

Chiropractic Diplomatic Corps

www.ChiropracticDiplomatic.com

800-600-7032

Vancouver, Canada

800-15355 24th Ave Suite 207
White Rock, BC V4A 2H9

Los Angeles, USA

17602 17th Street #102
Tustin, CA 92780

Aboriginal Recruitment of Chiropractors

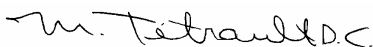
The American healthcare profession that closely aligns itself to the naturalistic and vitalistic concepts of Native American healthcare traditions is Chiropractic. Today, IHS and Tribal clinics have expressed interest in making Chiropractic services available for their Tribal members, yet there is a severe lack of Native Americans who are trained as Doctors of Chiropractic. The Aboriginal Recruitment of Chiropractors (A.R.C.) is a program designed to address this disparity, beginning with this end in mind: *"people are best served when they are cared for by professionals of their own heritage."* This concept is particularly true for sovereign Nations and is the driving force behind the A.R.C. program.

The proposal is very simple. It is funded through IHS, 628 or 638 sources. All proposed agreements for onsite services are based on a flat hourly rate depending on the target population monthly access needs for chiropractic providers and include the following services:

1. Provider recruitment and placement of a culturally oriented chiropractor
2. Protocols Manual and Integration steps with IHS or Tribal clinic providers
3. Training of specialized chiropractic clinical and administrative protocols
4. Community education on the benefits of Chiropractic
5. Native student orientations to attract prospective future chiropractors
6. Guide interested students to grants for college and Chiropractic school
7. Mentor students throughout the education steps to reach a DC degree
8. Engage students to stay locally active with clinic internship programs
9. Develop service models that can generate two to three times the actual costs of the A.R.C. program whereby creating a new profit center for the healthcare facility
10. The A.R.C. program ends when a Native DC takes over as the local provider

I am available to further discuss this program with Indian Health Services, clinic leadership personnel and Tribal Council members. You can reach me by email at tetrault@chiropracticdiplomatic.com or by phone at 800-600-7032.

Yours in Health,



Michel Tetrault, DC
Executive Director

Aboriginal Recruitment of Chiropractors - by Michel Tetrault, DC

Stewardship in action - an editorial viewpoint

In Canada and the United States, the federal governments have established full scholarships for Inuit, Aboriginal and Indian people to pursue professional degrees, including chiropractic health care. Perhaps this will also be true of Australia and New Zealand with similar colonial histories where suppression of traditional healing practices likely took place. In the wealthier Muslim based countries like in Brunei, United Arab Emirates, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, we find that these governments provide grants for their citizens to earn professional degrees abroad in foreign colleges that may apply to chiropractic education as well.

The question to pose is: "With these benefits, why is it that there are no scholarship students in chiropractic from the Aboriginal population?" This article also reveals the difficulties that arise from a federal system that has yet come to a proper understanding of the chiropractic profession while trying to reach the aboriginal people of Canada.

Since there are immediate scholarship opportunities available for Canadian First Nations people and American Native Indians, the Diplomatic Corps, in partnership with the Indian Health Alliance, has established a program called Aboriginal Recruitment of Chiropractors (ARC) to meet with the Chiefs of the major tribes to initiate recruitment of their students into chiropractic schools.

An important part of the long-term success of this program is to place DCs into the tribal, government and Indian Health Service clinics, where ever possible, in order to meet the immediate needs of their people. Once their students graduate, they will return to take over the already established and thriving clinics.

The basic program outline involves contacting government Aboriginal Bureaus or Agencies for the list of names and addresses of Tribes and their Leaders/ Chiefs; research the special scholarship programs available for Aboriginal People and obtain application forms and procedures; to mail letter to all Chiefs and follow up with a face-to-face meeting with the Chief and Tribal Council for a presentation on our proposal. The Indian Health Alliance serves as the resource center to facilitate of the scholarship application process.

Once the Chiropractic Services Provider Agreement negotiations are completed with each Native Clinic, experienced DCs are recruited and placed in the clinics. The DC candidate would need to become familiar with the tribe's history and customs as well as undergo integration training in preparation for practicing in a multi-disciplinary facility; focusing on the respect of traditions. As the local population of natives experiences the benefits of chiropractic care, the next step is to attract the right students into the chiropractic profession.

Recruiting top native students from each community begins when the chiropractor speaks to the local high school. In conclusion to the lecture, an essay scholarship contest with a cash award is offered to the 11th and 12th year high school students. An interview process that screens the candidates for their suitability as prospective chiropractic students follows the essays. The interested student receives assistance in applying for registration into both the University and the Chiropractic Colleges, with coordination of the available federal scholarship.

A lot of guidance and encouragement is needed to mentor the student through both levels of education to avoid dropouts. Coaching the student along the way should involve them in the clinic during vacation periods at every opportunity as well. Once the new doctor graduates, he or she will benefit from a continuation of mentoring for up to 2 years as the new Doctor of Chiropractic takes over the clinic from the contracted doctor. Then to repeat the same process in all countries where investigations reveal similar opportunities.

