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National Associations:

Building a structure designed for growth and stability

In the United States, Canada and Australia the National Association(s) have evolved complex organizational structures to meet the ever-growing needs of a highly developed profession.

In contrast, we see countries with but a handful of DCs struggling to even get together once or twice per year to somehow begin the process of establishing the profession by building a National Association.

This article discusses many of the tools that can guide these individuals in their efforts to create a foundation for what will support the professional growth of chiropractic in their country.

Today, there are about two-dozen countries at some stage of professional development with their National Associations and yet another 65 countries that are more accurately classified within the Pioneer stage in the development of the chiropractic profession - much like it was in the first decades of the profession in the early 1900's.

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Pioneer DC Survey

Sharing the experiences of pioneer practices

There are a growing number of DCs who are now leaving Canada and the United States to establish practices in foreign countries. By and large, they face similar challenges, except for local cultural variations.

Discussions with several established pioneer practitioners reveals that the majority suffered many of the same difficulties. Is there a way to better prepare foreign-minded DCs for their journey? What can be learned from those who have already been baptized by fire?

A solution is to create a central resource that can collect information from those with experiences to share and develop an easy format to gather this information. The Internet makes it possible for DCs from anywhere in the world to go online and complete a brief survey form. The data is then categorized and placed on a "Summary Report" on the same website in a format that can easily be updated as more and more information is added to the database.

This interface has just been set-up and so now an invitation is hereby extended to all DCs who practice in countries where there are one chiropractor for every 100,000 people or more. There are some 65 countries that fit into this group at this time with less than 500 total DCs between them. That's less than there are in one single jurisdiction, the State of Alabama.

Complete the online **PIONEER DC SURVEY**
www.ChiropracticDiplomatic.com/pioneer

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In itemizing the different functions of a State or National Association we find six (6) primary divisions:

- | | |
|----------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Executive | 2. Membership |
| 3. Services/benefits | 4. Administrative |
| 5. Public Relations | 6. Legislative |

There are resources available from the World Federation of Chiropractors (WFC), the International Chiropractic Association (ICA), the Federation of Licensing Boards (FCLB), the International Council on Chiropractic Education (ICCE), and a growing list of NGOs (non-government organizations) active with International programs such as the Chiropractic Diplomatic Corps, the Christian Chiropractor's Association and other Mission groups.

Sadly, it is pretty well left up to the individuals to get their local act together.

Country associations that have attained some degree of legal protection have different needs than those Pioneer chiropractors that may still not have a formally working association. In part, it is the lack of an organized presence or working structure that hinders the ability to acquire legal recognition. At present there is no standard for these pioneer DCs to turn to. As members of the WFC, they have representation at the WHO (World Health Organization), some assistance if they actually take the time to request information on legal definitions, and then only good wishes to help them get their house in order.

Sadly, it is pretty well left up to the individuals to get their local act together. That may be fine if one or two of these DCs have leadership skills. Somehow, it seems practical to help by offering structural models that can facilitate the development of a National Association in the early years. History shows up that failure to establish a formal organization only opens the door to struggling growth and the usual polarization we see within the profession plus the additional cultural separation between the Native vs the Imported DCs.

An interesting aspect of the suggested modeled topics is that this clearly places the responsibility with the established countries to sponsor and mentor International growth.

To these ends the following listing is offered with a variety of suggested ideas and objectives for this respective stage of professional growth to demonstrate the relative needs.

PIONEER STAGE ISSUES:

- Getting the National Association organized, using standard By-Laws adapted to their laws.
- Recruiting 100% of the few DCs into membership - being totally inclusive.
- Initiating legal recognition efforts with local government.
- Holding regular monthly meetings and set up 5 or 6 committees as needs dictate.
- Put together a bulletin or newsletter as the number of DCs grows.
- Coordinating with humanitarian mission groups to maximize benefits to all concerned.
- Set up a "Student Abroad Support" program to assure the new DC will return home.
- Initiate local university prospects then seek foreign school partnership.
- Develop policies on Public Relations efforts and actively work to see 2% of the population.
- Begin sending a representative to International conferences to help build DC numbers.

