

**SUMMIT POLICY PAPER**

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the pertinent facts of chiropractic, as well as the aspirations of the profession. The Summit Working Group is comprised of volunteers from a representative cross-section of participating groups, including membership associations, colleges and research organizations.

"The goal of this project was to develop a strong, factual and persuasive advocacy resource that a united chiropractic profession can embrace and which presents a single, united front to national policy makers, both in Congress and in the Obama Administration," said Dr. Jerry DeGrado, immediate Past President of the Congress of Chiropractic State Associations (COCSA) who serves as Chair of the Summit Government Relations Working Group. "I believe we have accomplished this task with great effectiveness." The Washington, DC staff and members of the legislative committees of the American Chiropractic Association (ACA), the Association of Chiropractic Colleges (ACC), International Chiropractors Association (ICA) as well as state association members of the Congress of Chiropractic State Associations (COCSA) are already making maximum use of the Summit paper in their lobbying efforts.

The united front on behalf of the chiropractic profession which the Chiropractic Summit is forging is vital to chiropractic's effectiveness in the current national debate on healthcare reform. As stated in the Preface to the Summit paper:

*On behalf of a united chiropractic profession, this paper is offered as a means to substantively contribute to the national healthcare reform debate, to help foster timely action on key health reform principles, and to offer a new perspective on how a system in crisis can be redesigned into a system that works, in which the public has confidence and which the nation and its citizens can afford.*

The Summit paper provides policy makers, consumers and the media detailed information and recommendations on how chiropractic can best be utilized in a reformed national healthcare system. The paper outlines the unique strengths and applications of chiropractic as well as documents how chiropractic's clinical and cost effectiveness offers tangible ways and means of relieving significant pressure on the current failing system. Other sections of the paper address the growing demand for chiropractic services, chiropractic's extensive integration in current health care programs and systems, chiropractic education and how chiropractic can significantly help address the alarming shortage of healthcare professionals looming just over the horizon.

The Summit paper addresses not

only chiropractic's greater potential role and aspirations in health reform, but provides a well-articulated summary of what needs to be done system-wide to address the roots of the current failure. As a starting premise, the paper addresses the need for a fundamental paradigm shift, away from the current system of sick-care, to a true prevention and wellness model. "The leadership of the chiropractic profession is united in its belief that effective national health care reform will only achieve maximum benefit for the American people when coupled with a broad transformational paradigm shift to a forward thinking and progressive health system that focuses upon comprehensive wellness care, healthy lifestyle choices and disease prevention."

Noting that "Nothing less than a major paradigm shift will prevent a bigger, more expensive failure," the paper outlines concepts that effective healthcare reform must address, including:

- A shift to policies that not only promote but secure meaningful prevention and wellness goals.
- The mobilization and empowerment of individuals and families to play a new and serious quality control function in health care delivery, prevention, healthy lifestyle choices and sound, informed health care decision-making.
- Policies that promote competition and patient choice and affirm and expand patient freedoms to allow for full direct access to the providers and health care pathways of their choice.
- An end to arbitrary anti-competitive barriers, such as those that have historically limited patient access to doctors of chiropractic and other care pathways, which only serve to drive up costs, limit patient choice and erode the quality and timeliness of care by steering patients to more expensive hospital, surgical and pharmaceutical care.
- A system of patient-centered care in which best practices initiatives are encouraged, but which understands that each patient is not only different but also unique and in which decisions about the best course of care for each patient remains in the hands of the patient's health care team.
- Public policies that reward and encourage maximum cooperation and coordination between healthcare professionals and institutions in the best interests of timely, optimal patient care.
- A system-wide implementation of electronic medical records (EMR) systems in a patient-centered, flexible and user-friendly format that is as efficient and user-friendly to the private practitioner as to the major hospital

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or institution. Such systems should focus on patient care, not business outcomes.

- A profound new commitment to patient safety and to both provider and patient accountability. Providers must be challenged to reduce the errors that currently cost the system upwards of 17 percent of total expenditures.

The full text of the Summit paper is available on-line from your state or national chiropractic organization. This document may be printed and downloaded for lobbying purposes at no charge.

"The time to use this powerful tool is NOW!" said Dr. DeGrado. "The growing delay and confusion on healthcare reform filling today's headlines offers chiropractic an extended window of op-

portunity to educate policy makers and to serve the nation's best interests in the most difficult public policy challenge of the century. Every DC, student and chiropractic organization must play their part in forwarding the message this document carries to their personal Congressional representatives"

**Full text available from your state or national chiropractic organization.**

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