

The Campaign for Chiropractic: A \$500,000 Commitment Kicks Off the Campaign

Editorial Staff

When the Campaign for Chiropractic was unveiled at the Parker Seminar in Las Vegas on Jan. 14, 2005, Mark Sanna, DC - the CEO and president of Breakthrough Coaching - was quick to pledge \$500,000 to the campaign. In an exclusive interview, Dr. Sanna explains why the Campaign for Chiropractic is so important:

Dynamic Chiropractic (DC): Why is your organization making such a large commitment to the Campaign for Chiropractic?

Dr. Mark Sanna (MS): My goal is to see chiropractic recognized for its central and unique role in the delivery of health care. My vision is to have all chiropractors experience the freedom that results from financial abundance. I know that it is only by creating a generation of financially affluent chiropractors, who are motivated to support our profession, will chiropractic win the respect that it deserves. It takes significant financial resources to affect public policy on a legislative level. The best lobbyists and legal counsel are extremely expensive. My goal can only be achieved if chiropractors come together in a spirit of unity to protect our profession. Our chiropractic licenses are not an entitlement; they are a treasure. A treasure that was hard-fought for by a generation of chiropractic pioneers, some of whom were jailed for their convictions.

Many of us take for granted the ability to freely practice our profession, but we must remember that there are still many who wish to deny us this right. We can never stop fighting for the complete recognition of our value to humanity until the battle is won. Our patients deserve nothing less from us. I'd like to leave behind a world better off for the contribution chiropractic makes to the health of individuals, communities, societies, nations, and the brotherhood of man. A world in which children and adults aren't indiscriminately drugged, and where senior citizens experience a vibrant quality of life and abundant health until the day they lay down to their final rest. A world in which it is accepted knowledge that health comes from within and not from outside of the body. A world where men and women respect their bodies and the world they live in, and recognize that the two are inseparably connected. A world in which chiropractic receives the rightful recognition it deserves!

DC: Dr. Sanna, in your mind, why is the Campaign for Chiropractic important for the profession?

MS: While medical doctors can depend upon an unending flow of patients from hospital and colleague referrals, chiropractors have no such patient base. Chiropractic has been as successful as it has been primarily through producing excellent results and then having the good word spread in a grassroots effort from one satisfied patient to another. In the early days of chiropractic, it was seen as distasteful for a chiropractor to market his or her services. The opinion shared by many chiropractors was that they became chiropractors to help patients and that to market their practices in an entrepreneurial manner was beneath their calling. However, the advent of managed care placed increased economic

pressure upon the chiropractic profession, and required practices to become profitable businesses. To meet the need for practice growth to offset the increase in overhead and decrease in patient flow, chiropractors no longer have the option to keep to themselves the positive impact that chiropractic has on the health of our patients, and the safe and natural alternative that we provide to the long-term costs of the medical approach to health care. Today, chiropractors must join together if we even hope to make a small impact in the billions of dollars spent on advertising - now directly to the consumer - by the giant pharmaceutical companies. It is only by pooling our resources that we can purchase the type of advertising and support the quality of lobbyists that will support chiropractic reimbursement and increase the flow of patients into chiropractic practices.

DC: At \$500,000, you have made a very large commitment. What would you say to other chiropractic vendors who may be considering supporting the campaign?

MS: My personal mission - and the mission of each Coach and employee on the Breakthrough Coaching Team - is to leave behind a legacy that includes creating a generation of philanthropic chiropractors. We are committed to leadership by example. Therefore, five years ago, we created a "Philanthropic War Chest" to which each Coach donates the income they generate from coaching one of their Breakthrough Coaching Members - each month for the entire year - every year. Having this policy in place as a company for over five years has enabled us to establish a sizeable War Chest, which has provided us with the funds required to step up to the plate to support the chiropractic profession when the call comes. To date, we have donated over \$1 million to chiropractic causes, institutions of higher education, local, state and national organizations, and to individual chiropractors who find themselves in need. We are in the process of establishing Breakthrough Coaching Scholarships to help offset the increasing costs of obtaining a chiropractic education. We encourage every chiropractic vendor to set aside the revenue earned from one client or sale each month to create a similar War Chest. Your profession is calling for your support - accept the responsibilities that come with success!

DC: What would you say is the most important challenge confronting the chiropractic profession?

MS: The unfortunate fact that chiropractic enrollment has dropped is a symptom of a much more serious problem. Our colleges have created a generation of chiropractors who are ill-prepared to deal with the economic pressures that managed care has placed upon the chiropractic practice. The average chiropractic student graduates with approximately \$120K in debt, and this is prior to taking on another approximately \$100K in debt, should the new graduate be bold enough to attempt to open a private practice. The new practitioner understandably holds a grudge against their chiropractic college for a perceived lack of preparation to succeed in the "real world" of health care reimbursement. While our chiropractic colleges must continue to focus on creating excellent clinicians with superior diagnostic and treatment skills, pressure is being placed upon our learning institutions to teach our students practice management skills prior to graduation. Without adequate business preparation, our colleges have unknowingly created one of the most non-philanthropic generations in chiropractic history. Why give back to your chiropractic college when you have to work so hard just to keep the lights on? Why donate your hard-earned income to local, state, and national organizations? "What good did my college ever do for me" is a common complaint heard from those chiropractors who make it through the economic gauntlet and establish a new practice.

This has also resulted in a generation of practicing chiropractors who are unwilling to recommend their chosen profession to their children and patients as a potential career. Why encourage your

children to enter a profession in which their economic security is so unsure? My father is entering his 50th year of chiropractic practice, and together we have sent over 40 students to chiropractic colleges - most of them previous patients of our practices. We did so because we believe that chiropractic is much more than a profession; that it is a calling that can bring the practitioner rewards well beyond the economic rewards that can still be gained through a well-run chiropractic practice. In order to break the cycle of "lack of preparation - resentment - lack of alumni referrals - lack of chiropractic philanthropy," our colleges must step up to the plate and prepare our students to practice by emphasizing the importance of learning sound business principals, along with clinical skills, prior to graduating them into the highly competitive marketplace of health care.

DC: Is there anything more you would like to tell the profession?

MS: A recent study was published by Richard A. Cooper and Heather J. McKee of the Medical College of Wisconsin. The report concludes with the following paragraph: "In previous decades, chiropractors did not want their profession to be considered as a form of medical practice. Even now, many see themselves as practitioners of a distinct art. Having crossed the chasm into the reimbursed world of health care, they must now prove their quality, effectiveness, and value. The profession is buttressed by satisfied patients and by sympathetic politicians and by the general longing for someone who will listen and be supportive. But as our aging nation struggles to define the health care system that it can afford, it is uncertain whether this will be enough."

Practice with a standard of care based upon empirical evidence and document the functional improvements chiropractic care delivers, and how this impacts the quality of life. Master the arts of coding and compliance to effectively communicate the value of chiropractic to interested third parties. Finally, accept that only through combining our philanthropic efforts can the chiropractic profession reach the level of financial commitment necessary to impact legislative regulation, reimbursement, and widespread public acceptance. Contribute wholeheartedly to your local and national organizations, and to the only unified marketing campaign endorsed by every chiropractic leader in the nation, "The Campaign for Chiropractic."

DC: Thank you, Dr. Sanna.

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