

A Chiropractic Call to Arms

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On August 15, the number of chiropractors in the American Public Health Association (APHA) will be counted. From this census, several important things will be determined:

1. how many votes chiropractors will get to cast within APHA (the largest public health association in the world);
2. how much money the Chiropractic Health Care Section of APHA will be budgeted for 2004;
3. how much clout chiropractic holds within this powerful health organization (considered one of the 15 most powerful lobbies on Capitol Hill);
4. how many voting seats chiropractic will have on the Governing Council, APHA's official policy-making body; and
5. whether chiropractic will become one of the larger and more influential sections in APHA, or remain one of its smallest.

It doesn't matter if we get a thousand new members after August 15; the census "snapshot" of membership numbers will happen on that day, and all related decisions and judgments for the year to come will be made accordingly.

So, yes, this is a "chiropractic call to arms"! Action is required by chiropractors from every corner of the country to join APHA now! It has never been easier. There are now two simple ways to join:

1. Log on to www.APHA.org and click on "Membership." You will be registered as a new (or renewing) member, and have full APHA rights within two days.
2. Use the membership form included with this article to send in your membership application today; within two weeks, your membership will be processed.

Remember, time is of the essence. You must join before August 15 to be counted in this year's census roll call.

Before you turn the page, I want to remind you of chiropractic's APHA accomplishments:

1. Chiropractic fought a 16-year battle to gain section status at APHA, giving us equality and voting privileges in line with every other represented health profession at APHA.
2. The Chiropractic Health Care Section recently won 2nd place (out of an estimated 900 exhibits at APHA) for organizing a collaborative Health Promotion booth, including Chiropractic, Podiatry, Vision Care and Oral Health sections of APHA.
3. A chiropractor, Dr. Rand Baird, recently received an award from APHA for having recruited more members than any other individual in APHA's 131-year history!
4. Chiropractic is one of the most active sections at APHA, often being held out as an example of "how to" from which other sections can learn.

5. Chiropractors have recently been elected and appointed to serve in high-ranking positions in APHA, affording the profession the opportunity to be a powerful voice in our nation's health.
6. This year's theme at APHA is related to "Healthy Behaviors and Lifestyles" - just what chiropractors always champion in everyday clinical practice.
7. This year, APHA holds its annual meeting and exhibits November 15-19 in San Francisco, Calif., a state in which one-fifth of all chiropractors in the United States currently practice! All chiropractic sessions will take place on Monday, November 17, so at least join APHA and come for the day!

The time has come to literally overrun the APHA with chiropractor members. In San Francisco, over 12,000 APHA members will convene as colleagues at the largest annual meeting related to public health in the world. So, now we have some timely choices to make:

We can:

1. sit back as a profession and not participate; or, we can
2. break some attendance records at this year's annual conference!

We can:

1. let this meeting come and go, with chiropractic barely making a blip on APHA's radar screen; or, we can
2. attend, be vocal and let this organization know about chiropractic's huge presence in California and elsewhere!

We can:

1. sit back and watch decisions being made by others about health care, freedom of provider choice, and the role of chiropractic within the health care system; or, we can
2. decide for ourselves what chiropractic's role should be, make a stand about provider choice, and lead the discussion about health care decisions in this country.

The choice is ours, and there has never been more of an opportunity for chiropractic to be heard!

So, what can you do? As I mentioned before, it's simple:

1. Become a member of APHA, as described above. Whether you are able to attend APHA annual meetings or not, your membership counts - and we need you immediately! Remember, the numbers used to calculate chiropractic's "power" will be counted on August 15 - that's a firm deadline!
2. Once you join, contact either myself or Tom Carpenter, DC, 2003 chair of APHA's Chiropractic Health Care Section, and ask (or tell us) how you can take a leading role in the organization, or be a more quiet champion of chiropractic in your home state.
3. If you live near San Francisco, for heaven's sake, don't miss the APHA annual conference. This meeting's size and power will absolutely blow you away!

4. Look to the future! APHA's upcoming annual meetings will be held in Washington, D.C., in November 2004; in New Orleans in 2005; and in Boston in 2006. Make plans now to be there.

I am writing this out of a true passion for APHA, and with a deep understanding of just how much positive potential chiropractic can have, especially when joining forces with this amazing organization. APHA has afforded me the opportunity to meet the last three Surgeons Generals of the United States, and talk with two of them about chiropractic. (I'll catch the third one this year!) Join us today, and you too can share this passion, shaping the future of our nation's health through chiropractic involvement in APHA.

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Note: For this special offer, APHA is letting our new members join for the reduced fee of only \$150, instead of the current dues of \$160. So, join now, get all the benefits, and save \$10, too!

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