

Wisconsin Executive Director Leaves Well-Paid Position

Editorial Staff

In a letter dated April 4, 2012, Russell Leonard announced, "I have resigned from my position as Executive Director of the Wisconsin Chiropractic Association." Leonard went on to say that "the Board of Directors will work on a transition plan and will then announce the effective date of my resignation."

Having served the WCA since 1990, Leonard has had a colorful tenure. In 2000, he and the WCA "agreed to settle Federal Trade Commission allegations that they [orchestrated a conspiracy](#) among WCA members to increase prices for chiropractic services and to boycott third-party payers to obtain higher reimbursement rates."¹ In 2005, Leonard and the WCA were found to have "filed a 'frivolous' lawsuit in 2002 against Dale Strama, DC, a former chair of the Wisconsin Chiropractic Examining Board, for the sole purpose of 'maliciously injuring' Dr. Strama by swaying chiropractors from attending continuing-education seminars sponsored by Dr. Strama's organization." [The court ruled](#) that the WCA "pay Dr. Strama's legal fees as a result of the case," a sum reportedly exceeding \$100,000.²

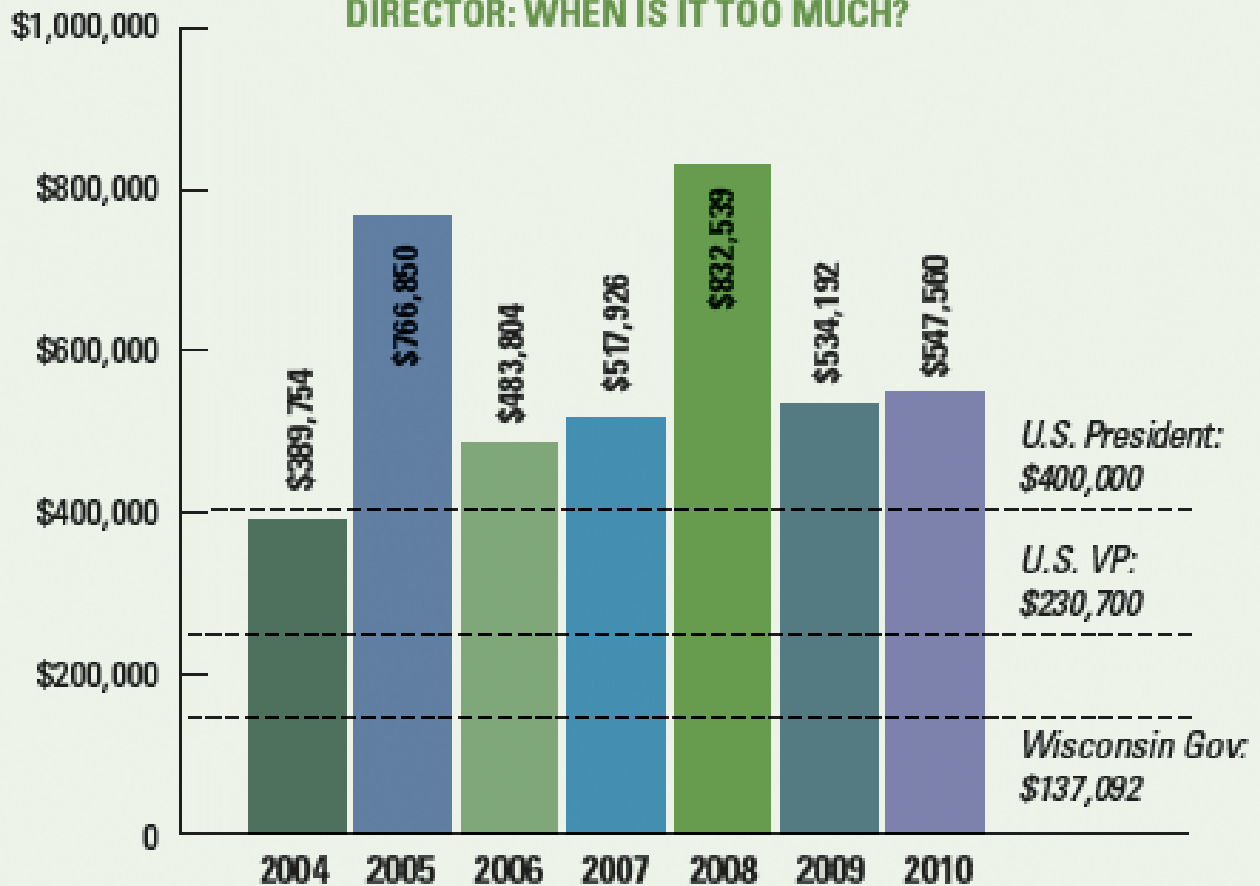
Included in Leonard's litigation testimony was the admission that "he personally receives 35 percent of the profits generated from WCA seminars, an amount that has exceeded \$100,000 per year on several occasions."² When [asked recently](#) about the lucrative arrangement, Leonard remarked, "I have not earned any money on continuing-education programs for chiropractors for well over a decade and do not intend to teach any programs after I leave."³

A review of the [WCA's 990s](#) (see graph) reveals Leonard was well-paid over the years, even without compensation from the WCA's continuing-education program,⁴ including "reportable compensation" from the WCA and reportable compensation from "related organizations." With an average income of more than \$580,000 per year, Leonard's average compensation is more than three times what the ACA executive vice president earns, not to mention most elected officials.

When asked if he expects to take a pay cut at his next position, Leonard remarked, "I did very well financially before I came to the WCA and because I expect to work exceptionally hard at whatever I do next, I expect my financial success will continue."

Why Leonard is leaving probably has more to do with where he is going next than it does with where he is now. Leonard insists that the recent formation of the Chiropractic Society of Wisconsin, which has apparently already reached 300 members, had nothing to do with his decision to resign as executive director of the WCA. But the obvious question remains to be answered: What position could be so promising and highly compensated to cause Leonard to leave the WCA? His reply: "Stay tuned."

ANNUAL COMPENSATION BY AN EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR: WHEN IS IT TOO MUCH?



References

1. "Wisconsin Chiropractic Association and Its Director Agree to Settle FTC Charges of Price Fixing." *Dynamic Chiropractic*, May 1, 2000.
2. "WCA Exec. Guilty of Frivolous Lawsuit." *Dynamic Chiropractic*, July 2, 2005.
3. Exclusive e-mail interview with Russ Leonard, May 18, 2012. Complete interview available online at www.dynamicchiropractic.com/Leonard.
4. Wisconsin Chiropractic Association Form 990 Filings, 2004 - 2010. Available online at www.dynamicchiropractic.com/Leonard.

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