



To: COCSA members and non members
From: The Chiropractic Summit Government Relations committee

The Summit Government Relations Work Group met on Tuesday afternoon for its weekly health care reform conference call and the campaign on "essential benefits" from the Solutions III meeting was addressed. The importance of DC services being included within any essential benefits package has been long understood by the Chiropractic Summit (CS) partners and our steering committee members (ACA, ACC, COCSA and ICA).

As you know, it was made clear to us early on, explained by congressional leadership (and certainly NOT a surprise), that specific health care services would not be spelled out in the reform legislation. The list of essential benefits and approved providers will be detailed in the administrative process over the next few months and years. When (and if) the Chiropractic Summit and its 40+ partners believe a focus on essential benefits is of primary importance, we will certainly inform the profession and send a series of action alerts to initiate that effort.

As you are also aware, the Summit Government Relations Work Group meets weekly to keep our efforts focused and on point: "one voice with one message." Our current Summit FOCUS is on **maintaining the historic win of federal non-discrimination language (Section 2706) in the health care law passed by Congress...as it is detailed in the administrative process. This will require all the attention and resources we can possibly muster as a profession...**again, one voice with one message. Divide the message or speak with more than one voice, no matter how important the message...and we will divide our effectiveness. We must move together **as a profession.** We must trust our national leadership and Summit leaders to guide our efforts and keep us focused as strategically as possible.

The National Association of Chiropractic Attorneys met recently and agreed that **the win of non-discrimination language in Section 2706 is historic** and will have far-reaching impact on state and national levels...and that we must all work together to maintain what we have won...toward leveling the health care playing field...as it moves through the administrative process. Already, insurers and AMA are jockeying to remove these gains or craft ways around the non-discrimination/patients' rights mandates. They must not be successful at taking away what we have fought for and won...with the Summit working as one, in coordination with our non-MD provider coalition in Washington, and with the help of past Majority Leader of the House, Dick Gephardt.

There is an immediate need for chiropractic organizations to focus their federal related energies on the adoption of what is known as the “grandfathering” regulations related to the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act. These regulations govern how existing health plans would be able to maintain their “current status” and thus evade application of many of the consumer-friendly provisions of the new bill, including Section 2706 which seeks to eliminate various forms of discrimination against health providers simply based on their scope of practice, license or certification. In the coming weeks, you will soon see a template for comments that can be sent by a state organization or an individual doctor or patient. We urge you to submit comments using this template and encourage doctors and patients to do the same.

Additionally, states are being urged by the Summit partners to work together and prepare for the establishment of the newly created “state exchanges” that are expected to grow into important health care marketplaces as the new legislation is implemented over a period of years. On our June call, we asked the states to do the following:

1. Establish a working group within the state association to monitor the creation of your local state-based exchange. These exchanges may be created by executive order, policy creation by the state Insurance Commissioner, or through legislation.
2. Work to develop relationships with key players in the process – the Governor, State Insurance Commissioner, and local Representatives and Senators who sit on committees responsible for healthcare in your state.
3. Determine how local doctors of chiropractic may become members of State Advisory Councils and take every measure to have DC’s appointed to these groups.
4. Relay all information obtained from this process to the Chiropractic Summit Government Relations Working Group. The Summit Working Group will be compiling a database on the state-based exchanges so we may share this information with other state associations. Our challenge going forward is to open the door to these exchanges for DC’s at the state level. We must ensure that doctors of chiropractic are included in provider panels and that fee parity is maintained as these plans are created. To do this we must work with state agencies to ensure that chiropractic services are considered an essential component of any health care plan.

This information will help ensure that chiropractic is fully mobilized in support of patient access safeguards as the new health care overhaul law is implemented through legislative and/or regulatory action in your state. We strongly recommended that an action plan be developed (and shared with Summit Work Group) designed to fully safeguard patient access to chiropractic care through the exchange in each state. As noted in previous communications, such activity may be through the Governor’s Office, the Insurance Commissioner’s Office, the Legislature – or a combination of these.

We ask that all states and all the profession stand with us in the Chiropractic Summit and move as one, one voice with one message.