



By Randy Tate
ICA Chief Legislative Strategist

Chiropractic's profile continues to grow on Capitol Hill thanks to efforts like ICA's 2002 Legislative Work Day on May 16th. DCs from around the United States made their presence felt through individual visits, important presentations to key Members of both Houses and the historic hearing before the Small Business Committee chaired by one of chiropractic's strongest allies in the House, The Hon. Don Manzullo. These activities are just part of a vital continuum, however, and every DC and chiropractic student in the US, as well as concerned chiropractic patients need to redouble their ongoing efforts to be known and to be considered by legislators at all levels when health care policy is made.



Randy Tate

What gives chiropractic its power in Washington is the regular, consistent and personal communication from the grass roots, on every issue of concern to the DC and patient alike. The stream of letters and e-mails lets them know you are out there and need to be taken seriously. This is the key. Chiropractic has grown and enough citizens care about chiropractic issues, such as access and reimbursement, to make chiropractic a potentially potent force. I am proud to be a part of ICA's operations aimed at making sure that every Member of Congress and every member of their staff know about chiropractic and, more importantly, that Americans by the millions are looking to them for fairness in health care policies.

In the last session of the current Congress, a major veterans initiative was passed. It came on the heels of a powerful push from the House Committee on Veterans Affairs, chaired by chiropractic supporter The Hon. Chris Smith (R-NJ), and also served by Ranking Minority Member, The Hon. Lane Evans (D-IL), another long-time and dependable chiropractic advocate. What brought these two leaders to such determined bi-partisan support for a chiropractic bill? You did. Because of the year-in, year-out stream of letters and communications from their districts, your individual support in their political efforts, and through their awareness of your presence, a critical mass was reached in their thinking that motivated them to act, and act with determination, to see the chiropractic veterans initiative through to a successful passage.

My appreciation for ICA's political sensitivity has grown as I have participated in the direct lobbying for the veterans bill as well as watched the determined efforts of ICA members throughout the nation at work educating their federal legislators. I was particularly impressed at the way ICA did not stop their interaction on the veterans issue after it passed but went to extraordinary lengths to acknowledge and thank

those who made it possible, in particular Mr. Smith and Mr. Evans. This demonstrates a principle we all need to embrace in the legislative process, continuity of contact based on loyal support.

Every chiropractor in the US has an obligation to be a part of the profession's legislative battles for recognition, inclusion and respect in the public policy process. Far too few make it a regular part of their professional duties and we must be frank in recognizing

that chiropractic's legislative success depends far more on communications from the grass roots than it does on the activities or skills of any Washington insider. I also want to remind you that it is your money the Congress spends each year. You pay taxes in the millions on your chiropractic earnings. Wouldn't it be a great feeling to know every April 15th your taxes are going to be put to work funding chiropractic benefits in every federal program?

The case in point is the potential for significant new chiropractic benefits in the Medicare program. ICA has been promoting a carefully drafted bill, H.R. 2284, sponsored by Rep. John Lewis (D-GA), and this bill has been the main focus of ICA's political mobilization efforts now that the veterans' bill has passed. H.R. 2284 would mandate payment for chiropractic examinations and x-rays in both Medicare and Medicaid programs, as well as establish once and

for all that only doctors of chiropractic are to be reimbursed for correcting subluxations under Medicare.

You need to act now!

Have you written to your Member of Congress? Have you asked your patients to write? Have you made an appointment to speak with your House Member or have you met with their health staff person to explain why chiropractic patients need and deserve added benefits in Medicare? Have you invited your Member of Congress to become a patient in your office so they can have a first-hand experience with the unique benefits chiropractic brings to the health care equation?

Medicare reform is especially timely because the Congress is considering a major new prescription drug benefit for seniors that will add billions to the Medi-

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