Dynamic Chiropractic



CHIROPRACTIC (GENERAL)

Step #1: Defining Barriers to Growth

WHAT'S HOLDING US BACK? HERE'S WHAT YOUR PEERS SAY.

Editorial Staff

Whether in a pond, a relationship, a job – or a profession – stagnation is rarely positive. But which direction to choose? Which changes to make? Which actions will swirl the waters; breathe new life, focus and growth into the lungs?

Our daily correspondence with doctors of chiropractic worldwide suggests many are unsure about the state of the profession moving forward and are actively debating which path (individually and collectively) to take next, so we posed this question in our latest ChiroPoll to learn more: "Which of the following do you consider the biggest threat to the chiropractic profession's advancement?" Possible responses included the following:

- Lack of professional unity
- Inadequate scope of practice
- Deviation from spine care only
- Lack of consumer awareness
- Provider competition (interprofessional)
- Insurance / billing challenges
- Other

Beyond selecting a choice from the above options, an unusually large number of chiropractors also provided comments regarding which issue they believe is most detrimental to professional progress. Here's a sampling of what your colleagues shared:

"Every specialty profession has suffered persecution and isolation at the hands of orthodox medicine, from the dentists and osteopaths to the optometrists and podiatrists; and each of those disciplines succeeded to become thriving professions through the cooperation and unity they developed. Only chiropractic continues to struggle because we have never been able to learn we are better together

than fighting to see our 'philosophy' prevail (whichever one we favor). We can only hope to overcome our foolishness before it's too late." — Dr. Jeff Taylor, Michigan



"[The problem is] too much focus on the undefined concept of wellness and not on spinal care. Too many chiros want to be providers of other modalities like acupuncturists, naturopaths, physical therapists or allopathic physicians, instead of chiropractors. They have so confused the public that when patients are asked, 'What is a chiropractor?' they all have a different definition. Each of the above-listed professionals is known to the public and the definition is congruent. The issue is not one of public branding, as there is not one message that the public will understand as to who we are.

"I think it is time to get back to what chiropractic is about and stop chasing all these other modalities, unless the chiropractor wants to spend the time to get properly educated and licensed in the other profession. The shortcut certification programs have done us more harm than good and seriously undermine our credibility with other professionals." — Dr. Michael Bowser, North Dakota

"Chiropractic runs the risk of being made obsolete by internal divisions and narrow-mindedness about insurance billing. We spend so much energy complaining about insurance and Medicare that we fail to educate the public about why we are different. Nobody doubts that acupuncturists are different, and insurance reimbursement or coverage is an infrequent topic of the money conversation. Chiropractors portray to the public that they are MD wannabes with neither the backing nor the public acceptance MDs have.

"Don't get me wrong. Medical doctors are essential to health care, regardless of where you stand on the conservative-aggressive treatment paradigms. So are chiropractors – except we wish to be treated as medical doctors, when in fact what we do and what they do are different. How about embracing our differences, accept that insurance prefers medical doctors, and carve out a niche that allows us to be different?" — *Dr. Eileen Machida, Oregon*

"In a time where everyone wants to become a medical professional, we as chiropractors have steered far away from the original concept of what chiropractic was meant to be. As a recent grad, many of my fellow classmates wanted to be able to prescribe drugs, and we were taught to only refer patients for surgery when they presented with disc herniations, for example. If they want to prescribe drugs or just refer patients to surgery, then they might as well just go to medical school.

"We as chiropractors have to focus on our philosophy and treat what chiropractic was originally meant to treat: the spine. Yeah, I know sometimes patients come with shoulder pain or wrist pain, and we might treat that also; but as long as we focus on the spine and treat the subluxations, we treat the cause of the problem. It is at this point that the apple does not fall far from the tree." — $Dr.\ Carlos\ Castro,\ California$

"This profession eats its young rather than nurturing them. Too few DCs are members of state and national associations. And then there's the issue of prescribing drugs. Ugh! Go to med school if you want to prescribe drugs!" — *Dr. Nancy Davis, Texas*

"Simply put: [The biggest issue is] the AMA's refusal to recognize chiropractic as not only a valid, but superior form of treatment than allopathic medicine – probably 98 percent of the time." — Dr. Frances Rinaldo, California

"Chiropractic is accelerating in its pace of being irrelevant due to lack of adequate scope. We have allowed other professions to expand their scope while we have been narrowed to a 'musculoskeletal' practice, and then only through manipulation. We fail to deliver adequate coverage through Medicare, Medicaid and other insurance for anything outside of a manipulation to the spine. Chiropractic has never been more irrelevant than today, and without a broader appeal and coverage for more services, chiropractic will continue its slide into oblivion." — $Dr.\ LaRoy\ Reek$, Wisconsin

"The profession needs to tier – several schools will soon offer the DCM degree and advance, and the rest of the minority profession will stay as is. That's good, since there is and never has been any unity in the profession. The Wilk case is a joke because the ACA did not sue for money and people do not even know about it – exactly what the AMA wanted!" — Dr. Richard Muccillo, California

In a sense, each chiropractic practice is a reflection of the profession; there's a reason why you're doing well – or not so well – that's tied to chiropractic on a larger scale. So, what's the biggest hurdle to advancement in *your* practice? Or what's your formula for success – what's working and could help your fellow DCs achieve more, reach more patients, expand their practices, and stave off personal and professional stagnation? Email editorial@mpamedia.com with your thoughts on this important issue.

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