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International Chiropractors Association Expresses Grave Concern for Public Safety Over New Mexico Chiropractic Scope Expansion into Pharmaceutical Prescription and Administration

The International Chiropractors Association (ICA) has been asked by members in New Mexico to become involved in the pending implementation of a legislative action that has the potential of fundamentally changing the nature of chiropractic practice as well as confusing the public and possibly placing the public at risk at the hands of a new category of provider.

Under the statute an “advanced chiropractic practitioner” is a chiropractic practitioner who,

(D.) has completed a minimum of ninety clinical and didactic contact course hours in pharmacology, pharmacognosy, medication administration and toxicology certified by an examination from an institution of higher education approved by the board and the New Mexico medical board;...may prescribe, administer and dispense herbal medicines, vitamins, minerals, enzymes, glandular products, naturally derived substances, protomorphogens, live cell products, gerovital, amino acids, dietary supplements, foods for special dietary use, bioidentical hormones sterile water, oxygen, epinephrine and vapocoolants. A formulary shall be developed by the New Mexico Medical Board and the board of pharmacy.”

ICA, while fully recognizing the wherewithal for any state legislature to act as it sees fit on behalf of its citizens, believes that this change is in neither the best interests of the public in New Mexico nor the chiropractic profession nationally.

Public safety is in question: The authority to prescribe and administer medications has traditionally been understood under the law as the practice of medicine. ICA holds that any member of the public, when interacting with any health care professional, has the right to expect that that professional has been trained and qualified at the highest level. We do not believe that this policy change provides that protection.

Public understanding of chiropractic as a true alternative to drug-based approaches is in jeopardy: At a time when national headlines are filled with stories about medical errors and the popular culture is searching for better, safer and more natural care pathways, the incorporation of drugs into popular understanding of chiropractic is counterproductive and will only serve to undermine the profession-wide efforts underway to break through to the public with a clear understanding of chiropractic as a separate and

distinct approach to health and healing, free from the complications and errors of the current medical and drug-based system of health care.

The New Mexico law change represents a major paradigm shift for the chiropractic profession. Since its founding more than 80 years ago, the ICA has consistently held that chiropractic is and should remain a drugless science and practice. The chiropractic profession has likewise established a powerful consensus on the issue of chiropractic as a drugless science. The testing of the National Board of Chiropractic Examiners (NBCE) does not include testing for the credentialing of the practice of medicine. The Chiropractic Paradigm http://www.chirocolleges.org/paradigm_scope_practice.html developed by the Association of Chiropractic Colleges (ACC) and endorsed by every chiropractic organization in the United States identifies chiropractic practice as being drug-free. The World Federation of Chiropractic (WFC) expressly states: *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.* To further highlight this global consensus, the WFC, in its comprehensive chiropractic “Identity Consultation” http://www.wfc.org/website/images/wfc/docs/as_tf_final_rept-Am_04-29-05_001.pdf agreed: *Patients managed principally by spinal adjustment, other manual treatments, exercise and patient education. Without the use of drugs and surgery, enabling patients to avoid these wherever possible.*

Action is needed to avoid damaging chiropractic nationwide: ICA urges all organizations and institutions within the chiropractic profession to take a stand on this issue, supporting the maintenance of chiropractic as a drug-free profession, clearly distinct from the practice of medicine and to oppose the tiering of the chiropractic profession as is established in the New Mexico statute. ICA strongly urges the National Board of Chiropractic Examiners (NBCE) to not give this initiative credibility by the establishment of any national exam to be used for the purposes of prescribing drugs and practicing medicine.

Now is the time for the vital center of the chiropractic profession to be proactive, outspoken and act to preserve the profession’s strongest asset; its status as a separate and distinct approach to health and healing, without the application of drugs or surgery. It is the right thing to do!

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