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Greetings Doctors,

I would like to share with you some thoughts about the increased level of credentials and requirements necessary to matriculate into the new Masters of Science program in Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation (MS: PM&R).

Educational standards of the Chiropractic profession have made enormous strides over the last 40 years. Public opinion and standards of care have been driving forces necessitating professional change. Perception by ones professional peers has always been a key factor motivating an individual to achieve higher levels of academic standards. As the health care field has become increasingly more competitive both intra and inter professionally Chiropractic Physicians have come to realize the necessity of achieving higher levels of academic competency. Many graduating Doctors of Chiropractic, chiropractic physicians, have chosen specialty education and certification or diplomate status in the field of Chiropractic Orthopedics.

In the 1980's the chiropractic profession entered the health care arena formally through the front door of accredited hospitals. In the mid 1990's we saw the emergence of chiropractic care in the Department of Defense military health care system. After the turn of the century in the early 2000's the chiropractic profession again entered into a new area for services in the Veterans Administration health care system. ***With these events specialty designation within our profession has taken on a new significance.***

Academic achievement and specialty designation has never been as significant for the chiropractic physician as it is in today's health care environment. Integration of the chiropractic profession in the accredited hospital in-patient area and in both DOD and VA governmental systems has given the profession the opportunity to be recognized as a vital health care partner in the inter-professional co-management of neuromusculoskeletal conditions. Never before has specialty designation and graduate level education meant as much for recognition of the chiropractic physician by promoting a greater level of inter-professional acceptance.

The Veterans Administration established a documented educational standard by the recognition of chiropractic specialty designation. This recognition establishes criteria promoting the Chiropractic Physician, with specialty credentials of recognized academic skills, to the preferred individual of choice in the selection to fill employment vacancies for chiropractic physicians in the Veterans Administration system. Chiropractic physicians possessing the added credentials in recognized specialty certification and graduate degrees have the competitive advantage of employment in these areas.

There is an ever increasing challenge to the chiropractic profession by non-physician health care providers as they elevate academic standards in an attempt to surpass the academic strides our profession has attained. The emergence of Masters and

PhD level programs beyond specialty designation has become a necessity for the profession to survive in the multi-disciplinary health care environment. These demands created a new vision within the Chiropractic Orthopedic community. The goal is to have these standards become a reality by [2010](#).

With increased academic demands of the Masters program came the need for increased entry level credentials. The Bachelors of Science baccalaureate degree provided one of these credentials. However, in years past many Chiropractic Colleges awarding Doctor of Chiropractic degrees did not have the pathway to award the Bachelors of Science degree, and many recent graduating Doctors of Chiropractic did not see the importance of having the additional Bachelors of Science degree. So it is that, as a Chiropractic Orthopedist, one may wish to matriculate to the higher standard of the Masters of Science degree in Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation, but discovers he or she is short the requirement of a Bachelors of Science degree required for admission into the MS: PM&R program.

Fortunately in this age of computerized education there exist many opportunities through on-line programs to acquire a BS degree that satisfies the admission requirement into the Masters of Science in Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation program. There are many choices that may meet ones needs both on-line and in local institutions of higher learning that make it easy for the busy professional to achieve this goal.

A good start in finding on-line sources is to search the key words or phrase: *Online Bachelors Degrees in Health Sciences*. Of the many results I found a few of interest: www.classesusa.com, www.degreeirectory.org and www.elearners.com. These sites will direct you to colleges that offer the desired Bachelor's of Science programs. Some will give advanced standing and credit for prior courses, experience and military schools. However, one must contact the Chiropractic College offering the Masters of Science in Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation program and insure that the Bachelors of Science degree awarded by a particular on-line college course will be accepted as admission requirement into their MS: PM&R program.

I find myself at this point in my career questioning the reason why I would subject myself to this added endeavor of a Masters program. I have come to one conclusion and that is the development and perfection of skills and the continued acquisition of knowledge. I would urge those of you that are Chiropractic Orthopedists pondering his or her quest for knowledge and skills to not delay in obtaining the Bachelors of Science degree required for admission into the MS: PM&R program.

As I acquire additional information on the Bachelors of Science degree requirement I will make future postings to the Academy web site. Please visit the website frequently to be kept up to date.