

Chiropractic's phenomenal advancement in these first 100 years

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While this is the 100th Anniversary of Chiropractic, I can only look back some 50 years. But what a phenomenal development and change has taken place in the profession in those years not only in Canada but around the world. The profession has advanced and matured academically and politically. The members have become better educated and they think more scientifically. If a statement is made regarding chiropractic practice one is expected to back it up with a published research survey or clinical trial.

The pioneers of the 30's and 40's who graduated in the 1920's were good technicians, sincere but not well grounded in the basic sciences. They were enthusiastic and they "lived chiropractic", but in their enthusiasm made claims based upon anecdotal evidence.

During this period chiropractic did not have a good reputation in medical circles or the public generally. Morris Fishbein, Secretary of the AMA once described a chiropractor as "a dangerous charlatan opposing scientific medicine".

If it weren't for the dogged determination of the pioneer leaders in that era chiropractic might not have survived. Up until 1943 there was no national organization in the profession and it was on the initiative of Drs. W. Sturdy and J. Clubine that the Dominion Council of Canadian Chiropractors was instituted. Others on the team were Drs. L. McPhail, J. Haldeman, J. Schnick, J. Gaudet, H. Lee and F. Wallace. They had 2 aims, one to be included in Medicare and the other to establish a school. Since education comes under provincial jurisdiction and they held a federal charter a new and separate organization with a provincial charter had to be organized. Among those charged with this responsibility were Drs. J. Clubine, J. Henderson, C. Clemmer and others. Outside assistance mainly advice was freely given by Drs. J. Nugent, J. Janse, V. Logan. Dr. A.E. Homewood was hired on the original faculty and served for many years as Administrative Dean and one term as President as well. He was a workaholic and saved the school from bankruptcy at one point and was the main witness in the court case vs. TTC and MetroToronto.

When CMCC was in the formative stage, an MD was hired

to teach but before the college opened he received a letter from the Ontario Medical Assoc. warning him to "disassociate himself from those chiropractors". What a difference today – there are now 8 MDs (2 are CMCC grads who studied medicine after) and 16 MDs listed as guest lecturers in the calendar.

After long years of negotiations with at least 6 universities, university affiliation with York appears to be a reality in the near future. What a tremendous accomplishment. Congratulations to Dr. J. Moss and the CMCC Board.

There have been many government commissions examining the efficacy of chiropractic practice. The New Zealand Commission in 1979 had a positive world wide impact. In 1990 the British Medical Research Council did a comparative study and concluded that chiropractic was the most effective method of treating mechanical low back conditions. The Ontario Government funded a study by Prof. Manga and associates and their conclusion was that chiropractic methods were the most efficient and cost effective method for low back pain.

For some years research studies and clinical trials have been carried out at an amazing rate by our academic leaders. Much of the funding in Canada has been done through the Chiropractic Foundation for Spinal Research. Several projects are being carried out in partnership with other disciplines in a university setting.

Chiropractic has been fortunate indeed in having many non-chiropractors taking an interest by teaching, writing and publishing. We should be appreciative of these people, some of whom are Drs. L. Biggs, I. Coulter, J. Keating and W. Wardwell and Messrs. R. Gibson, D. Chapman-Smith and D. Peterson.

Today chiropractic is recognized legislatively across Canada. The first Chiropractic Act was passed in Alberta in 1923. Over the years the other provinces followed one by one with Newfoundland's Act being proclaimed in 1992.

For every advance our profession has made there has been a determined enthusiastic persistent presentation behind the scenes with a leader guiding the attack. The latest victory was the 3 commemorative postage stamps celebrating our anniversaries and led by Dr. G. Dunn. Congratulations Greg!

When one looks at the phenomenal progress of the past, one must be optimistic for the future of chiropractic. There is no doubt that chiropractic and chiropractors will be held in higher esteem than ever before. It behooves us as individual practitioners to always "act in the best interest of the patient" to maintain and enhance that trust.

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