

EDITOR'S PERSPECTIVE

The ACC Paradigm - Something We Can All Agree Upon?

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In July 1996 the Presidents of all North American chiropractic colleges gathered together in an effort to develop a working paradigm for the chiropractic profession. The results of this meeting and a series of retreats were two position papers—one titled: ACC Chiropractic Paradigm and another on chiropractic scope and practice titled: ACC Scope and Practice. Since that time these statements and the Paradigm as a whole have been widely circulated within and outside the profession.

At the time of this writing nearly all major national and international chiropractic organizations have adopted and/or endorsed the statement including:

- The World Chiropractic Alliance
- The Council on Chiropractic Practice
- The International Chiropractors Association
- The American Chiropractic Association
- The Congress of Chiropractic State Associations
- The National Association of Chiropractic Attorneys
- The World Federation of Chiropractic

Other organizations including the Federation of Chiropractic Licensing Boards, The Federation of Straight Chiropractic Organizations and The National Board of Chiropractic Examiners have made statements in support of the document. Many individual state associations are now beginning to formally adopt the statement thanks to promotion of it by COCSA. I wonder if our college presidents knew of the enormity of what they were working on that weekend and the widespread effect and acceptance it would have?

I have personally heard stories about this meeting from several of the presidents who attended and the stories are fascinating to me. Especially since I've heard these stories from those at both "extremes" of the spectrum and because I feel the process they followed and the result they achieved could be one of the single most significant events in the history of our profession - regardless of whether it ends up uniting us or splitting us further. The more I hear these stories and the more familiar I

become with the ACC paradigm statement, the more respect I have for these Presidents and the work they did on this document.

While I clearly understand that the definition of subluxation that made its way into the ACC document is a political, and not a scientific one, I still have a great deal of excitement because of the discussion of subluxation within it and the role it plays. But even more intriguing is that in addition to the emphasis placed on the subluxation in the ACC Paradigm Statement there is an emphasis placed on a fundamental "Principle" of chiropractic. The ACC statement reads in part:

"The body's innate recuperative power is affected by and integrated through the nervous system."

Who in the profession could not live with that? And if we compare some of the statements in the ACC Paradigm with some of the statements from the policy document of the Council on Chiropractic Education (see Table 1) I think we can agree we could have a foundation to work from.

With all the controversy that is currently occurring regarding chiropractic education it is important to keep these statements by the ACC and CCE in mind. It is also imperative that all of the chiropractic institutions that adhere to a more traditional, conservative and vitalistic approach to chiropractic further develop these concepts of organizational principles and research the effects of subluxation on health, well being and quality of life. As I note in my Editor's Perspective on

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science in the last issue of JVSR, we must not rest on our laurels and need to fully engage ourselves in scholarly activity and research associated with these concepts.

We as individuals, as a profession and certainly as subluxation-based chiropractors have a moral and ethical responsibility to understand the epidemiology of vertebral subluxation and our colleges and faculty should be the nodal point for this activity.

Dr. Simon Senzon in a paper published in the October 2001 issue of JVSJ titled *An Integral Approach to Unifying The Philosophy of Chiropractic: B.J. Palmer's Model of Consciousness* makes the following statement:

"The chiropractic profession is fractured into many philosophical camps. The essence of this fracturing is a disassociation between science, psycho-spiritual growth, and philosophy. One solution that could unify the profession is to integrate the camps around a philosophical consensus within the profession. Such a consensus does loosely exist: the concept that the living organism is self-healing and self-organizing."

I think it's clear from Senzon's paper, the ACC and CCE statements that we have the building blocks for the unity we seek - we just need to keep working at it. As Dr. Reed Phillips states in his article on the Chiropractic Paradigm in the Fall 2001 issue of the *Journal of Chiropractic Education*:

"Now is the time to gather our philosophers, our scientists, and our moralists to wrestle with and flesh out the body of meaning constrained within the two position statements. The future is in our hands."

If he is serious then imagine if we as a profession could agree on and present a united front based on chiropractic philosophy, science and art.

Interestingly, much has been written over the years about the need to unify and merge all the different associations and how, if we did not do this, the profession would further splinter and that this would lead to greater disharmony and eventual destruction of the profession. I suggest that the opposite could happen amongst all this initial discord. Our profession, now matter where you sit in the spectrum, seems to have more clearly focused on its objectives and direction. The various issues that divide us are becoming increasingly clearer and seem to be amounting to concerns that can be broken down into reason-

ably workable problems with a number of solutions. What was that about conflicts clarifying?

