



COMMENTARY

COCSA in Baltimore: Chiropractic Unity on Display

by Stephen Welsh, D.C.

The Congress of Chiropractic State Associations (COCSA) brought together representatives of the Council on Chiropractic Guidelines and Practice Parameters (CCGPP) and delegates from nearly all 50 state chiropractic associations in an historic meeting in Baltimore. The outcome demonstrated that unity, consensus and compromise can work in our profession when open and honest communication exists.

"The organizations comprising the membership of COCSA cannot support the current draft of the CCGPP low back document, and agree that it should not be published as distributed for review." This was the opening line of the motion unanimously passed by the voting delegates of 50 state associations at the Annual COCSA Convention in Baltimore. It was followed by a series of recommendations which represented a consensus view of all the member state associations. It is extremely difficult to express the significance of what was achieved that weekend. You had to be

there to truly appreciate the unity of the state associations as well as the willingness of the CCGPP to listen.

On Friday morning, it had become apparent that the CCGPP and its Research Commission chairman had come to not just present, but to also listen and to be responsive to the concerns of the profession. A great weight was lifted from the shoulders of the COCSA state delegates when Dr. Triano announced that they (CCGPP) would find a way to circulate another draft of Chapter 1 prior to publication. Commitments were made to incorporate the comments received from draft 1, to add elements of the Clinical Compass concept to the next draft, and resubmit a modified draft for consideration by all stakeholders.

Later that day, following the two days of intense dialogue, the CCGPP board passed two motions which addressed concerns expressed during the forum. The principal message was that "Within the remaining comment and response period for the low back and

related leg symptoms draft, the edited introduction and summary of low back draft conclusions and tables will be re-submitted to stakeholders for comment on the "user-friendly" status, format and for consideration of responses to stakeholder comments." (See full text of the CCGPP motions on page 7)

These motions were read to the assembled COCSA delegates during their annual business meeting on Saturday afternoon. Later in that meeting a comprehensive COCSA motion, developed by a group of state delegates and with the support of the COCSA executive committee, was presented to the full assembly for its consideration. (see full text of the COCSA motion on page 1). This resolution was approved unanimously, bringing to a conclusion an historic event in the history of COCSA, the state associations and the chiropractic profession in the United States. The entire COCSA organization and staff should be commended for the level of professionalism demonstrated in facilitating an open and honest dialogue that has been long overdue.

The controversy surrounding the potential impact of the premature publication of the Low Back Draft seemed to unify our profession in a manner not seen for some time. The state association delegates, representing the voices of all chiropractors, came together in a groundswell of unity, and delivered a message that could not be ignored. It appears that they were heard.

Many months ago the ICA, after a comprehensive review of the initial draft of Chapter 1 of the proposed chiropractic "Best Practices" document, submitted its comments to the CCGPP, as re-

quested, and also publicly called for a rejection of the low back chapter (*ICA Choice*, Vol. 5 No. 4, August 2006).

During the ensuing several months, a majority of state chiropractic associations seemed to have come to similar conclusions and expressed similar concerns regarding the first draft. The ICA was obviously not alone in its critical assessment, nor was it alone in its call for rejection.

Contrary to many of the press releases that misrepresented what actually did happen in Baltimore, I offer the following observations and commentary:

1. The COCSA member associations did in fact pass a resolution declaring no support for the 1st draft as submitted for review. (see COCSA motion)
2. The COCSA member associations did in fact express support for the development of a "Clinical Compass" as described in the presentation made by CCGPP.
3. The COCSA member associations in essence rejected the document as previously released but accepted the process as worth continuing and made recommendations for improving the document and the process.
4. The CCGPP in essence agreed to withdraw the current draft and release a new draft which would at a minimum include revisions incorporating suggestions received during the first comment period. A commitment was also made to rewrite the document with the intention of

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