

**ACA NEWS**  
**By James D. Edwards, D.C.**  
**ACA Chairman**

The ACA recently achieved two more legislative victories on behalf of the chiropractic profession and the patients we serve.

**Victory Number 1.** - The ACA and the Association of Chiropractic Colleges lobbied successfully for a specific legislative directive to be included in the House version of the 2004 Department of Defense authorization bill, H.R. 1588, requiring accelerated implementation of chiropractic health care services for active-duty military personnel and setting a new target date of Oct. 1, 2005, for full implementation. As a result of the May 22 House vote, active-duty military personnel are one step closer to getting access to chiropractic services.

To ensure success, the ACA mounted a full legislative effort. On May 15, the ACA sent a "Legislative Alert" to its email list of 5,000 doctors encouraging immediate action. As a result of those contacts, the chairman of the Armed Services Committee, Rep. Duncan Hunter (R-CA), and the chairman of the Total Force Subcommittee, Rep. John McHugh (R-NY), wrote to every member of Congress to urge support for H.R. 1588 based on the bill's "array of initiatives that improve the quality of the worldwide health care benefit for the men and women of our Armed Forces." The ACA Department of Governmental Relations then emailed, faxed and hand delivered to every House of Representatives office a cover memo supporting HR 1588, the Defense authorization bill, with the Hunter-McHugh letter as an attachment.

After doing all of that work and securing House passage, it was quite surprising to read a recent press release from the International Chiropractors Association (ICA) giving full credit to its Legislative Chairman since he is a constituent of a key member of Congress. Although this type of "spin" has become very common, make no mistake about it...the victory was a direct result of the combined efforts of the ACA/ACC team.

But even more surprising was the news release of the World Chiropractic Alliance (a fellow "coalition" member of the ICA) that encouraged their members to oppose this important legislation that would accelerate implementation of the chiropractic benefit for active duty military personnel! That shameful action not only sent a confusing message to the profession's allies on Capitol Hill, but it provided aid and comfort to our powerful opponents.

**Victory Number 2.** - On June 12, the Senate Finance Committee approved a groundbreaking provision that would allow - on a demonstration basis - doctors of chiropractic to receive Medicare reimbursement for all health care services they are licensed to provide under state law. Should the provision become law, the three-year demonstration project would be conducted in six sites throughout the United States. As a result of the program, data reflecting the health benefits and cost-effectiveness of chiropractic care would be generated and ultimately evaluated for future consideration.

The Medicare legislation, authored by committee chairman Sen. Charles Grassley (R-IA), was developed and supported by the American Chiropractic Association (ACA), and was included in the bipartisan Medicare reform bill (S.1) sponsored by Senators Grassley and Max Baucus (D-MT). The Palmer Chiropractic University System and the Iowa Chiropractic Society each worked closely with the ACA to support the demonstration project, and each played a key leadership role in building support for the provision.

Shortly before the Senate Finance Committee began to deliberate over the language of the bill, Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist, MD, unveiled two "killer" amendments designed to eliminate the chiropractic provision from the bill. In response, Senator Grassley and the ACA mobilized a core group of senators committed to opposing Dr. Frist's amendments, including Senators Orrin Hatch (R-UT), Tom Daschle (D-SD) and Kent Conrad (D-ND). Chiropractic-friendly senators not on the Finance Committee voiced opposition to Frist's amendments as well, including Senators Norm Coleman (R-MN), Chuck Hagel (R-NE) and Ben Nelson (D-NE).

Rest assured, the ACA will remain vigilant at every stage of the process and will continue to fight for both of these major advancements for the chiropractic profession. I encourage you to contact me if you have any questions, wish to join the ACA, or if I can be of assistance to you in any way. Please email me at [JamesEdwards@JamesEdwards.com](mailto:JamesEdwards@JamesEdwards.com).