

The Four BIGGEST Lies in Chiropractic

By James Edwards, DC

There are four big lies currently circulating in the chiropractic profession:

1. The ACA supports mandatory immunizations and the ICA does not.
2. The ACA is pro-drugs and pro-surgery and the ICA is not.
3. The ACA does not support chiropractic as being a separate and distinct science and the ICA does.
4. The ACA does not recognize the vertebral subluxation complex and the ICA does.

There! As distasteful as it was, I was able to repeat all four of them. How many times have you heard one or more of these big lies? Two times, five times, 100 times? Have you wondered who started them? No one knows for sure, but they certainly did not originate within the ICA or ACA.

It's important that the profession know the truth because the telling and re-telling of the four biggest lies has become a major obstacle to national unity. It is also why so many DCs do not support the crucial work that needs to be done at the national level.

To set the record straight, it will be necessary to mention the ICA several times. The reader should understand that none of the references to the ICA are intended to be critical in any way. That is especially true because, as you will see, the policies of the ICA and ACA are essentially the same.

But don't take my word for it, check it out for yourself at the ACA and ICA websites, where all the official policies and positions can be reviewed. (ACA: www.amerchiro.org . ICA: www.chiropractic.org .)

Big Lie #1: The ACA supports mandatory immunizations and the ICA does not.

Let's see if that is true. One of the statements below is the official position of the ACA, and the other is the official position of the ICA. See if you can tell which policy belongs to which organization.

A. "Since the scientific community acknowledges that the use of vaccines is not without risk, (this association) supports each individual's right to freedom of choice in his/her own health care based on an informed awareness of the benefits and possible adverse effects of vaccination. (This association) is supportive of a conscience clause or waiver in compulsory vaccination laws thereby maintaining an individual's right to freedom of choice in health care matters and providing an alternative/elective course of action regarding vaccination."

B. "(This association) recognizes that the use of vaccines is not without risk. (This association) supports each individual's right to select his or her own health care and to be made aware of the possible adverse effects of vaccines upon a human body. In accordance with such principles and based upon the individual's right to freedom of choice, (this association) is opposed to compulsory programs which infringe upon such rights. (This association) is supportive of a conscience clause or waiver in compulsory vaccination laws, providing an elective course of action for all regarding immunization, thereby allowing patients freedom of choice in matters affecting their bodies and health."

Time's up. Which policy belongs to the ACA and which to the ICA? Did you notice a difference in the two policies on mandatory immunization? Of course not, because there is no difference! The policies of the two national associations are almost identical!

Now when you hear or read the big lie that the ACA supports mandatory vaccinations, you will know that the speaker or author is being dishonest with you. (For the record, "A" is the official position of the ACA.)

Big Lie #2: The ACA is pro-drugs and pro-surgery and the ICA is not.

Let's see if there is any difference between the ACA's position on drugs and surgery and the ICA's. One of the following policies is from the "ACA Master Plan" and the other is the official policy of the ICA. Which one belongs to which organization?

A. "(This association) holds that the best interests of both the public and the chiropractic profession are served by maintaining chiropractic as a ... drugless, nonsurgical alternative form of health care. ... (This association) recognizes that the various state legislatures have the right to grant Doctors of Chiropractic the option to qualify, and thereafter utilize procedures which are not within the Association's view of the parameters of the clinical application of traditional chiropractic."

B. "Chiropractic is a drug-free, nonsurgical science and, as such, does not include pharmaceuticals or incisive surgery. Without prejudice to our commitment to this vital core concept and, in conformity with the nation's antitrust laws, chiropractors may elect in their practice to use common domain procedures, otherwise allowed by applicable law, and assuming they are properly qualified by background, education and training to do so."

Okay, there you go. Which one is the policy of the ACA and which is the position of the ICA? Doesn't matter, does it? Both policies are essentially the same. Both defer final authority to the states. The words "drug-free," "drugless" and "nonsurgical" leave no doubt that both ACA and ICA are unequivocally opposed to drugs and surgery becoming part of chiropractic practice. ("B" is the official position of the ACA.)

One last comment on drugs. The ACA recently proved that its anti-drugs policy is more than just words. In 1996, a few pro-drug DCs (not ACA delegates) submitted a proposal to the ACA annual meeting to create a pharmaceutical council. That measure was defeated in the ACA Council of Delegates by a UNANIMOUS 57-0 vote!

