

More Chiropractic Endorsements From Presidential Candidates

Editorial Staff

In the Dec. 15, 2003 issue, we published pro-chiropractic statements from four leading Democratic presidential candidates (Vermont Gov. Howard Dean, MD, Missouri Rep. Dick Gephart, Massachusetts Sen. John Kerry and Connecticut Sen. Joe Lieberman).¹

Realizing the importance doctors of chiropractic - and the millions of patients they see on a regular basis - will have on the 2004 presidential race, two more candidates for the Democratic nomination, retired general Wesley Clark and North Carolina Sen. John Edwards, have released similar statements on chiropractic, just in time for the Jan. 19 Iowa caucuses.

"The candidates are recognizing the political clout of Iowa's chiropractic constituency," commented American Chiropractic Association (ACA) Iowa delegate F. Dow Bates, DC, adding, "The road to victory in the Iowa caucuses goes straight through the offices of the state's doctors of chiropractic." As with the other candidates who have endorsed chiropractic, the ACA worked closely with the Iowa Chiropractic Society and other politically active DCs in securing the statements from General Clark and Sen. Edwards.

Statement From General Wesley Clark

Twenty million Americans can't be wrong. That's how many patients seek treatment from chiropractors each year. Studies indicate that chiropractic care successfully relieves pain and suffering of millions of patients, which is good for public health and also good for the economy. By helping to put people back to work and regain their health, chiropractors save millions of dollars in care and lost time.

I recognize the contribution that chiropractors make to our national healthcare system and salute America's hard-working chiropractors, many of whom are enterprising small businesspeople as well as health care specialists. I believe that chiropractors should be treated with the same respect and dignity due to all health care professionals.

Unfortunately, barriers to obtaining chiropractic and other less traditional treatments remain. I support direct access for patients to chiropractic care and provider non-discrimination policy that will allow more consumers to choose and receive assistance paying for chiropractic care.

I applaud Congress for recently passing legislation requiring that chiropractic be made available through the Department of Defense and Veterans health care system. This is an important first step in integrating chiropractic care fully into our national health care system. Patients should be able to

choose the types of treatment that are best for them without burden and expense. The next step ought to be exploring expanded access to chiropractic care through Medicare and Tricare insurance for military dependents.

Statement From North Carolina Sen. John Edwards

Today, tens of thousands of chiropractors are working to relieve the pain and suffering of an estimated 30 million Americans. They do this work without expensive procedures and without costly prescription drugs. Yet significant barriers continue to prevent Americans from accessing this very important care. As President, I will work to break down barriers to chiropractic care.

Studies have shown that chiropractors can successfully relieve the pain and suffering of patients. This translates into millions in savings for health care and the economy. For example, expanded access to chiropractic services could help recover some of the estimated \$60 billion lost in work productivity due to backache and headache. With a minimum of 4,200 hours of educational training beyond undergraduate degree work over multiple years and strict licensing requirements, Doctors of Chiropractic (DCs) are highly trained and skilled health care professionals.

I will break down barriers to chiropractic care so that it can continue to be a growing part of America's health care system. I will work to ensure that:

- Patients with private insurance have direct access to chiropractic care, just as they should for other medical specialties.
- Federal health insurance programs offer chiropractic services with reasonable reimbursement rates.
- Educational opportunities are available for those seeking to provide chiropractic care.
- Veterans have the access to chiropractic care guaranteed by law.
- The federal government conducts additional research on the cost-effectiveness of chiropractic care and impact on quality of life.

With your help, I look forward to discussing issues throughout the 2004 election. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact my policy director, Robert Gordon, at 919-744-7878.

Reference

1. Four presidential candidates endorse chiropractic. *Dynamic Chiropractic*, Dec. 15, 2003. www.chiroweb.com/archives/21/26/06.html.

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