

REFORM—HENDRICKSON

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needed effort, to be completely forthright about what we as consumers are likely to be expected to pay out of pocket. The impression, which is being promoted by both the Congress and the President, that a reform program will largely relieve people of the personal burden of paying for health care, is simply incomplete at best and misleading at worst.

If ever there was a time for plain speaking, realistic dialogue and respect for the needs of citizens, this is it. In this debate the chiropractic profession is working hard, in an historic united effort, to secure sound, common sense policies that respect individual rights and also reflect the realities of a \$20 trillion national debt and a \$1.8 trillion current fiscal year federal deficit. In the landmark white paper on chiropractic's potential contribution to the national healthcare crisis developed by The Chiropractic Summit, *The Path to Change in the US Health Care System: The Chiropractic Perspective*, the crux of this matter is stated very well:

Clear distinctions must be made in any national reform plan between parameters of reimbursement, which must out of financial necessity be limited, and clinical necessity based on the unique needs of the patient, best clinical practices and the judgment of the attending provider. It is essential that program language in this area be forthright and not attempt to obscure program limitations. Beneficiaries are entitled to know where coverage and program payment are likely to end and personal responsibility might begin, to allow for personal financial planning. Such straightforward information will also press home the vital importance of personal responsibility for health, when individuals and families are given clear messages about their personal responsibilities for payment.

Can the currently fractured and intensely divided policy process produce meaningful reform? That remains to be seen, but it is clear that the rush to have a quick solution does not serve the nation or any of the players, either Congressional or Executive, very well. It would be far better to slow the process down, and to debate and refine each dimension as long as it takes to craft a lasting solution. If we do not, then this already year-long activity will become just the first of an unending series of reform phases that will continue until the process finally gets it right. As ICA's longtime Legal Counsel Mr. James D. Harrison used to often advise, "A wise man makes haste, slowly." Considering the multi-trillion dollar stakes and the deep and very genuine human concerns up in the air, this sounds like very good advice.

RONALD M. HENDRICKSON has been active in chiropractic public policy issues for nearly 30 years, serving ICA in a number of capacities including Legislative Director and Executive Director. Prior to coming to ICA he served in both the executive branch of the federal government under President Jimmy Carter and in the legislative branch on the staffs of Senator Allen Ellender of Louisiana and Senator Eugene McCarty of Minnesota. He holds graduate degrees in economics from the London School of Economics and in political science from Johns Hopkins University. Mr. Hendrickson currently serves as ICA's Deputy Executive Director of Membership and Government Affairs.

Student ICA Leaders Forge New Advocacy Skills in Washington, D.C.

Student ICA delegations from chiropractic colleges across the country gathered in Washington, D.C. on May 14-16 for a series of leadership workshops and in-person lobbying experiences in conjunction with the Chiropractic Summit V proceedings and the ICA Annual Meetings.

ICA had relinquished its normal annual legislative day proceedings to host the Chiropractic Summit, a growing consortium of chiropractic associations, organizations, and businesses convening in a dedicated ef-

fort for collective problem-solving on health care reform and related issues. Taking advantage of the historic opportunity for participation as observers to the Summit process, students from many different colleges came to Washington to share in an intensive series of presentations by Members of Congress, Senators, and other national policymakers, as well as from leaders in chiropractic. Student leaders were able to gain new insights from these historic discussions on health care policy and administration and the profound impact the

current health reform debate will have on their future patients and practices.

"ICA's student leaders represent a powerful and exciting new addition to the ranks of chiropractic's activists and workers and we are very proud of them," said ICA President Dr. Gary L. Walsemann. "They recognize that the profound changes taking shape in health care reform demand that they personally assume a leadership role in influencing legislation and other public policy aspects to secure chiropractic's role in national health care. The SICA delegations have stepped forward with great clarity and commitment at this time of crisis in our profession and their help will continue to be needed as new national policies are crafted."

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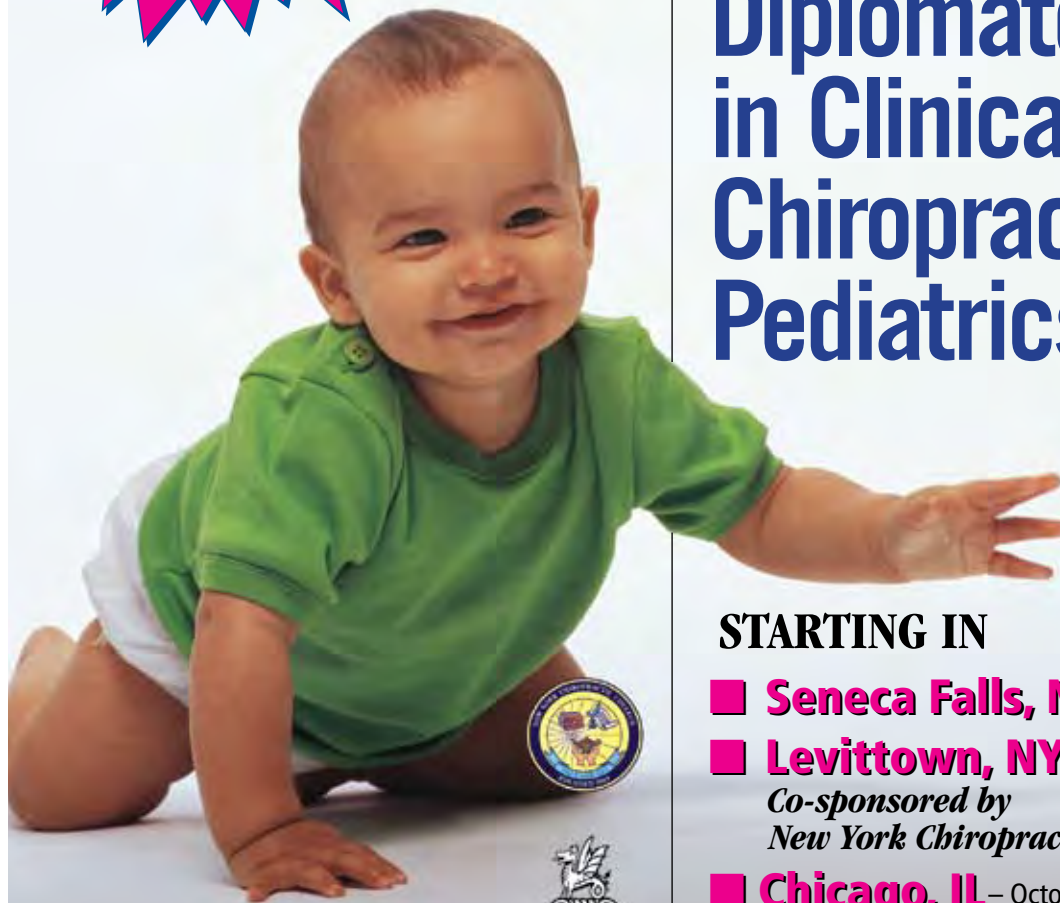
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