This program is a lot easier to write about than to implement. There are many challenges to overcome and the first is the sheer lack of familiarity with chiropractic. Isn't it sad that a group of people who are culturally aligned with the non-allopathic philosophy of chiropractic end up being the last to find out about it? Aboriginals have experienced ridicule in their customs revolving around their medicine men's traditional health care practices; then being forced to adapt to Western cultures and values, only to physically suffer alcohol addiction, diabetes and to suffer denigration, when previously living a highly honored lifestyle. The Imperial Colonization methods imposed severe hardships throughout the world and North America was not spared this fate.

Chiropractic is also a "white man's" invention. Today's Natives still harbor deep resentment for white men's institutions so it is not surprising that they do not easily embrace something that is unknown and foreign to them. A native pastor in British Columbia boldly stated: "I don't believe in chiropractic." Although we recognize the inherent benefits of drugless chiropractic, it will take a very diplomatic approach to establish an open and frank dialogue with aboriginal people.

Upon closer comparison of the neighboring countries of Canada and the USA there is a wide difference between the recognition of chiropractic at their federal levels. In fact, chiropractic is well recognized by the American federal Social Service Administration that authorizes the funding of Medicare and Medicaid programs. Here and in the Armed Forces and Veteran's Administration chiropractic inclusion has been mandated by Congress as far back as 1972 when included in their definition of a physician. In Canada, only recently has the federal government accepted to even look into chiropractic with a version of an Armed Forces Demonstration Project; and this was only possible because of the success of the same program in the eleven US Army bases during the mid 1990's.

The Canadian Chiropractic Association has already attempted to recruit students from the aboriginal populations but with zero results. Not to reflect poorly on this effort, but these results are merely symptoms of a more inherent problem in Canada - **the lack of federal recognition and legal authority to hold an equal place in the delivery of health care.** The five provincial health plans that include chiropractic cover the services at the same level as has been authorized for other para-professional services, such as physical therapy, massage therapy, reflexology, naturopathy etc. It sounds ridiculous to take the high level of chiropractic training, equal to that of an MD in our area of specialty, and place the entire profession at the level of "second-rate citizens." (Beginning to relate to the treatment afforded the natives?)

When we contacted the Inuit and Native Indian Non-Insured Program, a division of the Indian and Northern Affairs Department in the summer of 2001, while acquiring information for the ARC program, we were informed that it would be impossible to place chiropractors in native health care facilities simply because chiropractic has never been recognized by their department. In pressing further, the attitude was expressed as a nationwide federal policy position.

No wonder it was impossible to attract bright young aboriginal minds into the chiropractic profession - Chiropract... what? As it stands right now, we predict that the efforts to pursue the ARC program in America will result in creating some interest in the Canadian Native leadership and begin to produce some results in their tribal communities. However, this investigation revealed the "weakest link" accounting for the long list of frustrating experiences of the chiropractic leadership in all provinces in Canada: a major Atlas subluxation in Ottawa. (It's one thing to be subluxated at L4 or T6 but it's a major issue when it occurs at the Atlas.)

The Chiropractic Diplomatic Corps has remained curious about the disparity in acceptability and inclusion in government benefit programs seen in Canada, in comparison with its southern neighbor. There must be a few additional reasons for the differences but it seems the most significant is the lack of inclusion in federal programs. This gives the provincial pundits the audacity to exhort all forms of discrimination upon the valuable service chiropractors perform for the Canadian people; to ignore the conclusions of the Manga Report; to ignore the results of the natural market place as it exert its influence in American health care; and to allow their lower attributes of human behaviour to participate in prejudicial activities against a fellow countryman.

The solution to encourage aboriginal students into the chiropractic profession begins with a stronger effort to change the current course of attitudes in Ottawa and the respective Provincial Ministries. The chiropractic leadership has expressed its desire to see more individual DCs actively engage in the political effort, both at the national and at the provincial levels. It gets old and tiring in a system that allows the Canadian Secretary of Health to not even show up for two consecutive scheduled meetings with CCA representatives who flew both times to Ottawa just for these meetings. The old guard needs fresh recruits to train for the battles to come. How about you? If you would like to get more involved, contact the CCA and your Provincial Association leadership and start showing up at all the meetings.

When one compares the difference in federal acceptance between the two countries that first established the chiropractic profession's rightful place in the world it becomes easier to understand the "trickle down effects" observed in a wide array of inequities. Stop the "brain drain" of Canada's most valuable resource - its people to the USA, including chiropractors and work to create a professional environment that can support a natural attraction and retention of all population sectors into the profession and to guarantee the future well being of both the profession and the Canadian people... including First Nations people.

Dr. Michel Tetrault is the Executive Director of the Chiropractic Diplomatic Corps, a humanitarian NGO (non-government organization) representing chiropractic patient interests worldwide in promoting the increased availability and equal access of chiropractic to the world's populations. The organization's website is www.ChiropracticDiplomatic.com