As much as one wishes to respect the sovereignty of each country there are *de facto* standards necessary to ensure one unified profession with certain unique elements. Creating and offering a model structure to guide the organizational development for a National Association can only produce a smoother and more effective outcome for the growth of the profession in new countries. An interesting aspect of the suggested modeled topics is that this clearly places the responsibility with the established countries to sponsor and mentor International growth. It is important to offer assistance and support while still respecting the autonomy of the pioneer DC as they integrate the chiropractic profession within their county's laws and cultures.

It has been estimated that there currently exists the need for over 350,000 chiropractors in today's global marketplace. There are presently 70,000 DCs in the world reaching less than 20% of the people who can afford care today and leaving 80% unserved. Perhaps some effort to help with organizational assistance is not such a far-fetched idea after all at this time and there is room to expand the contents of this chapter with input from several pioneer DCs wishing to share in this effort.

A model building block structure is being developed as we speak. The outcome could be a software program that gives step-by-step outlines and timely objectives to put on the table. *"In the absence of something... anything goes."* To provide input in designing this model structure, just [EMAIL US](#).

PIONEER DC: HONDURAS

by Bob Funk, DC



"CHIROPRACTIC is still new and a potentially good and healthy growth prospect for the country. Various DCs have come and gone in mission type or brigade type programs; DCs who left as quick as they came, not really imprinting what the profession really holds in regards to a viable profession to STAY in the country.

I have sought in nearly 4 years, to come to grips with what is essential for a good practitioner inside this country, living from the inside and not receiving ANY support from the outside. To do this most say is impossible, but it can be done. One must first:

1. Have a long-term goal to stick out the hard times and poor income compared with standards elsewhere.
2. Get proficient in Spanish before coming.
3. Expect a culture shock in many ways, but particularly the vast differences between rich and poor. This can be chilling to even a seasoned DC as myself. The rich expect and treat the poor less than some treat animals in the rest of North America. We as DCs took an oath to help ALL and even though targeting the richer for best income potential we must bear this in mind.
4. Consider an outside job or other opportunity for your spouse to help her get involved in the local social fabric of the country when you can.
5. Learn to live on less if you want to stay - consider it a privilege to be a new profession and one which has much to offer. You are NOT as some massage therapists or some general MDs that represent themselves as offering chiropractic. Living here with some jealousy on the part of the medical community has certainly been much less stressful than in the prior 25 years of this in Canada and the US.

The Latino "machismo" attitude encompasses almost everything in the male part of life here. So keeping this in mind when dealing with other health professionals it is easier to understand their mindset. It is NOT the same in many ways as their northern counterparts and they are indeed open to what we have to offer - many even coming for care with their families.

Chiropractic has much to give all classes in this country, and if any are interested in following a new path and ethical professional practice Honduras is only waiting. Contact Dr. Bob Funk at Bobfchiro@yahoo.com for any information. "

The Pioneer DC Survey consists of asking for the "Top 3" responses to 5 simple questions - for example these are answers to a test run we did this December.

Q-1. *What are the top 3 things you think someone needs to know before opening up a pioneer practice?*

A's. The real needs of the people in that area; Love & Interest in the potential hardships of meeting and treating a new cultural people group; Dedication and a willingness to understand the culture they will be living in and to learn the local language; Business and chiropractic legality; The real costs, including hidden and otherwise unforeseen, of maintaining the practice; Be flexible and adaptable to their new cultural ways and activities, different from N. America; Vision; The legal situation (Chiropractically speaking); The local language (at least conversational).

The other questions are as follows:

2. What are the top 3 things you do to build your practice?
3. List the top 3 challenges you face continuously.
4. What are the top 3 things you know you have to do to stay out of trouble?
5. Finally, what are the top 3 things you feel still need to get done, that are doable, that can strengthen your survivability so the next generation will be assured the availability of chiropractic?

It is hoped that over 100 pioneer DCs will take the five or ten minutes needed to answer the online survey. The database produced by the responses are then categorized and the resulting "Pioneer Report" is to be made available on the same website for easy downloading. The report format used can be updated so ongoing responses can be incorporated in the report as time goes on.

A printed report will be available for personal delivery to the participants at the WFC Congress in Orlando, Florida the week of April 28, 2003.

NEWSLETTER POLICY:

This newsletter is intended to inform and encourage the International growth of Chiropractic. If you know someone who may be interested in receiving this newsletter, please have them go to www.ChiropracticDiplomatic.com/register and complete the Foreign Service Registry form, their address will then be added to future mailings. If you do not wish to receive this newsletter, simply notify us by replying to the delivery email.