



## Service, the Best Measure of True Value!

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In this complex and uncertain economy, we doctors of chiropractic have had to focus our attention on every aspect of our practice operations. With an eye on the bottom line and out of concern for a shrinking economy, we search for value and cost-effectiveness in every purchase we make. This is sound thinking. Over the past years, however, there has been a less than a positive mood in the service world. Often we have had to fight even for the



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things we thought we paid for and which, one might expect, should be delivered by vendors as a matter of course. The issue is service. The powerful, positive, non-economic impact on patients and clients of a service-oriented practice can take on a value that exceeds any monetary measure. Your patients know this. So do we at **ChiroSecure**.

The value of service is very real. Recently I was in an upscale health food store and my wife decided to purchase some skin care lotion which she had purchased many times before. When she went to the register to check out,

the cashier said, "You know you can bring this back and refill it." We asked if it was worth it in terms of convenience and savings. The cashier said that she didn't exactly know. But she stopped what she was doing, went to the lotions' section to compare the refill price with a new purchase. When she returned and told us that the savings was more than 30%, we were pleasantly surprised. On the way out, my wife said "WOW, she made me want to come back and shop here more often". Why? Simply put, the reason was service.

We have all had this kind of experience. Have you ever gone to a top-notch restaurant in anticipation of a fine dining experience only to leave disappointed because the wait staff were rude, slow or seemed not to care? You start to question your decision in picking that restaurant, — the menu prices, the quality of food, the presentation, and before you know it you are making that experience the topic of your conversation over the next week, if for no other reason than to justify the fact that you did not get your money's worth. The outcome is simple. You decide not to return to that restaurant and, directly or indirectly, influence all of your acquaintances to do the same. On the other hand, you can name stores or restaurants that you return to and rec-

ommend to your friends because what you remember most about them is their courteous, and or prompt, friendly service.

What does this have to do with chiropractic? What does this have to do with malpractice insurance? Everything! Years ago, Dr. Joe Flesia, Dr. Guy Riekeman, Mr. Bill Esteb and others shared the thought that it is essential for anyone wanting to be successful to go above and beyond, to exceed people's expectations. Simply meeting an expectation will allow someone to be ambivalent about you or your service. Worse, when you do not even meet their expectation, they will leave your business and will let everyone know about it.

How do you surpass your own patients' expectations? When a new patient walks into your office for the first time, does your front desk person stop what he or she is doing, offer eye contact and a warm smile as they shake the patient's hand and welcome them with sincere enthusiasm?

What about you, doctor? When you are with your patient, can you honestly say that you create an awesome experience through your relationship with each and every patient you adjust? Do you become totally focused on that patient and your connection with them or are you still thinking about the last phone call you were on, or the patient that was complaining, or maybe even the bills you opened that morning? It seems so simple and perhaps it is. The easiest way to think about this is by being a patient yourself. How would you want to be taken care of? Where would you want your doctor's focus and attention to be?

Over the past couple of years, since I have taken over the day-to-day operations of the **ChiroSecure** Malpractice Program, I have had to revisit these lessons for myself. The harsh realities of the marketplace come crashing in when you see competitors using every sort of weapon and aspersion against others to get people to buy their product

over others. This kind of slash and burn marketing is, I believe, a disservice to the customer because it reveals a deep-down cynicism and maybe even contempt for the customer. This approach to people is likely to have major implications for the buyer in the way they might be treated once there are issues that cut against the vendor's self-interest.

At one point early on I was caught up in the distortions about **ChiroSecure** being circulated by competitors as a central part of their marketing strategy. I felt I had an obligation to set the record straight even if it wasn't necessary. Then came a transition for me. I realized that even though my service is now insurance, not chiropractic adjustments, this is my practice and all the doctors I speak to are my patients. It was time to take the high road and make sure I treated each person as I wanted to be treated. It didn't matter anymore if they did or did not sign up with our program. If I could not offer better coverage and/or better pricing to a doctor, I would still consult with them on their coverage and allow them to know I cared enough about them to be honest. If things change, they are always welcome to come back to **ChiroSecure**. It is my goal, and my hope, that I leave them with the distinct knowledge that they are not only welcome to get our coverage, but they are wanted.

Ever since I made this conscious decision to shift my thinking everything has changed for me. I do not feel the stress of selling to my peers any longer. Instead I get to educate and allow them to make their own informed choices. Lately, I have had a number of doctors call me for information and a quote. They have called back to comment that they never realized that the chiropractic insurance business was so cut throat. When I asked what they meant by that, they explained that when they called some of our competitors for quotes, they were bombarded with negative stories about all the other companies including us. That was why they came back. They were comfortable with my having taken the time to assist them and guide them without even discussing any other company.

Our **ChiroSecure** program is growing every day with satisfied doctors who are referring many others due to the exceeded expectations they experience. We are growing because our mission is SERVICE! ICA is a democratic, not-for-profit organization with a 76-year history of accomplishment, commitment and service to members. The **ChiroSecure** program is part of the ICA and will continue to lead the way with service as its primary goal.

This should be a lesson for all of us. Whether it is insurance, restaurants, or your chiropractic practice, people are attracted to good service. All the hype and marketing without the service to back it up is just another expensive restaurant with lousy service.

I want to thank all of our insureds and supporters for helping our program become such a success and I hope we will continue to be a role model. When we all take the high road, ultimately CHIROPRACTIC wins!

**STUART HOFFMAN, D.C.** is president of ChiroSecure, ICA's malpractice insurance program. This program reflects ICA's subluxation philosophy and supports the values and activities of ICA. To get a quote or for more information call Dr. Hoffman TOLL-FREE 1-866-802-4476 Ext 11 or visit [chirosecureonline.com](http://chirosecureonline.com)

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