How will this happen? I feel it will only result if certain individuals in each of the "camps" have the foresight and understanding to know that we need to communicate and listen to each other, bridge these gaps, and move beyond the petty jealousies and infighting that has hampered serious growth in the profession. Direct communication with one another to determine what is true and what is not could sow the seeds of an initial trust within the profession. Of course many individuals, groups, and organizations will have to put aside the benefits they derive from keeping the profession split. Are we ready for that? Do we even want that? Is it even possible given the deep wounds that exist?

Whether or not these seeds spring forth and bear fruit remains to be seen and we can only hope that the leadership of our profession stays the course and sees this initial dialogue through - though there are rumblings that this might not be the case.

It can only be assumed that the memberships of our various organizations along with the large disenfranchised proportion of the profession want this to happen. Perhaps if they see our organizational leaders behaving maturely and with appropriate stewardship they will increase their support. What do we have to lose? After all nothing else has worked so far and the alternatives will not be pleasant - not for anyone.

Editors Note: The CCE discusses proper and necessary examination procedures that include "conducting skeletal-bio-mechanical and subluxation evaluation" and they specifically mention physiological instrumentation.

The ACC PARADIGM text and pictures follow beginning on page 3.

Table 1

"Chiropractic science concerns the relationship between the structure of the human body, primarily the spine, and function, primarily coordinated by the nervous system, as that relationship may affect the restoration and reservation of health.

The Council on Chiropractic Education (CCE) accepts the physiological principles of organization in living things and the manifestation of the self-regulatory mechanisms inherent in the body.

CCE accepts the physiological and chiropractic concept that each organ of the body contributes to the well-being of the body and ultimate changes in organs and tissues are coordinated in response to nerve signals. Thus, the state of health may be considered a condition in which all organs and tissues are capable of normal function.

In recognition of the primacy of the nervous system as a communication system necessary for functional integrity, CCE accepts the concept

that interference with normal nerve function may well be a cause of abnormal physiology.

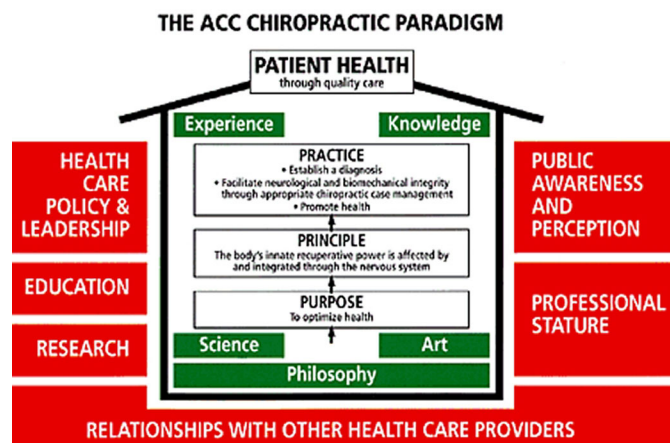
Finally, CCE accepts that the nervous system is vulnerable to disturbances resulting from derangements of the neurobiomechanical system, including the vertebral column and vertebral subluxations.

Educated in the basic and clinical sciences as well as related health subjects, the doctor of chiropractic attends particularly to the relationship of the structural and neurological aspects of the body.

The educational process should be a reinforcement of the validity of the basic principles of chiropractic and an encouragement to the student to apply those principles in his or her clinical programs, with emphasis given to detection and correction of derangements of the neurobiomechanical system, including vertebral subluxation."

Table 1: *Excerpted from the Policies of the Council on Chiropractic Education. January 2001. The Council on Chiropractic Education. Scottsdale, Arizona.*

Chiropractic Paradigm



1.0 PREAMBLE

The Association of Chiropractic Colleges (ACC) is committed to affirming the profession by addressing issues facing chiropractic education. The ACC brings together a wide range of perspectives on chiropractic and is uniquely positioned to help define the chiropractic role within health care.

The ACC is committed to greater public service through reaching consensus on the following issues which are important to the chiropractic profession:

- continued enhancement of educational curricula;
- strengthening chiropractic research-,
- participating and providing leadership in the development of health care policy-,
- fostering relationships with other health care providers,
- affirming professional confidence and conduct, and
- increasing public awareness regarding the benefits of chiropractic care.

The member Colleges of the ACC represent a broad diversity of institutional missions. The presidents have drafted a consensus statement that includes the following:

- the ACC position on chiropractic-,
- a representation of the chiropractic paradigm-, and
- clarification regarding the definition and clinical management of the subluxation.

Additional statements will be forthcoming as the ACC continues to provide meaning and substance regarding what is taught in chiropractic colleges and how this information influences the present and future of the profession.

2.0 ACC POSITION ON CHIROPRACTIC

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.

