

Industrial Consulting Is Natural for Chiropractic

By Scott W. Donkin, D.C.



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The notion of specialization within the chiropractic profession is not foreign or revolutionary. We are, in fact, already specialists within the general health-care delivery system. We are considered to be primary, portal of entry

SUMMARY: Industrial consulting is a natural role for chiropractors to undertake. The specialist in this area can provide a great service to individual patients by helping to eliminate conditions or practices that lead to physical problems.

health-care professionals, specializing in the conservative management and prevention of neuromusculoskeletal disorders as this applies to our definition and legal scope of practice. Our profession exists and now flourishes because of need and results. The real issue of specialization within our profession is if a specialty exists within the framework of the definition of chiropractic philosophy and practice.

The following is an excerpted definition of chiropractic from the ACA Master Plan.

The ACA Master Plan, ratified by the House of Delegates in June 1964 (amended June 1979), will govern future policies of ACA, as quoted:

'With regard to the chiropractic principle, it shall be stated in the following terms:

'Chiropractic is based on the premise that the relationship between structure and function in the human body is a significant health factor and that such relationships between the spinal column and the nervous system are the most significant, since the normal transmission and expression of nerve

energy are essential to the restoration and maintenance of health.'

'Chiropractic shall be described in accordance with the foregoing principles as follows:

'Chiropractic is a branch of the healing arts which is concerned with human health and disease processes. Doctors of chiropractic are physicians who consider man as an integrated being, but give special attention to spinal mechanics, musculoskeletal, neurological, vascular, nutritional, and environmental relationships.'

'The practice and procedures which may be employed by doctors of chiropractic are based on the academic and clinical training received in and through accredited chiropractic colleges. These shall include, but are not limited to, the use of diagnostics and therapeutics. Such procedures specifically include the adjustment and manipulation of the articulations and adjacent tissues of the human body, particularly of the spinal column. Included is the treatment of intersegmental disorders for alleviation of related functional disorders. Pa-

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tient care is conducted with due regard for environmental, nutritional, and psychotherapeutic factors as well as first aid, hygiene, sanitation, rehabilitation, and physiological therapeutic procedures designed to assist in the restoration and maintenance of neurological integrity and homeostatic balance.'

'Since the practice of chiropractic is regulated in all states, Puerto Rico, nine provinces in Canada, and a number of foreign countries, the present scope of practice is necessarily determined locally by existing statutory enactment and judicial determination in the separate jurisdictions.' "

The cause of professional specialization is born of desire and need. An environment conducive to specialization within a maturing profession such as chiropractic is created when:

1) The body of information that doctors of chiropractic are responsible for grows beyond the capabilities of the individual to fully incorporate into a solo practice.

2) A need exists in the profession or the people it serves that is not being met.

3) A doctor of chiropractic or chiropractic assistant possesses special talents, interest and opportunities that would benefit his patients, colleagues and the profession.

Industrial consulting fits well within the framework of the chiropractic definition and the qualifications for specialization. The

ACA definition specifically states that while we consider man as an integrated being, we give special consideration to spinal mechanics, as well as musculoskeletal and environmental relationships. Patient care is conducted with due regard for environmental factors and rehabilitative procedures designed to assist in the restoration and maintenance of neurological integrity and homeostatic balance.

For me, it therefore became quite natural with my chiropractic training to explore environmental factors in the form of my patients' workplaces and determine how their postures and movements affected their health and my treatments. My disturbing observations of typical manual labor and sedentary labor activities explained why many patients would experience frequent exacerbations and frustrating results from what were in fact appropriate chiropractic treatments. There are few things more frustrating in our practice than successfully treating a worker's compensation case only to send them back to a poor work station and be accused of ineffective or prolonged treatment due to recurring strain. You have also probably experienced the dilemma of treating a work injury that should never have happened because the individual was not physically capable of performing the job for which he or she was hired.

Additional treatment nightmares occur when a patient is

treated for a personal injury, but conditions exist within their workplace that confound your therapeutic procedures.

The chiropractic consulting specialty presents a variety of opportunities which include:

- 1) Preplacement screening
- 2) On-site workplace evaluations for both industrial and office environments
- 3) Employer and worker training
- 4) Worker injury examination, treatment and rehabilitation
- 5) Consultation with other health-care and human resource personnel

Industrial consulting becomes a collective interdisciplinary effort and the doctor of chiropractic is an integral part of this team. While in pursuit of service through industrial consulting, we reach many more people than we would have had we not decided to become involved. This endeavor expands the vision of chiropractic.

Carefully consider two more factors. You will be the most successful and satisfied in a specialty when your desires and talents match the unique requirements of the specialty. The negative side of chiropractic specialization occurs when an individual becomes so entrenched in a specialty that he or she loses sight of the chiropractic definition and the fact that we consider people to be integrated beings and not the sum of their parts. Examine the chiropractic principle, definition and your professional direction frequently. ■