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Who Represents the Mainstream of Chiropractic?

By James Edwards, DC

Dr. Edwards' articles, a "Talk Back" forum and a brief biography of the author are available online at www.chiroweb.com/columnist/edwards.

After reviewing every official position of the ACA and ICA, I authored an article titled "The Four Biggest Lies in Chiropractic," published in the Dec. 1, 1999 *Dynamic Chiropractic*. In that article, I discussed the official policies of these associations and how they are essentially identical with regard to:

1. chiropractic being a separate and distinct health care discipline;
2. mandatory vaccinations;
3. the subluxation complex; and
4. that drugs and surgery should not be part of chiropractic practice.

I still receive compliments on the article, and the ACA subsequently made it into a reprint brochure; however, I still ask:

What's happened in the last four-plus years? Have the policies of the ACA and ICA on these important issues become increasingly similar, or do they now conflict with each other? And has the ACA wavered in its stance on these important issues? The answer is clear - the official positions of the ACA and ICA on the aforementioned issues remain exactly the same, and the ACA has not taken a single step backward!

Not only has the ACA maintained its conservative position on these issues, it has gone much further in its protection and representation of "mainstream" chiropractic.

Here's a brief update of what has happened since that 1999 article was published:

In September 2000, the full ACA House of Delegates (HOD) unanimously adopted the following resolution:

"The House of Delegates **reaffirms the core principle of the subluxation**. The ACA will strive to reiterate this principle and further state that **the core treatment of chiropractic is manual manipulation/adjustment of the articulations**, both spinal and extra-spinal, **to reduce subluxations**, when called upon in relation to federal legislative efforts, in addition to full scope of practice as allowed by state law. **References to subluxation** and chiropractic adjustments/manipulation should be made in ACA releases, whenever possible." (Emphasis added)

Even the casual reader will have to admit that there's not a lot of "wiggle room" in that official position! The ACA HOD not only went on record that subluxation care is the "core principle" of our profession, it also made it very clear that it wants references to subluxation to be included in all federal legislation. At that same 2000 annual meeting, it went further by adopting an additional resolution that recommended against the use of the phrase "chiropractic medicine."

But wait, there's more - the ACA officially endorsed the ACC Paradigm that defines the subluxation as follows:

Chiropractic is concerned with the preservation and restoration of health, and **focuses particular attention on the subluxation**. A subluxation is a complex of functional and/or structural and/or pathological articular changes that compromise neural integrity and may influence organ system function and general health. A subluxation is evaluated, diagnosed, and managed through the use of chiropractic procedures based on the best available rational and empirical evidence. (Emphasis added)

Even with those strong official policies, some have accused the ACA of being unwilling to include the word "subluxation" in federal legislation. I can assure you that there is no truth to that allegation, and here's the proof. The phrase "subluxation complex" was included in the veteran's bill (that became law) only because past ACA Chairman Kerwin Winkler, DC, went to then-Senate Majority Leader Tom Daschle and asked him to assist in getting the phrase added to the bill. No matter how many want to claim credit for the inclusion of the subluxation language, it happened only because the ACA used its political clout and made it happen. Actions speak louder than words, and that action speaks volumes about where the ACA stands on the subluxation issue!

When it comes to "putting your money where your mouth is" and actually taking action to protect the subluxation, the ACA is the only national membership organization in the profession that can make that claim. It was the ACA that filed a federal lawsuit against the Department of Health and Human Services so

physical therapists and MDs would not be allowed to provide subluxation care under Medicare, and it is the ACA that has worked around the clock to raise over \$6 million to legally ensure that only DCs are authorized to provide subluxation care. Again, actions speak louder than words.

The record is so clear! From subluxation being the core of chiropractic; to chiropractic remaining separate and distinct; to opposing drugs, surgery, mandatory vaccinations and the term "chiropractic medicine"; to fighting the federal government so medical providers cannot provide subluxation care - the ACA continues to admirably represent the "mainstream" of the chiropractic profession!

(Author's note: The opinions expressed in this article are solely those of the author and do not necessarily represent the opinions, policies or positions of the American Chiropractic Association.)

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