

Four Presidential Candidates Endorse Chiropractic

Editorial Staff

The American Chiropractic Association (ACA), in close cooperation with the Iowa Chiropractic Society (ICS), recently secured formal statements supporting chiropractic care from four of the leading candidates for the Democratic nomination for president of the United States.

Representatives of the ACA and the ICS met with Howard Dean on Oct. 27 at ICS headquarters in Ankeny, Iowa to clarify the candidate's position on chiropractic care. Gov. Dean pledged his future support and stated that he would immediately improve on his earlier "Access to Chiropractic Care" policy statement by adding language to recognize the effectiveness of chiropractic care and support patient direct access to chiropractic services. He also pledged his support for funding for chiropractic research and said he would include chiropractic care in his universal coverage health care proposal.

That same day, an ACA delegation also met with top officials in the Iowa offices of the John Kerry and Richard Gephardt campaigns to discuss their candidates' respective policy statements concerning chiropractic issues.

Keith Overland, DC, ACA Connecticut delegate, a health care policy adviser to the Joseph Lieberman campaign, assisted in securing the senator's official statement on chiropractic.

Participants at the Oct. 27 meetings included F. Dow Bates, DC, ACA Iowa delegate; Maurice Cyr, DC, ACA Vermont delegate; Charles Foster, DC, immediate past president, Vermont Chiropractic Association and ACA member; Gene Handley, PhD, ICS executive director; Jon Hymes, ACA vice president for government relations; Rodney Langel, DC, ICS president-elect; Larry Phipps, DC, ICS legislative co-chair; and Ken Storjohann, DC, ICS president.

"We were pleased to facilitate this meeting," said Dr. Storjohann. "Chiropractors are recognized leaders in towns and cities across Iowa, strongly united in support of quality health care for Iowans and, as the candidates know, we'll be there on caucus night."

"The candidates are recognizing the political clout of Iowa's chiropractic constituency," added Dr. Bates. "The numbers speak for themselves. Iowa is home to thousands of doctors of chiropractic and chiropractic assistants, tens of thousands of chiropractic patients and the largest chiropractic college in the world. The road to victory in the [Jan. 19, 2004] Iowa caucuses goes straight through the offices of the state's doctors of chiropractic."

Statement From Vermont Gov. Howard Dean, MD

The chiropractic profession is widely recognized for the positive contribution it makes to our nation's

health delivery system. It is now estimated that over 20 million Americans seek treatment from a doctor of chiropractic each year. These patients seek this care, because they believe that chiropractic care has value and a positive impact on their health status. Patient satisfaction with chiropractic providers is extremely high.

Despite the growing popularity and acceptance of chiropractic care, some barriers to obtaining chiropractic services remain in both the private and public sectors. I applaud and support efforts to remove these barriers and to equip consumers with the means and ability to obtain the type of health care services they need and desire, including chiropractic care. Patients should have the freedom to directly access chiropractic services without the burden or expense of having to go through another provider.

I am encouraged that Congress has recently enacted legislation requiring that chiropractic care be made available in the Department of Defense and Veterans health care systems. This step is long overdue. As President of the United States, I will work towards further integrating chiropractic care into these systems - and into all federal health care programs and systems where chiropractic care is excluded or not adequately provided.

Statement From Missouri Rep. Dick Gephardt

The chiropractic profession is a highly regarded and highly sought part of our nation's health care delivery system. More and more Americans are seeking treatment from a doctor of chiropractic. Evidence continues to emerge about the benefits of chiropractic care as a cost-effective and proven health treatment. About 20 million Americans seek chiropractic care from chiropractic physicians each year. These patients seek this care because they believe [it] has value and a positive impact on their health status.

I am pleased that the U.S. Congress has recently enacted legislation requiring that chiropractic care be made available in the Department of Defense (DoD) and Veterans (DVA) health care systems. I supported these initiatives and I believe that those who receive health care through the DoD and the DVA will benefit from the full integration of chiropractic care into these health care systems. As President, I will work toward this - ensuring that America's current and former service personnel have full access to the chiropractic care they need and deserve.

I believe this progress should continue and that remaining barriers to chiropractic care should be eliminated. Medicare beneficiaries should be allowed direct access to the full scope of services provided by doctors of chiropractic. Such a step will make it easier for Medicare beneficiaries to seek and receive care and will also produce savings in the Medicare system. At the same time, there should be a strengthened federal commitment to chiropractic research and education.

As you know, I have made providing all Americans with affordable and guaranteed health care a centerpiece of my presidential campaign. I look forward to working with you in order to achieve this goal and make sure that every person in this country gets access to the health care they need.

Statement From Massachusetts Sen. John Kerry

John Kerry believes it is overdue that our nation and its leaders acknowledge the important work done by chiropractors and knock down all existing barriers to chiropractic care.

More than 60,000 chiropractic doctors are practicing in the United States - treating more than 20 million patients each year. These patients have discovered that the low cost, noninvasive care that chiropractors provide has a value and a positive impact on their health.

[Although] chiropractors have made great progress in gaining the acceptance they deserve, there are still many barriers to chiropractic care in the public and private sector. Many seniors seek chiropractic care, yet Medicare provides reimbursement only for chiropractic adjustments, leaving the patient to pick up the tab for additional costs associated with treatment. John Kerry will work to ensure that seniors get the care they need and that Medicare treats chiropractors fairly.

Recent legislation has mandated that chiropractic care be available in the Veterans and Department of Defense health care systems. This was an important development, but it's only the beginning. Kerry will work to integrate coverage into all federal health programs.

In the private sector, too many health plans and HMOs do not cover chiropractic care. Kerry strongly supports a provider non-discrimination policy and will help improve access for the millions of Americans that currently pay out of pocket to receive the high quality care delivered by chiropractors. Additionally, Kerry is committed to the principle of direct access for chiropractic care.

Statement From Connecticut Sen. Joe Lieberman

Musculoskeletal health issues are a major cause of lost work time, chronic pain and a reduction of one's quality of life. Billions are spent each year in health care treatments and worker related costs. But, no single form of health care or health care discipline can provide all of the treatment options needed by all patients. The needs of individual patients vary on a case-by-case basis.

Chiropractic care is one approach that is utilized by over 20 million people annually to help reduce the devastating effects of these injuries and conditions. If patients want this type of care and it is medically necessary and indicated, patients should have full access to chiropractic care and it should be covered by insurance, just as other treatments are covered. I am pleased that Congress has passed legislation making chiropractic care available to certain patients in the Department of Defense and Veterans Affairs health care systems.

Maximizing a patient's ability to choose the provider of his or her choice, as long as that care is effective and safe, is a component of my health care platform. As President of the United States, I will promote that policy.

"[Although] they may often disagree on other issues, the leading presidential candidates for the Democratic presidential nomination appear to completely agree on the value and benefits of chiropractic care," commented ACA President Donald Krippendorf, DC. "The ACA is encouraged by this enthusiastic support and more determined than ever to ensure that it is maintained by our elected leaders long after Election Day."

DECEMBER 2003

©2024 Dynamic Chiropractic™ All Rights Reserved