

Focus Group Research Project To Provide Useful Data on Consumer's Health Care Decision-Making

As part of its on-going strategic planning effort on behalf of the organization and the chiropractic profession at large, ICA's Executive Committee has approved a major new consumer research project to start in April, centered around a series of in-depth consumer focus groups. Organized in conjunction with Washington D.C. area universities, the consumer research project will seek to gather new and useful data on consumer thinking about health and health care decision-making processes, spending priorities, and levels of information and attitudes about health, healthcare delivery and chiropractic. Over a period of months, diverse consumer panels from across the nation will provide insight and important perspectives on the state of consumer thinking.

ICA has been fortunate to secure the services of researcher and educator, Yvonne G. Villanueva-Russell, PhD. Dr. Villanueva-Russell holds her doctorate in health care sociology from the University of Missouri and is well-versed in all aspects of the chiropractic profession having done her dissertation on chiropractic and the health care marketplace. She will direct the data collection

process and oversee the analysis of the information collected in this historic undertaking.

ICA has already had the benefit of a comprehensive review of focus group literature and has prepared a participant questionnaire that will be standard among all groups. This data gathering process is only the foundation, however, for an intensive period of interaction in an in-person setting where a series of moderators will seek to draw out information on key areas of interest in the discussion process.

Chiropractic organizations and individual practitioners alike will be able to benefit from the information gathered through this unique process. Presently little data is available on consumer attitudes about chiropractic and ICA sees this as an urgent frontier if chiropractic is going to be able to effectively compete in today's marketplace. A special effort will be made to define where consumers look for health care information, what elements go into selecting a health care professional, and how consumer value systems interpret the role of both chiropractic and standard medical care.

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Debate on FCLB's "PACE" Proposal Continues – ICA Study Group Concerned Over Increased Costs for DCs

A special ICA Study Group appointed by ICA President Dr. D.D. Humber has undertaken a comprehensive examination of the Federation of Chiropractic Licensing Board's so-called "PACE" proposal under which the FCLB would assume a dominant role in chiropractic relicensure and continuing education programs.

The initial findings by the group, chaired by Dr. Gary Walsemann of New Hampshire and comprised of nearly 12 experienced college administrators, postgraduate instructors and state board members, show many points of real concern. The initiative will, at a minimum, add approximately \$2.5 million to the cost of chiropractic postgraduate education annually, all of which will be passed on to the doctor in the field. The economic price will be especially painful to the chiropractic colleges, each one of which will be obliged to pay out approximately \$150,000 annually.

The ICA investigation of the PACE concept began over a year ago and, in addition to a detailed section by section review of the proposal, the Study Group is conducting surveys of state boards, colleges and state associations to determine the level of understanding of this far-reaching proposal and asking for statements for the record on how those interested parties stand on various aspects of the proposal. The group also will be asking for direct discussions with FCLB representatives in order to gain

the clearest possible understating of the proposal.

"This proposal appears to represent a completely unwarranted tax on doctors in practice, not to mention another layer of bureaucratic and financial demands on educators and educational institutions," said Dr. Walsemann. "The entrepreneurial aspects of the initiative in the interests of the FCLB should not be obscured or minimized by anybody considering this proposal. In this evaluation process, it is vital to consider whether the economic costs to the profession, levied in the form of obligatory added costs for continuing education, to the sole benefit of the FCLB, are in the profession's best interests."

The Study Group is particularly concerned over the potential restrictions and limitations to the free exchange of ideas inherent in the proposed approval process. As well, the issue of examinations following seminars is especially problematic for the doctor in the field both because of the cost and because of the lack of any evidence to indicate that such a burden adds anything of substance to the educational experience.

The Group is also looking carefully at the representations of the FCLB regarding PACE and has found a number of major issues of concern. "There are elements in the marketing of the "PACE" proposal that have raised genu-

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