



Eliminate Provider Discrimination in Health Care

As part of healthcare reform, Congress must enact into law “anti-discrimination” provisions that would prevent insurance companies and health plans from arbitrarily excluding chiropractic care or the participation of doctors of chiropractic in their plans. Discrimination against the chiropractic profession harms patients by restricting their ability to select the provider of their choice. Congress must guarantee that the availability of the *essential* services provided by doctors 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 policies that discriminate against chiropractic patients and providers are eliminated.

- In today’s delivery system, health plans routinely discriminate against entire classes of healthcare providers based solely on their professional degree, not withstanding their ability to provide these essential services based on their education, training and licensure.
- Health plan discrimination is not only wrong in principle, but it is without justification based on the quality of health care provided by a variety of non-MD/DO providers, including doctors of chiropractic.
- There is no evidence that patients are less satisfied with the care typically provided by non-MD/DO providers versus the care provided by MDs and DOs. In fact, there is evidence to the contrary. In May 2009, America’s largest independent consumer product testing, service evaluation, and reporting organization published findings from a recently conducted national survey of more than 14,000 individuals regarding the treatment of back pain, which costs an estimated \$50 billion a year to treat. The findings revealed that a significant percentage of patients preferred the treatment they received from doctors of chiropractic versus that received from other providers, including medical doctors.
- Discrimination against the inclusion of non-MD providers in health plans is clearly anti-competitive. It denies patients choice as well as access to a range of beneficial providers.
- Limiting the types of healthcare providers included in health plans results in a restrictive system that is less than optimal because the number of treatment options (conservative wellness care versus traditional “sick” care) are often limited or eliminated entirely. This has occurred with respect to the availability of chiropractic care under Medicare Part C, where access to the conservative care approach of doctors of chiropractic has largely been eliminated.
- It’s clear that legislative provisions should be adopted that prevent existing healthcare plans--as well as any new federal plan--from discriminating in relation to plan participation, indemnification, and reimbursement against entire classes of healthcare providers based solely on their professional degree, not withstanding their ability to provide these essential services based on their education, training and licensure.