

Oregon Update: Chiropractic Researcher Discredits SAIF Report

By Editorial Staff

In an exceptional effort, Joanne Nyiendo, Ph.D., one of chiropractic's top researchers, has refuted the SAIF report that was used to discredit the chiropractic profession in Oregon.

The State Accident Insurance Fund (SAIF) of Oregon is a quasi-public company that is Oregon's largest worker's compensation insurer. Recently, they produced a 665-page report which detailed 1988 and 1989 provider payments. This report was especially critical to chiropractic care.

The result of the SAIF report was a barrage of some of the most damaging publicity the chiropractic profession has ever seen. Newspapers and magazines featured articles with headlines:

"Chiropractors: Cases Prove To Be 2.5 Times More Expensive" Headline from The Oregonian, April 5, 1990 and included statements such as:

"The average cost per claim (for chiropractic care) was \$703, compared to \$284 for a medical doctor. Chiropractic claims are likely to remain open much longer too." Oregon Business, October, 1989.

Needless to say, this report and the anti-chiropractic publicity it created served to direct the political wrath of the Oregon legislature against chiropractic care. The real damage occurred when politicians considered ways to reduce the expenses of the ailing worker's compensation system. Oregon chiropractors lost most of their worker's comp reimbursement privileges. They have now been relegated to one month or twelve visits, whichever comes first.

But Dr. Nyiendo has effectively demonstrated that the SAIF report should not have been relied upon (please see her testimony "State Accident Insurance Fund (SAIF) Data Not Research Material" on this page). Dr. Nyiendo's testimony was submitted along with supportive documentation to the Legislative Hearing Committee for inclusion in the record.

Dr. Nyiendo's findings were confirmed by Dan Adelman, of the Department of Insurance and Finance. In a letter to Oregon Speaker of the House Vera Katz, Mr. Adelman stated "Dr. Nyiendo's criticism of the use made of the 1988 data is essentially valid: the data did not fairly compare actual medical costs among providers." (Please see letter to Representative Katz on this page).

To this end, the profession has turned back the SAIF claims. But the damage remains.

Chiropractic still has a black-eyed reputation. The DCs in Oregon have lost many of their worker's comp privileges. Our enemies have seen an effective demonstration of how to decrease the public's access to chiropractic care.

Now is the time for preparation.

The chiropractic profession cannot afford to hope for a good defense. Part of our weakness is lack of research data that will demonstrate how effective chiropractic care is. Even the little research we have remains a secret. Every chiropractor and chiropractic student has an obligation to be familiar with the research literature and should be sending copies of supportive studies to their legislators. Every legislative library should be filled with information and data regarding the value of chiropractic care.

For more information on what happened in Oregon and how you can protect chiropractic in your state, please contact either:

Oregon Chiropractic Physician's Association
3903 S.W. Kelly, Suite 150
150 Portland, Oregon 97201
(503) 224-2464

OR

Chiropractic Society of Oregon
P.O. Box 16452
Portland, Oregon 97216
(503) 253-6513

In addition, you may want to equip yourself with two of the most important studies to occur within the last year. (Please see page XX of this issue.)

If we are not prepared to protect our profession against this event, no one else will.



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