



NEWS / PROFESSION

## Unity in Michigan

AS OF JAN. 1, 2007, THE MICHIGAN CHIROPRACTIC ASSOCIATION AND MICHIGAN CHIROPRACTIC SOCIETY ARE OPERATING AS A SINGLE ENTITY.

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Michigan chiropractors ended 2006 with a resolution of unity, as the Michigan Chiropractic Association (MCA) and the Michigan Chiropractic Society (MCS) voted to function as a single organization - the Michigan Association of Chiropractors (MAC). In early December, the boards of both organizations voted to merge, and on Dec. 29, 2006, members of the MCA and the MCS voted to approve the merger, paving the way for a unified chiropractic profession in the state.



The MCA posted the following notice on its Web site after the member vote: "Beginning January 1, 2007, the state of Michigan's chiropractic community will be represented by a single, more influential professional organization that better serves doctors of chiropractic, their patients and the profession as a whole."

A joint press release issued by the MCA and the MCS explains the reasoning behind the unity effort: "After years of operating separately, the differences between the two organizations have diminished and their need for a unified effort has increased. The organizations have begun collaborating recently, most notably during efforts to improve Michigan's scope of practice legislation and in legal actions against discriminatory insurance practices. Additionally, the merger will reduce duplication allowing the profession to devote more resources to public education and public policy initiatives."

Prior to the Dec. 29 member vote, a joint venture agreement, plan of consolidation and a new set of bylaws already had been ratified by the boards of both groups to ensure a smooth transition. The Bylaws Committee included Drs. Christophe Dean, William Goss, John Hofmann, Mark Limberg, Eric Seif and Dennis Whitford. The Transition Executive Committee included Drs. Allen Kash, Thomas Klapp, Donald M. Reno, Daniel Spencer and Kirk Stekete.

According to the newly adopted bylaws, the mission statement for the new organization is as follows:

"The Mission of the Michigan Association of Chiropractors is to protect and enhance the chiropractic profession through organized leadership, education, and the promotion of the chiropractic discipline and practice." Its purpose is "(a) To promote the Chiropractic profession as a distinct branch of the healing arts based on the body's inherent abilities and the role that vertebral subluxation plays in that process; and (b) To advocate for Michigan Doctors of Chiropractic, chiropractic patients and the Chiropractic Profession to

the Government, the public, the business community and the community of third party payers."

In addition to the mission statement and purpose, the bylaws also address organization structure, membership, districts, board of directors, executive committee, executive director, elections, officers' duties and responsibilities, committees, meetings, manner of adjudicating complaints against individuals, officers and committees of the organization, fiscal business, amendments to the constitution and bylaws, saving clauses and a code of ethics.

The MAC will hold its first district elections in the fall of 2007. New officers and board members will begin serving in January 2008. Until that time, the interim MAC board will consist of current MCS and MCA board members. Following the fall 2007 elections and the installation of the new board in early 2008, the MAC will be divided into eight districts, based on geographical factors, the number of doctors in each region, etc. A board of directors, comprised of two representatives from each district, the past president, president and vice president, will govern the affairs of the new organization. The current executive committee includes Drs. Thomas Klapp, chairman; Kirk Steketee, president; Donald Reno, vice president; Eric Seif, director of financial affairs; and Robert Markle, director of internal affairs.

The MCA and the MCS have been considering a merger for several months. In August 2005, the organizations announced they had each appointed members to a "unification steering committee." Almost immediately after that announcement, surveys were e-mailed to more than 1,400 chiropractors in Michigan regarding the proposed merger. At that time, approximately 90 percent of respondents were in favor of the proposed merger. Of those who responded, 45 percent were MCA members, 34 percent were MCS members and 21 percent were not members of either organization. At the time of the survey, the two organizations agreed on approximately 85 percent of the issues, with their primary difference being in how they would approach those issues.

"Instead of airing our differences to others outside our profession, we could now discuss our differences in one board room among ourselves. This would stop us from appearing disjointed and would prevent our enemies from playing us against each other," said Dr. Sam Caruso, MCA president.

"So, now maybe, just maybe, we can continue this trend and maybe, just maybe, Michigan could be the tipping point and soon another state, emboldened by our success, would follow, and then another and another," added Dr. Christophe Dean, MCS president.

Michigan is the latest state to achieve chiropractic unity, continuing what is now a clear trend in that regard. In the past several years, chiropractic membership organizations in three other states (Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Colorado) have completed mergers. Virginia looks to be the next state to actively pursue a merger of the state's two chiropractic organizations, the Virginia Chiropractic Association and the Virginia Society of Chiropractic. To learn about recent unity efforts, access the following articles online:

- "Unity in New Jersey." *Dynamic Chiropractic*, Jan. 15, 2005. [www.chiroweb.com/archives/23/02/18.html](http://www.chiroweb.com/archives/23/02/18.html).
- "Michigan Chiropractic Associations Explore Merger." *Dynamic Chiropractic*, Sept. 27, 2005. [www.chiroweb.com/archives/23/20/09.html](http://www.chiroweb.com/archives/23/20/09.html).
- Merger in Michigan; Unification Also a Hot Topic in Colorado, Virginia." *Dynamic Chiropractic*, June 6, 2006. [www.chiroweb.com/archives/24/12/11.html](http://www.chiroweb.com/archives/24/12/11.html).

- "Unity Message Seems to Be Getting Through." *Dynamic Chiropractic*, Sept. 14, 2006.  
[www.chiroweb.com/archives/24/19/20.html](http://www.chiroweb.com/archives/24/19/20.html).

As of press time, you can contact the Michigan Association of Chiropractors by phone at (800) 949-1401, by e-mail at [info@chiromi.com](mailto:info@chiromi.com) or via the Web at [www.chiromi.com](http://www.chiromi.com).

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