

We Get Letters & E-Mail

Editor's note: The first three letters to the editor are in response to the publisher's report of findings, "Is It Time to Join Forces," published in the Jan. 1, 2006 issue and available online at www.chiroweb.com/archives/24/01/16.html.

"One Voice Is the Only Way to Get Anything Done"

Dear Editor:

I read your commentary every time I receive *DC*. What is my opinion regarding joining forces? Well, it is very simple: We cannot even "join forces" as a profession. How can we hope to do it with other professions?

I practice in a state that probably has the worst practice privileges. We have two professional organizations here in Michigan. I am sure you are aware of the recent activity to bring those two groups together. I am hoping that it will happen, because the politicians in this state are unable to help us as a profession until it does!

Quite frankly, sometimes I feel like we are a pathetic profession! One voice is the only way to get anything done one voice! Our profession should do all our "dirty laundry" behind closed doors and come out with one voice. That voice should be fighting for those things that help to make our profession more viable - period. Politicians and the insurance industry do not give a crap about technique and philosophy. As soon as we are united, we can bring into our fold other alternative health care professionals, all of our clients/patients, and most importantly, their voices!

Thanks for listening in. I am sure there are many of our colleagues out there who are just as frustrated.

Jeff Allyn, DC
Berkley, Michigan

"Increasing Collaboration Is a Reality We Must Embrace"

Dear Editor:

I agree with your premise of joining forces with other CAM providers. I practice in Minnesota and I am a past Minnesota Chiropractic Association president. We have been working cooperatively with the other nonallopathic providers, as well as with the nurses' association, for nearly 10 years. These groups, including the nurses, share many of our issues with MDs and have been excellent allies. We have frequently coordinated our efforts, especially legislatively. This combined effort has reaped the

chiropractic profession and the group many successes in the legislative arena. These successes include preservation of scope of practice, continued participation in personal injury and MinnesotaCare, our state's Medicaid program, etc.

The Minnesota Chiropractic Association has previously entertained bringing massage therapists, naturopaths and/or acupuncturists under the Minnesota Board of Chiropractic Examiners as additional registrations/certifications. While this has been pursued at a board/profession level, it has yet to make its way through the legislative process due to the cost considerations at that level. Our logic in pursuing these additional groups mirrors what you voiced in your article: adding more bodies, money, grassroots clout, etc. Our track record demonstrates that this works!

As you mentioned, health care is changing. Increasing collaboration is a reality we must embrace to ensure the continued success and growth of our profession. Therefore, I applaud your raising the issue in a national public forum and hope our leaders will see the wisdom of interprofessional diversity and inclusion. Of course, that would also be a welcomed occurrence on an intraprofessional level as well.

Mark Dehen, DC
North Mankato, Minnesota

"We Have More in Common Than We Realize"

Dear Editor:

I wholeheartedly agree with you! We must muster up the vision and will to develop strategic relationships with other professions. Our very survival depends upon this. Health care professionals have more in common than we realize.

Rick Martino, DC
Vails Gate, New York

"We Must Take a Stand!"

Dear Editor:

For years, our profession has been lamenting what to do about the American Chiropractic Network (ACN). Now the American Chiropractic Association is seriously considering using its (our) limited assets to sue them. We can all save these limited assets for the bigger fights in Washington by simply taking control of our individual destinies. Resign from ACN today! If they have no members, they cease to exist!

What has happened to our rebel spirit? What has happened to that rebellious spirit our forefathers demonstrated when towing the profession into the future? We must take a stand! You must take a stand! If we endure a little pain in the short term, it will pay off in the long term. If you sit on your hands and let the ACN continue to grow and gain credibility and clients, they may be telling you what to do in every insurance plan for the rest of your "limited" career. I say "limited" because no one can afford to practice when you cannot pay your overhead.

Most recently, Great West Insurance Company announced that effective Jan. 1, 2006, ACN will manage its network. On Dec. 7, 2005, John Deere Insurance Company was bought by United. If you guys thought American Whole Health Network was a pain, just wait until ACN takes over next year. These carriers cannot sell chiropractic benefits without a network. Don't let it be ACN.

I resigned a year ago when United Healthcare bought ACN and started using them to govern its network in Tennessee. Guess what? My patients still keep coming back and paying cash. Some have good out-of-network benefits. I don't have to beg to treat my patients or waste money on overhead to do their needless paperwork.

I challenge each and every one of you to stand up and fight! Let's move ACN into the age of the dinosaur and chalk one up for chiropractic!

Michael T. Petty, DC
Knoxville, Tennessee

"How Convenient for ACN"

Dear Editor:

Our office recently quit Blue Shield of California because they are utilizing ACN. We did not want to participate in their wrongdoings to our patients and profession.

Because we got off Blue Shield, this automatically removes our name as a provider for United Health Care of CA Insurance. After 21 years of being a provider for UHC and being removed without prior written notification, this was a strong financial and emotional blow.

If you want to be part of United Health Care, you now have to join ACN! You can't do one without the other! If you want to be part of Blue Shield of CA, you have to be a provider and abide by ACN rules and paperwork.

