

TALKING POINTS

NATIONAL HEALTH CARE REFORM

A PARADIGM SHIFT IS NEEDED:

A broad transformational change – a *paradigm shift*—is needed, away from our current health delivery system which is largely oriented to provide care for those who have already become seriously ill, and toward a more progressive system that focuses primarily on comprehensive wellness care and disease prevention.

Given the high cost of providing health care, the undeniably high incidence of preventable disease and America's rapidly aging population -- **it is imperative that we move toward a "wellness" model of care as the primary and favored model of health care delivery, as rapidly as possible.** To do this, there must be much more focus on conservative approaches, patient involvement in their care and the routine and persistent teaching of healthy habits, activities and life styles by all health care providers. Doctors of chiropractic are well prepared to offer this care.

WHAT CONGRESS SHOULD DO:

Members of Congress and Obama Administration officials should seek to fully integrate chiropractic care into a delivery system that is newly oriented toward the delivery of wellness care, with a goal of fully utilizing the chiropractic profession's conservative physician-level providers to **MAXIMIZE THIS NATION'S FULL HEALTH POTENTIAL.** Services delivered by doctors of chiropractic are an **ESSENTIAL** component of the nation's health delivery system and can help to produce the following positive results:

- Increase the quality of health care offered;
- Improve patient outcomes and levels of patient satisfaction;
- Expand patient treatment options and choice of provider;
- Improve the overall health status and quality of life of the public by providing a well established, effective, holistic wellness approach to patient care;
- Reduce medical errors and treatment risk by reducing the need for invasive procedures, hospital events and excessive use of pain medications and many overly prescribed pharmaceuticals with significant side effects;
- Expand the nation's capacity to deal with a major healthcare emergency.

CONGRESS SHOULD ALSO:

- Fully utilize the 70,000 licensed doctors of chiropractic, practicing in every state, to partially address health provider shortages. DCs have the education, skills and experience to reduce the burden on other providers while providing high quality, cost effective care accessible to all American citizens;
- Avoid preemption of state laws that help ensure a patient's right to seek care from the provider of his or her choice, unless such laws are replaced by federal standards which are clearly superior;
- Ensure that any federally defined package of "minimum benefits" specifically includes the conservative professional services provided by doctors of chiropractic;
- Guarantee that the availability of chiropractic is equal to the availability of traditional medical care in all federally established or regulated plans, including managed care plans, and that any discriminatory policies adverse to chiropractic patients and providers are eliminated;
- In pursuit of "Medical Home" or "coordination of care" concepts, avoid the creation of a gatekeeper scenario that would serve as an impediment to accessing chiropractic care.