

Opportunity Knocks at Chiropractic's Door

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My wise old grandfather used to say, "When opportunity knocks, open the door!" Well, get ready to open the doors, doctors, because opportunity is going to be knocking very loudly for chiropractors throughout the 1990s.

The state of Maine has just recently adopted a mandatory training law requiring companies to provide ergonomic training for employees who use Video Display Terminals (VDT) more than four hours per day. The purpose of the law is to reduce potential injuries by using workstations properly. Several other states are also in the process of similar mandatory safety regulations for computer users and sedentary office workers. Private employers all across the country are feeling the growing pressures to follow suit.

According to trend predicting analysts such as John Naisbitt, co-author of the book Megatrends, "The shift to an information economy dramatically changed the nature of work, but didn't curb the growth of worker illnesses, injuries, and other safety issues associated with an industrial culture."

"A complex set of new health problems developed over the past decade and somewhat unique to today's information society will be the focus of employer concern for the rest of this century." Repetitive-motion injuries afflict over 5 million Americans annually, at an estimated cost of over 27 billion dollars in medical treatment and lost income. The National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health is predicting that more than half of the workforce could fall victim to motion injuries in this decade.

The Wall Street Journal recently reported that back pain is now second only to the common cold as a cause of employee absenteeism, accounting for 1,400 lost work days per 1,000 employees per year. Backaches, ironically, are often caused by working conditions along with the many hours that sedentary workers sit in poorly designed or maladjusted chairs.

We, as doctors of chiropractic, are the authorities on the prevention and treatment of musculoskeletal disorders. We are the most qualified healthcare professional to analyze, educate, and correct the problems related to physical stress in the workplace. In order to reach people with information about what we do as chiropractors, we have to approach their worlds. This means getting in to educate people in the workplace. Once you are successful in getting in the door of one business, the word of what you are doing in the community will spread and other opportunities will begin to unfold.

For example, just recently I administered my physical stress reduction program to the employees of a local bank. The bank is a branch of a large California banking network. The vice president of the region happened to be attending the program. He now has invited me to give the presentation to several top executives of the banking network. My projection is that every branch of this large network will incorporate a physical stress reduction segment into its employee training program, therefore creating the need for doctors of chiropractic in many cities to service their needs. In this manner the

opportunities unfold for both doctors of chiropractic and the working public. This particular bank has 150 branches throughout California. This means I will have to locate and train 150 chiropractors to service their locations.

The opportunities presently knocking at our profession's door are almost endless. It is my sincere hope that you will join me in the opportunity of putting chiropractic on the cutting edge of addressing the issue of physical stress in the workplace throughout the 1990s. Approaching the business community is an excellent way to gain new patients and the professional respect that we deserve. Our success in the marketplace will be judged by our determination and ability to convince the American public and entrepreneurs that chiropractic is the major solution to their healthcare problems.

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