

ACA Mobilizes Phase II of Legislative Campaign

Editorial Staff

The American Chiropractic Association (ACA) initiated a three-phase National Emergency Mobilization Campaign immediately after the November 1992 elections (see "ACA Declares National Legislative Emergency" in the Dec. 4, 1992 issue).

Phase I was an intense dissemination of information designed to "politically educate" DCs and alert the chiropractic profession of the immediate importance of legislative action.

"The first step in a campaign of this magnitude had to focus on dishing out a heavy dose of political reality to the profession," said Dr. Reeve Askew, ACA board liaison to the legislative commission. "We had to make sure doctors of chiropractic across the nation were fully 'alerted' and made truly aware of the seriousness of the situation at hand. We've sent out thousands upon thousands of special bulletins and newsletters regarding the urgency of the national health reform issue and its potential impact on chiropractic."

Phase II is now underway, focusing on mobilizing both doctors and chiropractic patients to lobby Congress. According to Richard Miller, ACA vice president for governmental relations, this phase will last for approximately three to five months and will involve three steps: a video alert bulletin, a lobbying kit, and a letter writing campaign.

The video alert bulletin, produced by the ACA's Political Action Committee (ACA-PAC), has already been distributed to more than 35,000 DCs nationwide. It was scripted by the ACA staff and legislative strategist Mark Goodin, and is meant to reinforce in a vivid and graphic way the urgency of the legislative campaign.

Over 40,000 of the Phase II lobbying kits have been mailed. They contain lobbying tips/protocols; an advocacy paper on DCs as primary care gatekeepers; a synopsis of chiropractic research/cost-effectiveness studies; and talking points/sample letters DCs can use in lobbying efforts. The kit will be updated or augmented later in the year as additional specifics of the Clinton health care bill are released.

The lobbying kits also contain an "alert bulletin" urging the profession to begin a coordinated Phase II letter writing campaign directed toward Congress as the first major step in launching grassroots activities. This bulletin also asks doctors to place follow-up phone calls to their elected representatives, and encourages DCs to recruit their patients to do the same. Dr. Kurt Hegetschweiler, chairman of the ACA's legislative commission, explained that the letters and calls are intended to be the first wave of a series of intensified and successive nationwide contacts with Congress by DCs and their patients.

Additionally, the ACA is in the process of developing a patient education video for DCs to show in their offices and to politically motivate patients. The video's theme will be "National Health Care Reform --

No One Has More to Gain or Lose than You -- the Patient." The ACA plans on releasing 45,000 copies of the video.

Phase III of the National Emergency Mobilization Campaign will be introduced after the Clinton health proposal is made.

MARCH 1993