How convenient for them - look how interconnected ACN is. I feel this is an illegal monopoly on the part of ACN and the insurance companies. "Antitrust" is going on here. I just don't understand how so few (ACN) can have so much power over so many chiropractors and nothing is being done as of this time.

Name/address unknown

An Association for All Chiropractors

Dear Editor:

Shortly after I arrived at Palmer College in 1983 to begin my studies to become a doctor of chiropractic, I received a copy of *Dynamic Chiropractic*. In that issue, I learned of an effort to unite as a profession. That effort failed. In the intervening years, as my life as a chiropractor has moved along, I have found that there is so little unity.

About a year into chiropractic college, I learned of a small dedicated group of chiropractors and

historians that had come together to form the Association for the History of Chiropractic. Their mission was to preserve and record our profession's history, with special emphasis on its beginnings. I joined as a student member in 1984 and in the subsequent years, the membership of the group has remained at about 500 members worldwide.

Upon my graduation in 1986, I converted my student memberships in the ACA and the ICA to full memberships. This was when the groups were trying to merge, and since I was taught that at any point in time, approximately half of the practicing chiropractors were graduated in the last ten years, I should say that the effort to unite also failed, as a vocal minority of the smaller group, the ICA, voted down the merger.

Shortly after this, I let my membership in each group lapse, as much for economic reasons as philosophical ones, as the dues rose sharply for a recent graduate such as myself.

In the almost 20 years since, I have wondered if there is any group with the word "chiropractic" in its name that virtually every chiropractor in the world could support - everyone from Dr. Fred Barge and Dr. Terry Rondberg to the brashest anti-BJ mixer. If such a group could exist, how would the profession benefit if there was almost universal membership among the practicing chiropractors of today?

I submit that the Association for the History of Chiropractic is that organization. Every chiropractor, from the most recent graduate to those ready to retire, should acknowledge, with appreciation, those pioneer chiropractors whose stories are being preserved in the Association's journal. Solon Langworthy, an early student of D.D. Palmer, and co-author of the first book published about chiropractic, claims to have given over 7,000 adjustments in one year, less than 10 years after the first chiropractic adjustment. Imagine if 99 percent of the U.S. population had never heard the word "chiropractic," and the challenge that presented to these early chiropractors, to say nothing of the threat of jail.

A recent study showed that about half of the U.S. population had seen a chiropractor at least once in his lifetime and that five percent of the population thinks of themselves as "regular chiropractic patients." That five percent is keeping most all of us 60,000 chiropractors busy.

If 90 percent of those 60,000 were to join the Association for the History of Chiropractic, the benefits to the profession and to each member would be great. Every practicing chiropractor owes a debt to the pioneers of our profession and one way to repay that debt is to help preserve their history. What a public relations coup we would enjoy as a profession, if each of us could point with pride to the association and its substantial support.

After 20 years in the profession, I realize that level of support is a dream which is unlikely to come true, but if you have read this far, and are rightfully proud of this wonderful profession; please take the action step of lighting a single candle by mailing \$50 annual dues to the Association for the History of Chiropractic, 1000 Brady Street, Davenport, IA 52803.

Steven Parker, DC
Emporia, Kansas

Dear Editor:

I submit that after being in this profession for nearly 30 years, I know the answer to why we aren't enjoying the public acceptance that we deserve. Unfortunately, I don't think it can be solved with a slick advertising campaign. I suspect it's due to the way the public perceives us. Historically, we have been perceived as less than equal to MDs, DOs and most other health care providers. In fact, it's no surprise that some people still consider us quacks.

I can remember when podiatrists had a similar image. Unlike us, they fought for hospital and prescription privileges. The public just doesn't trust a "doctor" unless he or she can prescribe meds and use hospital facilities.

Of course, some in our profession would argue that we would be heretics to align ourselves with organized medicine. Guess what? That might be the quickest way to change our image and enjoy the public's acceptance!

How would you feel about going to an all-natural dentist? One who didn't feel it was necessary to inject Novocain prior to filling your cavities. I suppose if he was real charismatic, he might convince about 10 percent of the public to go along with him. But in the meantime, the other 90 percent would go to a dentist who can offer them pain-free dentistry and manage their pain afterward.

Why aren't we "identifying" with the consumer? Is it because we're not capable? No. Most of us are well-trained. Is it because we don't produce results? No. We should be in demand due to our expertise in manual and physical therapies. But even manual and physical therapies have limitations! Is it because we charge too much? No. Most health care providers, including physical therapists, charge more. Is it because the medical profession is curing everyone? Definitely not! We are underutilized. Is it because patients prefer the effects of drugs and surgery? Yes! If you are in pain, don't you? Guess what?

Sometimes drugs and surgery are necessary and entirely appropriate, and we can't use them! Do you really believe that any of us chiropractors would deny ourselves or our family's appropriate medical care - including drugs and surgery - if needed?

Lyle Zurflu, DC
Bend, Oregon

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