

COMMENTARY— HENDRICKSON

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proach to health chiropractic provides meets both the needs of the elderly, and does so on a basis that society can afford. The utility and appropriateness of chiropractic for the elderly can best be summed up in the words of The Hon. Barbara Kennelly, President of the National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare: "Chiropractic offers seniors the two things they value the most; help in maintaining their mobility and, clarity of mind, because chiropractic is a drugless science. Chiropractic is an important part of Medicare and the drug-free nature of what you do is so important when the average Medicare beneficiary spends \$200 or more a month on prescription drugs."

Implications for Chiropractic

In addition to the vast opportunities

to step into the provider gap to address the health needs of the aging population, what are the other implications for the chiropractic profession of the pending health provider shortage? Should the chiropractic colleges mount a major recruitment offensive to build the student population? Should changes to the curriculum in chiropractic colleges be made to strengthen the geriatric skills needed to meet the needs and demands of the segment of the population? I know that those types of discussions are underway within the chiropractic educational community and rightfully so. I expect that we will see some changes and hopefully, more doctors of chiropractic in the pipeline.

Regarding the individual doctor in private practice, there are some factors that require attention, if not now, in the months and years ahead. Those include associates and trained support staff, especially chiropractic assistants and x-ray technicians. Other professions will be competing for support staff, and I believe quite heavily for

those same types of personnel. It is prudent to start looking now for staff resources, such as technical colleges where x-ray techs are trained, and to develop a 5, 10 and 15 year staffing plan so that you have a better idea of what your needs might be. Also, many practices are looking to technological means, mostly computer-based, to reduce the number of personnel needed to efficiently run the practice. This is not a bad idea either.

Practices that are looking to recruit associate or partner doctors of chiropractic will need to become more forward-looking and a bit more sophisticated, looking to placement resources such as the new ICA ChiroJobs career center now available on-line at <http://www.chiropractic.org/index.php?p=chirojobs/main>. ICA's new interactive job board for the profession is an easy-to-use and highly targeted resource for online employment connections for the entire chiropractic profession.

The same proactive thinking and planning applies to new graduates and DCs

looking to make a location or employment change.

With its focus on serving over 50,000 practitioners, students, chiropractic assistants, educators and lay persons worldwide, ChiroJobs will provide both potential employers and those looking for positions with advanced career search features:

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The future has a lot of good things in store for chiropractic, despite the uncertainty of how, or if, there will be any substantial national health reform, and in spite of the fact that forward looking thinking, planning, proactive action steps and all the work they involve will become the order of the day. Chiropractic's value will shine through, and the nation should be grateful that there is such a powerful resource to turn to in this time of crisis. In this time of transition, ICA will be working hard to keep you informed, to offer resources, such as its new career center and strategies, and to remind you that what you do as a doctor of chiropractic is a vital service, of profound importance to millions, and a science, art, philosophy and practice whose time has come. But, we still have to do the work.

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