

Health Insights Today

A SERVICE OF CLEVELAND CHIROPRACTIC COLLEGE

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EDITOR'S LOG

Change in the Military, Change in the Society

By Daniel Redwood, DC

Beyond its primary mission of national defense, the United States military has long served as a laboratory for social change. President Truman's courageous decision in 1948 to desegregate the military set into motion changes that have reverberated through our society ever since. For many years, I lived and worked in southeastern Virginia, a region with many military bases and hundreds of thousands of veterans. It was clear that institutional support for racial equality within the military had played a pivotal role in speeding the breakup of centuries-long patterns of prejudice and discrimination. Later policy changes mandating that women in the military be judged on merit rather than gender have expanded this model of nondiscrimination. Problems still exist but there has been great progress.

The military is currently incorporating other changes that also have the capacity to spread through society as a whole. Without seeking to equate discrimination against chiropractors with the horrors of racial, ethnic, or gender discrimination, I believe it is fair to say that all represent forms of injustice.

In the past decade, Department of Defense (DOD) and Veterans Administration (VA) medical systems, bowing to sustained pressure from Congress, have gradually put into practice new policies that reverse longstanding discriminatory rules under which chiropractors were excluded from participation in the health care delivery systems for veterans and active duty members of the Armed Forces.

Moreover, President-elect Obama, in three detailed letters to the American Chiropractic Association in 2008, has endorsed fuller inclusion and integration of chiropractic into the health care provided by the DOD, VA, Medicare, the U.S. Public Health Service and any expanded national health program enacted by his administration and the new Congress.

Leaders in a Time of Transition

In this issue of *Health Insights Today*, we highlight the ways that the DOD and the VA are moving to integrate chiropractic and acupuncture into their health care systems. I recently interviewed two doctors whose leadership in this transition is helping pave the way for broader changes in the coming years.

Chip Gowan, DC, is the full-time staff chiropractor at the Kansas City Veterans Administration Hospital, where he has developed a program where selected student interns from Cleveland Chiropractic College–Kansas City participate in rotations as part of their education. Richard Niemtow, MD, PhD, MPH, practices acupuncture full-time at Andrews Air Force Base in Maryland, while also seeing patients at the Pentagon and Walter Reed Army Medical Center and serving on-call with the medical team at the White House. Drs. Gowan and Niemtow are doctors that future members of their professions will remember as trailblazers. The same can certainly be said of Bill Morgan, DC, the chiropractor at the National Naval Medical Center interviewed in our inaugural issue.

Another example of the military's increasing openness to new approaches is the recent grant of over \$400,000 to the Center for Mind-Body Medicine (CMBM) by the newly formed Defense Center of Excellence for Psychological Health and Traumatic Brain Injury, to study the effectiveness of a comprehensive, non-drug approach to treating posttraumatic stress disorder and major depression with troops returning from Iraq and Afghanistan and their families. The CMBM model includes mind-body approaches (meditation, guided imagery, biofeedback, and yoga) and self-expression in words, drawings, and movement, in supportive, educational small groups.

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James Gordon, MD, the center's founder and director, presented a workshop about the CMBM approach recently at Cleveland Chiropractic College–Kansas City. Dr. Gordon is a clinical professor at the Georgetown University School of Medicine and chaired the White House Commission on Complementary and Alternative Medicine Policy. His most recent book is *Unstuck: Your Guide to the Seven-Stage Journey Out of Depression* (Penguin, 2008). Dr. Gordon is a *Health Insights Today* editorial board member.

Finding a New Path in Civilian Life

Among the hundreds of thousands of veterans returning from Iraq, Afghanistan and other assignments are many men and women embarked on a sincere search for meaningful careers through which they can continue to serve others. For some, chiropractic is a perfect fit. The veterans among my students here at Cleveland Chiropractic College bring a maturity and seriousness of purpose that will undoubtedly serve them well in the future. In this issue, we interview one of these students, Valerie Tolen, a former military medic for whom chiropractic is the logical next step in her health care career. Her motivation is admirable and her dedication is strong. I am hopeful that this interview will inspire others in search of meaning and purpose to pursue careers in chiropractic.

Growing Your Own Vegetables

This issue also includes an article of mine about the joys and rewards of vegetable gardening. I've been an organic gardener for years and highly recommend it. Gardening is a hobby but it can be much more. It's good exercise, yields healthy and tasty food, and might just be the human activity that delivers more wide-ranging benefits than any other. To create a society that can be sustainable for many generations, we'll need many more people in suburbs and cities to join those in rural areas in growing some of their own vegetables. This will provide a 21st century equivalent of the "victory gardens" of the World War II era. Perhaps this time around we'll call them "homeland security gardens." Or "sustainability gardens" or "save the planet gardens." Whatever name we choose, we'll need them for the future health of our nation and our world. Now is the time to start.

Yoga's Deeper Meaning

Ashley Cleveland, DC, continues her series on yoga, with a change of pace. While most people think of yoga as a form of exercise, the roots of yoga tradition have more to do with the cultivation of compassion and the quest for deeper meaning in life. To embody these values requires us to craft a counter-narrative to our culture's incessant focus on drive and competition. In Dr. Cleveland's words, "We are rewarded for winning, for pushing ourselves to our limits to achieve. Drive is valorized. Those who have earned the right to call themselves *doctor* have had to work particularly long and hard, often marginalizing everyone and everything in their lives to complete school, internships, board and licensing examinations." Finding balance in our lives is a necessity, particularly at times of stress experienced in our years as doctoral students.

Research Updates

Starting in this issue, we're including a brief, "news you can use" summary of cutting-edge research in nutrition. Then, in our March issue we will expand this to include research in other key areas such as exercise and fitness, mind-body health, chiropractic, complementary and alternative medicine, and important news on the health policy front. Our goal is to provide a one-stop quick update for busy practitioners, students and others who need this useful information in an easy-to-read, short format.

If there are topics that you would like to see in *Health Insights Today*, please send me an email. We want this newsletter to do the best possible job at providing you with the natural health information you need.

Daniel Redwood, DC
Editor-in-Chief