The practice of chiropractic focuses on the relationship between structure (primarily the spine) and function (as coordinated by the nervous system) and how that relationship affects

the preservation and restoration of health. In addition, Doctors of Chiropractic recognize the value and responsibility of working in cooperation with other health care practitioners when in the best interest of the patient.

The Association of Chiropractic Colleges continues to foster a unique, distinct chiropractic profession that serves as a health care discipline for all. The ACC advocates a profession that generates, develops, and utilizes the highest level of evidence possible in the provision of effective, prudent, and cost-conscious patient evaluation and care.

3.0 THE CHIROPRACTIC PARADIGM (refer to diagram above)

PURPOSE

The purpose of chiropractic is to optimize health.

PRINCIPLE

The body's innate recuperative power is affected by and integrated through the nervous system.

PRACTICE

The practice of chiropractic includes:

- establishing a diagnosis-,
- facilitating neurological and biomechanical integrity through appropriate chiropractic case management; and
- promoting health.

FOUNDATION

The foundation of chiropractic includes philosophy, science, art, knowledge, and clinical experience.

IMPACTS

The chiropractic paradigm directly influences the following:

- education;
- research;
- health care policy and leadership;
- relationships with other health care providers;
- professional stature;
- public awareness and perceptions; and
- patient health through quality care.

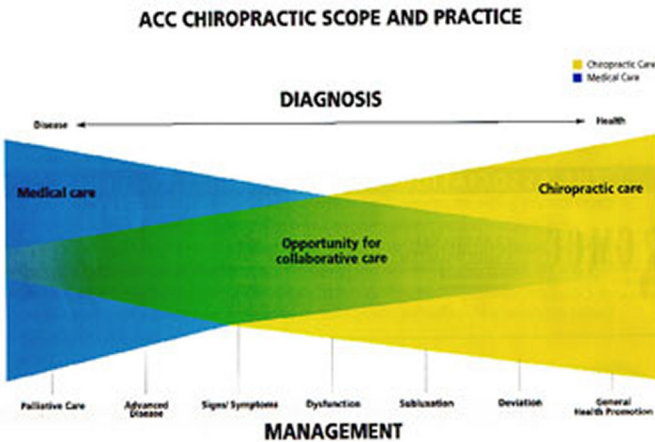
4.0 THE SUBLUXATION

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

A subluxation is a complex of functional and/or structural and/or pathological articular changes that compromise neural integrity and may influence organ system function and general health.

A subluxation is evaluated, diagnosed, and managed through the use of chiropractic procedures based on the best available rational and empirical evidence.

Chiropractic Scope and Practice



1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Association of Chiropractic Colleges (ACC) brings together a wide range of perspectives on chiropractic and is uniquely positioned to help define the chiropractic role within health care. In Position Paper #1 (July 1996), the ACC presidents described the practice of chiropractic within the chiropractic paradigm to include:

- establishing a diagnosis;
- facilitating neurological and biomechanical integrity through appropriate chiropractic case management; and
- promoting health.

As part of its on-going commitment to affirming the profession by addressing issues facing chiropractic education, the ACC presidents have drafted a consensus statement on chiropractic scope and practice.

ACC member colleges educate students for the competent practice of chiropractic. These academic institutions have a direct interest in the definition of the chiropractic scope and practice. Clarity on chiropractic scope and practice will:

- enhance the consistency and excellence of educational outcomes,

- contribute to a better understanding of chiropractic education and practice, both within the profession and by the public; and
- provide direction to the profession for the advancement of chiropractic.

This second position paper includes:

- definition of the chiropractic scope; and
- a description of the practice of chiropractic with respect to diagnosis, case management, and health promotion.

2.0 DEFINING CHIROPRACTIC SCOPE

Since human function is neurologically integrated, Doctors of Chiropractic evaluate and facilitate biomechanical and neurobiological function and integrity through the use of appropriate conservative, diagnostic and chiropractic care procedures.

Therefore, direct access chiropractic care is integral to everyone's health care regimen.

3.0 DEFINING CHIROPRACTIC PRACTICE

A. DIAGNOSTIC

Doctors of Chiropractic, as primary contact health care providers, employ the education, knowledge, diagnostic skill, and clinical judgment necessary to determine appropriate chiropractic care and management.

Doctors of Chiropractic have access to diagnostic procedures and /or referral resources as required.

B. CASE MANAGEMENT

Doctors of Chiropractic establish a doctor/patient relationship and utilize adjustive and other clinical procedures unique to the chiropractic discipline. Doctors of Chiropractic may also use other conservative patient care procedures, and, when appropriate, collaborate with and/or refer to other health care providers.

C. HEALTH PROMOTION

Doctors of Chiropractic advise and educate patients and communities in structural and spinal hygiene and healthful living practices.