The next time an author or speaker starts telling you that the ACA is pro-drugs and pro-surgery, you will know that he or she is being dishonest.

Big Lie #3: The ACA does not support chiropractic being a separate and distinct science and

the ICA does.

Fasten your seat belts, because here we go again. Which one of the following positions belongs to the ACA and which belongs to the ICA?

A. "(This association) holds that the best interests of both the public and the chiropractic profession are served by maintaining chiropractic as a separate and distinct ... form of health care...."

B. "The objectives of this organization are to maintain the science of chiropractic as a separate and distinct healing arts profession."

Again, the polices are almost identical. "B" is the ACA's position. There is no question that the ACA and ICA are both committed to chiropractic remaining "separate and distinct." The ACA has even taken it one step further by adopting an official policy in opposition to the "Doctor of Chiropractic Medicine" degree. So the next time you hear this big lie, you will know it is not true.

Big Lie #4: The ACA does not recognize the vertebral subluxation complex and the ICA does.

Most would agree that a good way to determine if an organization recognizes an entity is if it is contained in their official policies and if the organization has taken the time and effort to define the entity. The references to subluxation in the policies of the ACA and ICA follow. See if you can tell which ones belong to the ACA and which ones belong to the ICA.

A. "Manipulable Subluxation: A subluxation in which altered alignment, movement, and/or function can be improved by manual thrust procedures.

Subluxation: A motion segment, in which alignment, movement integrity, and/or physiological function are altered although contact between joint surfaces remains intact.

Subluxation Complex: A theoretical model of motion segment dysfunction (subluxation) which incorporates the complex interaction of pathological changes in nerve, muscle, ligamentous, vascular and connective tissues.

Subluxation Syndrome: An aggregate of signs and symptoms that relate to pathophysiology or dysfunction of spinal and pelvic motion segments or to peripheral joints."

B. "Of primary concern to chiropractic are abnormalities of structure or function of the vertebral column known clinically as the vertebral subluxation complex. The subluxation complex includes any alteration of the biomechanical and physiological dynamics of contiguous spinal structures which can cause neuronal disturbances."

As you can see, both the ACA and ICA recognize the vertebral subluxation complex. (The four definitions under "A" belong to the ACA.)

With the filing of the HCFA lawsuit by the ACA, some have suggested that the ACA has absolutely proven its commitment to subluxation. It's important to note that the heart of that federal lawsuit is to prohibit non-chiropractors from performing chiropractic adjustments to "correct a subluxation."

So the next time you hear that the ACA does not recognize the vertebral subluxation, realize that you are hearing a lie and remember that the ACA is the national association that is fighting the federal government so that subluxation will remain the sole domain of the chiropractic profession.

The Harm to National Unity

How do these four biggest lies hamper national unity? A few years ago, Dr. Fred Barge (*Dynamic Chiropractic*, May 22, 1992 and July 3, 1992) chastised the ACA for not having an immunization policy and for being pro-drugs and pro-surgery. Dr. Barge clearly defined what was needed for national unity when he said the following:

"The one basic concept that will create unity for the chiropractic profession is a definitive stance! Once this has been achieved, unity will evolve with little or no effort. The effort will be in the development of a definitive stance and, in my opinion, the subject of immunization will play an important role."

As you have already seen, the ICA and ACA have nearly identical policies on mandatory immunization, "separate and distinct," drugs, surgery and subluxation. And it doesn't stop there. A detailed analysis of the policies of the ACA and ICA reveals that both organizations have similar or identical positions on almost every issue, including: primary care; chiropractic practice; diagnosis; thermography; and x-ray.

The questions that need to be answered are these: Since both the ACA and ICA now have similar stances on all major issues, including identical "definitive stances" on mandatory immunizations, why hasn't national unity "evolved" as predicted?

Do some continue to tell the four biggest lies to keep national unity from becoming a reality? And do some continue to oppose a unified profession based on what's best for them personally, rather than what's best for chiropractic?

The bottom line is this. The overwhelming majority of ICA leaders and the overwhelming majority of ACA leaders are highly principled, hard-working volunteers who unselfishly give their time, expertise and energy for the betterment of the chiropractic profession.

Maybe it's time to combine all those talents. Maybe it's time for chiropractic to speak with one powerful voice.

The American Chiropractic Association extends an open invitation to meet with any other chiropractic group or organization to discuss issues and negotiate agreements to help achieve a unified profession.

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