

## **Perseverance helps chiropractors survive**

**Question:** I have lived in Ocean County more than 30 years and am amazed by the amount of chiropractors that have come and gone. Why is it that so many chiropractors are not able to maintain their practices and close after only being open a short time?

**Answer:** Your observation is very accurate. Ocean County has had a large influx of chiropractors over the last 20 years. It does appear that they are on every corner and in every strip mall. I want to believe that the main reason for so many chiropractors in this area is because there is a higher consciousness of health and well being amongst the population. Unfortunately there are other reasons. Ocean County is one of the fastest growing counties in the state and is in my opinion the most beautiful and best quality of life environment to live in and raise a family. It also harbors one of the largest retirement populations in the country. There is a definite attraction to our area for these and many other reasons. Dense populations, great living conditions, and plenty of potential patients add up to a perfect place to hang your shingle. In days of old a doctor could come to town and literally open up and become busy immediately. It is not that easy anymore. Just existing and having a license to practice does not assure you will have success. Chiropractic colleges teach the art, science, and philosophy of the profession but do not prepare a newly licensed doctor to open or run a business. Most chiropractors that fail in practice do so in the first year. This factor alone gives the illusion that multiple chiropractors are overwhelming

the area. The failed office may be sold to another chiropractor that may fail in a year and this sequence can continue.

It is a shame that a talented well-intended disciplined physician can fail in business yet contain such great potential. Reasons for failure are abounding and increasing exponentially as big business and franchise health care invade the health market. Many carriers, limiting the return on services rendered, cap the insurance reimbursement for chiropractors. This means that the doctor gets paid only a certain percentage of his fees for service no matter what treatment he provides. This was not true in the past when the majority of services were covered and paid for. Employers, employees and private individuals pay a lot of money for their insurance coverage and want to get the maximum benefits out of it. Many businesses join group plans such as HMOs or PPOs, which keep some costs of health care down but limit the patient to which doctors they can see. If the new chiropractor or even existing chiropractor is not on that plan the patient will have a tendency to seek a different chiropractor that is on that plan, despite whether he is not as professional, personable or effective. This is a travesty of justice, yet the way of the insurance industry. The new physician may be forced to have only cash patients at lower fees to compete with the insurance doctors, which belittles him and underrates his service. Survival is difficult in this predicament. The chiropractors who do survive and flourish have one particular attribute in common, perseverance. Chiropractors that combine a diversity of patients whom are paying from multiple sources such as workman's compensation, personal injury, and major medical coverages, coupled with cash

reimbursements, protect themselves from both long term and short-term cash flow problems. Establishing and maintaining a successful practice requires great clinical ability and training, a well-trained staff, and sound educational systems. Any chiropractor must stay in tune with changes in the insurance industry and within their own practice. A good chiropractor must stay in shape and maintain a positive upbeat nature. The attrition of many of my colleagues has been due to failed physical health. Chiropractic is a physically and mentally demanding job yet is rated as one of the most satisfying jobs in the world.

You may have a little more respect and understanding for your chiropractor now. We love our patients and appreciate your love in return.

**Quote of the week:** *“Love is the only sane and satisfactory answer to the problems of human existence.”* - Author unknown