



CHIROPRACTIC ROUND-UP INITIATIVES AROUND THE WORLD

By Ronald M. Hendrickson
ICA Executive Director

CANADA

MANITOBA: *In a highly significant and uncharacteristic move, the Provincial Government of Manitoba has reversed an earlier decision that denied payment for chiropractic services to anyone under the age of nineteen. The reversal of the controversial policy signals an important victory for chiropractic in that the completely unsupportable and prejudicial restriction of reimbursement for younger patients has been rescinded.*

The across-the-board cuts in chiropractic reimbursements, however, still stand and new efforts are underway to



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seek a responsible solution to government concerns over health spending, including spending for chiropractic care. ICA members in Manitoba, led by ICA Board Member Dr. Daniel Schaeffer of Winnipeg, aggressively campaigned for a reversal of this policy decision with the full support of

the ICA and the chiropractic community worldwide.

The Information Services Division of the Manitoba government released the following notice on July 12th:

Manitoba Government Signs Long-Term Agreement with Chiropractors: Commission Created

The Manitoba government today announced it has reached an agreement with the Manitoba Chiropractors' Association that provides coverage to all Manitobans while achieving significant savings. Retroactive to July 1, 2002, Manitoba Health will specifically provide coverage for Manitobans under 19 years of age and will provide a benefit of \$8 per visit to a maximum of 12 visits during the current fiscal year. Effective April 1, 2003, the rate will increase to \$9 per chiropractic visit. The former rate was \$11.56 per visit. "We respect the role chiropractic care plays in the health care system," said Health Minister Dave Chomiak. "Our goal is to achieve a balance between providing coverage that provides Manitobans affordable and effective health choices and living within our fiscal boundaries." A three-person com-

mission will be struck to review the cost-effectiveness, the accessibility and the integration of chiropractic services. The commission will include one representative each of the Manitoba Chiropractors' Association and Manitoba Health, as well as a chairperson selected jointly. This commission will report in 2004. Chomiak said he was pleased the four-year agreement provides long-term stability for the Manitoba government, chiropractors and their patients. Manitoba remains one of the five provinces that provide chiropractic coverage. In the next two years under this agreement, the Manitoba government will achieve savings totaling \$3.8 million.

ICA members in Canada remain concerned over the reductions of reimbursement levels and recognize the need to make the strongest possible case for parity and expanded access as the new commission considers the various aspects of the cost-effectiveness of chiropractic care. "The battle for full inclusion and full compensation in Manitoba is far from over and the need to be proactive and determined will continue," said Dr. Daniel Schaeffer.

"Chiropractic's critics and competitors have mounted an active campaign on many fronts to restrict access to chiropractic and in fairness to our patients who rely on chiropractic care, we are obliged to do all in our power to see that justice for all Canadians in health care is done," he said.

Doctors of chiropractic and Manitoba chiropractic patients in the tens of thousands mounted a powerfully resonat-

ing campaign to restore the chiropractic cuts since the announcement of the new policy some months ago. "Our grass-roots campaign has had a major impact on the government and should stand as a very important lesson to other jurisdictions that such policies can and will be reversed if opposed with dignity and resolve," Dr. Schaeffer concluded.

For more information on the initial government decision, go to ICA's website at www.chiropractic.org.

SWITZERLAND

The *Association of Swiss Chiropractors (ASC)* will be holding their 2002 Annual Congress and Continuing Education Course September 19-22nd, in Burgenstock, Lucerne, Switzerland. This year's program includes presentations on pregnancy and the special needs of women patients, pediatric care, and whiplash and associated disorders. This year's event offers attendees an opportunity to learn in a beautiful setting. Advanced registration is preferable and will avoid an added on-site registration fee. For more information, contact the ASC by e-mail at scgasc@swissonline.co, see the ASC's website at www.chiropaktik-info.ch or call the ASC Secretariat Martha Mattmann at 031-372-031 (FAX) 031-372-2654.

United States

ARKANSAS

Two federal court decisions have closed the door on religious exemptions to otherwise mandatory vaccination laws for school-age children in Arkansas. On July 25th, the federal District Court for the Western District of Arkansas found that the state's religious exemption for immunizations law unconstitutional based on the language of the state statute that acknowledged only "recognized religions", thus denying "equal protection" to all religions. In a similar case, Arkansas Eastern District Federal Judge Susan Webber Wright ruled in mid-August that the Arkansas immunization statute was in violation of the Establishment Clause of the U.S. Constitution because it favored "recognized" religions.

Both cases are being appealed, and various remedies are being sought to continue the long-standing exemption for those whose beliefs prevent them from immunizing their children. Unless corrective action is obtained from another federal court, however, the state school system will have authority to exclude any unvaccinated children from public schools, forcing parents to either give their children the required shots or to home-school their children until a remedy can be found, either through the courts or through a new statute. ICA has long held, as a matter of official policy that all laws governing public mandatory medication must offer a means for those who object for reasons of conscience, philosophy or religion, to obtain an exemption.

For more information on this developing story, watch ICA's website at www.chiropractic.org, The National Vaccine Information Center website at www.909shot.com, or www.vaccinelaw.com.

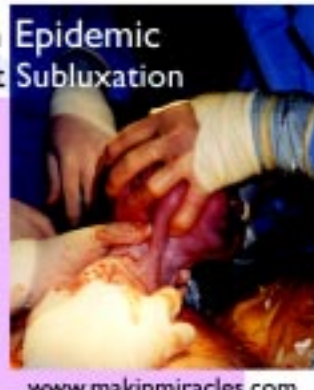
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