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MEDICARE DEMO PROJECT

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end on March 31, 2007, unless extended by Congress. An interim report is due to be submitted to Congress in the Spring of 2008, with a final analysis to be provided to the Congress before the end of 2009.

"ICA appreciates the opportunity to provide input on behalf of participating doctors because of the potential good or harm this study is capable of doing to the chiropractic profession," said ICA Medicare Committee Chair Dr. Michael Hulsebus. ICA has offered its assistance to the analysts in collecting data on the project and has undertaken a survey of ICA members in the demonstration areas. ICA has also offered to collect data from any doctor of chiropractic involved in the project and invites members and non-members alike to submit any comments, concerns and observations on the project by e-mail to chiro@chiropractic.org, or by US mail to: Medicare Project Analysis, International Chiropractors Association, 1110 North Glebe Road, Suite 650, Arlington, VA 22201.

Information from doctors in the field on all aspects of this project is important, and DCs are asked to provide information on their experiences with the project including but not limited to areas such as:

- What motivated you to participate or not participate in the demonstration program?
- The clarity and detail of information provided by your Medicare carrier about the details of the project
- The degree to which carriers were prepared to conduct the project
- Whether there were inconsistencies in the various waves of information distributed by carriers about the project
- Whether claims for non-adjustment services were processed appropriately and how timely was the receipt of payments for those services
- Whether reimbursements for non-adjustive services were adequate and consistent with reimbursements from other third-party carriers for

similar services.

All data collected by ICA will be forwarded without edit to the program analysis team.

ICA did not support the legislation authorizing the Medicare demonstration project because of concerns that such projects can only delay in securing permanent reforms and because of language in the legislation that stipulated that the project must be "budget neutral." CMS has defined the budget neutral concept to mean that, "Aggregate Medicare provider payments may not exceed amount that would have been paid in absence of demonstration. If demonstration is not found to be cost neutral (based on its estimated impact on Medicare Part A and Part B costs), CMS will recoup excess costs via payments made to all Medicare chiropractic service providers."

CMS indicated that such excess costs would likely be deducted from Medicare fee schedules in calendar years 2010 and 2011. "ICA continues to hold that such a funding mechanism, where the costs of this project will come out of the pockets of DCs providing adjustive care is simply ridiculous and clearly not in the best interests of the profession," said Dr. Hulsebus. ICA believes that any Medicare expansion

initiative should focus on enhancing the quality and availability of needed patient care and include program-wide coverage for x-rays and exams.

While ICA did not support the legislation authorizing the project, ICA is committed to assisting analysts in developing a complete, fair and objective review of the demonstration project in order to protect the profession and Medicare patients alike from any skewing or misrepresentation of the project data. "ICA believes the Brandeis University team is also dedicated to a fair review of the program and we look forward to a productive engagement with them in the analysis process," said Dr. Hulsebus.

More information on this project can be obtained from CMS via the Internet at: <http://www.cms.hhs.gov/DemoProjectsEvalRpts/MD/itemdetail.asp?filterType=none&filterByDID=-99&sortByDID=3&sortOrder=ascending&itemID=CMS024103>.

VISIT ICA'S WEBSITE:
www.chiropractic.org

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active, courageous and insightful actions on the part of so many organizations and individual leaders to preserve the practice rights of the doctor of chiropractic and defend the rights of patients against the kind of political opinion the CCGPP appears to have developed.

ICA withdrew from participation in the CCGPP out of a decided lack of confidence in the direction of the organization following the profession-wide rejection of the *Mercy Report*, a position reaffirmed by the ICA Board on more than a dozen occasions over many years.

HOPEFUL SIGNS: I just returned from a CCE Task Force meeting held in Scottsdale, Arizona. The purpose of

the group was to review and rewrite the CCE Guidelines and Standards to be reviewed by their Board of Directors. Based on past experiences, I was not quite sure what to expect when I entered the room, not having met many of those individuals invited to participate.

As the day progressed it was clear to me that CCE is making an effort to include all aspects of the profession in this process. There were representatives from the entire spectrum of chiropractic. I feel that this is a positive step forward for the CCE and I am encouraged by their efforts at inclusion in this process. Hopefully, this positive trend will continue, but as I have said before, time will tell.

COORDINATION IS NOT A PASSIVE FUNCTION:

So what does Principle No. 32 have to do with you? ICA is leading the way in fulfilling this principle by acting to remove interference, in the form of the CCGPP initiative and other dangerous interferences, with the effective functioning of chiropractic. Coordination begins with correcting the Subluxation so there is "harmonious action of all parts of the organism [Chiropractic], in fulfilling their offices and purposes."

Do not doubt for a minute that this all can take place without your participation. You can act, or be acted upon, and ICA needs your help to defend the freedoms we need to serve our patients. What is the price of freedom? President Thomas Jefferson summed it up for all times, "The price of freedom is eternal vigilance." This is ICA's role, and you need to play your part.

If you are not a member of the ICA, why not? We are the only nationally recognized association in which you, as a member, have a voice in who represents you at every level, from local representatives to President. Join the team dedicated to the future and principles of Chiropractic established by our founder Dr. BJ Palmer 80 years ago.

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