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JOINT POLICY STATEMENT ON NATIONAL HEALTH CARE REFORM

On Behalf of a United Chiropractic Profession

The leadership of the chiropractic profession is united in its belief that effective national health care reform will only achieve maximum benefit for the American people when coupled with a broad transformational *paradigm shift* to a forward thinking and progressive health system that focuses on comprehensive wellness care, healthful lifestyle choices and disease prevention. We believe that such reform is urgent in the face of the looming provider shortage and the unprecedented demands our aging population will place on the system.

The chiropractic profession recommends that this new system include three pillars vital to the health reform movement. The essential services provided by a doctor of chiropractic address these pillars:

ACCESS: Extend health care access to the estimated 45 million uninsured Americans that currently have little or no reliable access to comprehensive health care services. America has over 65,000 doctors of chiropractic, proven providers of cost effective spine care for patients of all ages, with all its broad-body implications for health. Research clearly demonstrates that procedures utilized by doctors of chiropractic are effective and supports chiropractic's maximum utilization in addressing the nation's current health care crisis.

COST: Reduce the current high cost of health care services and health care insurance coverage. Limit future cost increases to rates that more closely match the overall inflation rate of the nation's economy by reducing errors, encouraging the utilization of cost effective care pathways, enhancing patient choices, stressing patient responsibility for health and prevention and other urgent changes. Scientific evidence powerfully supports the safety, effectiveness and cost savings of chiropractic care. Chiropractic care is especially important in improving function, joint mobility and quality of life for beneficiaries through the use of conservative methods reducing reliance on expensive drugs and surgery.

QUALITY: Significantly improve the effectiveness of those health care services being delivered now and in the future. Doctors of chiropractic are especially well qualified to play an integral role in the needed shift to a health delivery system that is appropriately focused on essential wellness care and disease prevention services.

In a properly reoriented health delivery system - one that places an appropriate emphasis on wellness and preventive care – chiropractic care would rightly be viewed as an essential element of any health plan seeking to provide an adequate range of basic health care services.

Decision makers should seek to affirm and expand patient freedoms to allow for full direct access to the providers and health care pathways of their choice. Every patient should have the right to choose and be reimbursed for all health care services from doctors of chiropractic without barriers and limitations that unfairly restrict their freedom of choice. Arbitrary anti-competitive barriers only serve to drive up costs, limit patient choice and erode the quality and timeliness of care by steering patients to more expensive hospital, surgical and pharmaceutical care.