

## **December 2008**

Academy e-letter  
Volume 7, Number 12

From the Desk of:

Stephen D. Capps, DC. FACO  
President, Academy of Chiropractic Orthopedists

Seasons Greetings to all Fellows:

I would like to take this opportunity to wish each of you a very blessed holiday season.

I also would like to thank you, members of the orthopedic specialty and coalition, for your continued support of the Academy. The Academy is grateful for your participation and continued dedication to further advance the specialty and the chiropractic profession. It is only through your support and team work that the specialty is able to continue these professional advances.

When one looks at the challenges of the current economic environment it may be difficult to appreciate current opportunities that are available. Of the many things to be grateful for one should not overlook time available to pursue additional skill sets that would enhance patient care as well as broaden opportunities for professional development. It is said that there is no better investment opportunity than to invest in ones career through additional education, academics and credentials.

There are many exciting opportunities that are currently available and more opportunities that will become available in the near future. These opportunities will continue to advance the academic credential and evidence base available to the chiropractic profession as well as provide additional assets to the orthopedic specialist. I would encourage each of you to contribute to overall professional development through whichever avenue is the most appealing to you.

There are many opportunities to contribute including reviews, case studies and articles needed to build the foundation and expand the evidence base of chiropractic care. Additionally there are graduate level courses available which will provide additional credentials apparent to both the patient population as well as other health care providers. These credentials in themselves will secure additional referrals to specialty practices and improve overall case management outcomes.

The following article highlights current changes in the academic pathways and opportunities available to the profession:

### **HOW CREDENTIAL CREEP IS AFFECTING THE CHIROPRACTIC PROFESSION AND THE ORTHOPEDIC SPECIALTY**

Over the past century of its chronicled existence the Chiropractic profession's degree program has progressed from professional certificate, to associate degree, to bachelor degree, and now new pathways have emerged to master and doctoral degree programs. The chiropractic profession is experiencing the credential creep of the health care professions.

With the current standard of academic levels in the health profession the eventual impact of credential creep has become a reality that mandates the chiropractic profession, if it is going to survive and maintain a credible credential, must accelerate along academic pathways. There is an increasing awareness on the part of our patients, as well as other health care professions, of academic credentials to include not only board certified specialties but graduate level degrees as well. Across the board of health care fields there is an increasing need to maintain a higher level of academic credential. Whether we like it or not the public does look at the credentials a provider has following their name. The chiropractic profession can no longer rely on simply a competency model that is not tied to academic degrees.

Along this same path board certified specialties, based on post graduate studies and competency based models, in the future will increasingly become based on graduate level studies as well as certification and re-certification by specialty competency exam. Graduate level degrees will ultimately determine the future of chiropractic specialties. Those specialties that do not progress to a graduate level of study will fall short of the bar with credible credentials. The Academy of Chiropractic Orthopedists position on this issue is one of increasing awareness and proactive development of graduate level pathways.

A graduate level of education will further increase and develop the skills and knowledge base of current chiropractic physicians that are board certified orthopedic specialists for present and future clinical, hospital and academic demands. If the orthopedic specialist is to be viewed at the same level of competency, in their respective field of neuro-musculoskeletal management, as their medical and osteopathic counterparts then it is essential to possess equal if not greater credentials. With the increased level of responsibility demanded of the chiropractic physician in the clinical, hospital and academic settings the doctor of chiropractic, board certified in orthopedics, possessing degrees at the master or doctoral academic level will possess the skills and knowledge to excel in these areas. This makes the orthopedic specialty graduate level study program an appropriately recommended academic credential for specialty certification, re-certification and maintaining ones credentials and privileges.

The chiropractic college system has served the profession well over the decades. Now through a team effort of leading educators and academicians the orthopedic coalition has developed a Master of Science (MSc) program in Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation (PM&R). This program will meet the future needs of accelerated credentials and the criteria for orthopedic board specialty certification. The Academy strongly supports the board certified orthopedist continuing their education through traditional pathways as well as obtaining further education along the graduate level master and doctoral programs that meet the criteria demanded of the orthopedic specialty field.

Please visit the Academy web site [www.dcorthoacademy.com](http://www.dcorthoacademy.com) often for the latest developments and encourage your respective alma mater to offer the Master of Science (MSc PM&R) program.

STEPHEN D. CAPPS DC, FACO, FICC

I would encourage each of you to assess your future needs and goals as to how graduate level studies will influence your skills to provide the most current and up to date quality care to your patients with outcome measures as management tools for an effective evidence based practice.

I wish each of you a very prosperous and happy new year.

Thank you for your continued support of the Academy.

STEPHEN D. CAPPS DC, FACO

President

Academy of Chiropractic Orthopedists