Strength in diversity: professional and legislative opportunities in primary care by the recognition, defining and promotion of the licensure of chiropractic medical education, competencies and skills

To the Editor:

Congratulations on an excellent December 2002 issue. The six articles on primary care merit thoughtful study. In that vein, a statement in Dr. Reiner Kremer's article (1) requires scrutiny. The author states, "The consumer wants one-stop shopping, ideally one primary-care physician who is "drugless" philosophically, but has access to prescriptive medications when medically necessary and reasonable."

With respect, how is it possible for a doctor to be drugless philosophically while prescribing drugs? Isn't this like being "a little bit pregnant?"

What is the prevailing view within the chiropractic profession? In 1996, the Association of Chiropractic Colleges (ACC) drafted a position paper on chiropractic scope and practice. This document stated:

"Chiropractic is concerned with the preservation and restoration of health, and focuses particular attention on the subluxation."

"The practice of chiropractic includes: establishing a diagnosis, facilitating neurological and biomechanical integrity through appropriate chiropractic case management and promoting health."

"Chiropractic is a health care discipline which emphasizes the inherent recuperative power of the body to heal itself without the use of drugs or surgery."

If the ACC position paper truly represents the consensus of the profession, we should ask ourselves who are the fringe elements within chiropractic. When individuals maintain that chiropractors do not diagnose, they obviously do not represent the mainstream within our profession. Likewise, when individuals advocate the addition of drugs to our scope of practice, they also comprise a fringe element that is not representative of the core values of our profession.

With all the documented hazards associated with pharmaceutical intervention, one wonders why some chiropractors want prescription rights. Do drugs magically become less toxic when

administered by a chiropractor who is 'drugless philosophical'? Society doesn't need yet another category of medical provider to dispense drugs. Rather, the public desperately needs health care professionals who are skilled at the prevention of chronic degenerative disease, before it has progressed to the point where crisis medical intervention is required. Chiropractors can fill this niche, and this does not require or benefit from prescription rights.

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REFERENCES

1. Kremer RG. Strength in diversity: professional and legislative opportunities in primary care by the recognition, defining and promotion of the licensure of chiropractic medical education, competencies and skills. *J Chiropr Med* 2002;1:139-148.

In Response:

While on one hand it is true that "society does not need another medical provider to dispense prescription drugs", society DOES NEED the rational and reasonable use of prescription drugs. Is a drug free world reality or an illusion? Who better to promote the reasonable and rational use of prescription medications and alternatives than the duly trained doctor of chiropractic? While chiropractic has generally had an anti-drug position, it legally can do little to modify or adjust the patient's prescription medications. For to have the ability to remove someone from a particular medication, one must have the statutory authority to be able to prescribe the medication to begin with. It is my opinion that there has been rampant professional dishonesty in this area, and this must be revisited with clinical and intellectual honesty and integrity.

Absolutes are not part of the current reality in the world. If we wish to serve our patients in a holistic manner, then is an area that we may at least consider obtaining responsibility for. As momentum is gained for making certain nutritional products "drug products", only available by prescription, will we continue to maintain our "drugless" position and watch the reality of an ever-changing world pass by?

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