

# CHIROPRACTIC DIPLOMATIC CORPS

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2003 Pioneer Survey Preliminary Results



# Pioneer Practices in Chiropractic

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In January 2003, *Pioneer Survival Surveys* were sent to about five-dozen DCs in over fifty countries to obtain information about their experiences. The survey asked for their top three answers to five basic questions. The following summarizes the responses submitted by first DCs to return the survey from Botswana, Brazil, Croatia, Guatemala, Honduras, Italy, Jamaica, Peru, Philippines, Russia, Singapore, Turkey, Uganda, United Kingdom, Ukraine and Zimbabwe. In evaluating the data there appeared two main topical issues that focus on "what you do" and "who you are" in pioneering chiropractic.

## 1. What are the top 3 things you think someone needs to know before opening up a pioneer practice?

### a) What you do

- Become familiar with the target culture
- Learn the dominant language of the land
- Be familiar with legalities required to set up move:
  - The right to live in country
  - The right to work as DC or other healthcare provider designation
  - Business obligations such as fees, taxes, etc.
- Find a sponsor or "local" you can trust to facilitate visas, leases, etc.
- Be familiar with the lay healers, their role as well as MDs
- Acquaint yourself with as many local DCs as possible (if any)
- Create a budget and business plan
- Get adequate reserves of funds (average is \$25,000 to set up a practice and \$3-5,000 for associate)

### b) Who you are

- Genuinely interested in caring for these people
- Ready to work hard and be patient but persistent
- Committed to this location and its people enough to dedicate yourself a minimum number of years in this location or area
- Someone who is flexible, a self starter with a Purpose
- Willing to be humble and network with MDs in area
- Willing to be accountable to your patients and your profession, to the host community as well as your family

## 2. What are the top 3 things you do to build your practice?

### a) What you do

- Meet the movers and shakers who support chiropractic
- Get to know local MDs interested in chiropractic and ask for referrals
- Meet athletes and sponsor them. They are highly respected and admired by the public in general. They are also sensitive to their bodies and are great patients and referrers.
- Outside lectures: talk to groups; school careers days, organizations ex. Rotary
- Mandatory patient lay lectures / orientations
- Basic marketing: business cards, brochures, flyers, etc.
- Advertise: Press Releases, Radio, Newspapers, Magazines, TV, Fliers
- Provide written reports to GP referrals

### b) Who you are

- A part of the community

- A conscientious and caring clinician - the best adjuster you can be
- Comfortable with your position as a chiropractor and willing to interest others in your special work (including MDs, business men and women, leaders, public at large)
- A professional both in and out of the office
- A hard working business person interested in a personal success and a growing profession

### **3. List the top 3 challenges you face continuously.**

#### a) Affecting what you do

- Lack of chiropractic understanding (awareness) by community and other healthcare providers
- Lack of professional support by peers
- Inadequate or missing legislative protection
- Poor language skills
- Difficulty getting x-rays
- Competition by lay healers claiming to be chiropractors and the damage their poor skills inflict

#### b) Affecting who you are

- Frustrations due to cultural differences
  - Attitudes toward you as a foreigner / expatriate
  - Financial disparity of the region
  - Mañana attitude
- Invalidation by other healthcare professionals due to ignorance or prejudice
- Concerns about finances and at times personal safety

### **4. What are the top 3 things you know you have to do to stay out of trouble?**

#### a) What you do

- Make friends with people in high places
- Know your rights and the local laws (and follow them)
- Improve language and communication skills
- Practice basic chiropractic (don't mix)
- Do not misrepresent chiropractic

#### b) Who you are

- Tolerant at all times when experiencing cultural differences
- Adaptable to new situations
- Low keyed and non confrontational
- Prayerful, on purpose and calm
- Cautious (do not trust too easily)
- Courteous - to other healthcare professionals in particular

### **5. Finally, what are the top 3 things you feel still need to get done, that are doable, that can strengthen your survivability so the next generation will be assured the availability of chiropractic?**

#### a) What you do

- Use your contacts to build support for the chiropractic profession
- Run high volume and profitable practices (How fast can you and the other DCs see 100,000 patients?)
- Keep an active and strong national association
- Attract new people to be chiropractors
- Bring people together to start a chiropractic school
- Keep high personal and professional standards
- Be prepared with documents and speak to MDs, legislators, business and community leaders

- Use media to build P.R. about chiropractic: interview-type articles, press releases, etc.

b) Who you are

- Confident, on Purpose and successful
- Professional in and out of the office
- Accomplished spokesperson
- Continuously improving own knowledge and skill base

## Pioneer Practices in Chiropractic

Survival Survey Responses, 2003 from Botswana, Brazil, Croatia, Guatemala, Honduras, Italy, Jamaica, Peru, Philippines, Russia, Singapore, Turkey, Uganda, United Kingdom, Ukraine and Zimbabwe.

### 1. What are the top 3 things you think someone needs to know before opening up a pioneer practice?

a) Regarding your patients

- The real needs of the people in that area
- Love & Interest in the potential hardships of meeting and treating a new cultural people group
- Dedication and a willingness to understand the culture they will be living in and to learn the local language.
- The Language. You can also learn as you go. Opening a private practice from scratch is how we learned the language. Interaction with intent and emotion makes for fast learning.
- They need to understand the local medical culture
- The local language (at least conversational)
- The peoples' response (attitude) to illness
- How to communicate (language barrier)
- It is a privilege if they allow you to practice in their country (as apposed to visa versa)
- Be flexible and adaptable to their new cultural ways and activities, different from N. America
- The environment
- Vision

b) Regarding your practice

- Business and chiropractic legality
- How to take care of patients
- Nothing is as powerful as word of mouth referral
- The real costs, including hidden and otherwise unforeseen, of maintaining the practice
- The Law. The legal situation (Chiropractically speaking)
- Meet as many chiropractors as you can already in practice. They will all be helpful and empathetic. In fact the usual scenario is a free meal, huge information transfer, and a job offer (5/10). I communicated with 30 DCs in Italy as part of my research. Lots of fun!
- Clarify the local laws regarding medical licensing of chiropractic
- Is it legal? Relative question, but will you get thrown in jail?
- The laws of the land you choose to live
- Local laws (tax, employee salaries etc)
- Is this a place where you could see yourself living for a while
- Try to establish a core of followers who were good patients and people in high places
- Have a vision that covers everything from patient greeting to actual care

### **c) Regarding yourself**

- Determination
- It takes time
- Be patient, it may take time getting established due to the uniqueness of your service in that area
- Prepare for the long haul - say 3 yrs to establish a good professional rapport and help a lot of patients
- Knowledge
- Readiness to work
- It takes perseverance
- Commitment
- Have determination to be successful in all you set out to do-much as setting up a new practice
- Persistence
- It will be hard work. Like most things, it is your decision whether you think it is enjoyable or otherwise.
- Patience
- It takes dedication to the principal of chiropractic
- Do you know what culture shock is, and are you prepared to deal with it?
- Courage

### **d) Miscellaneous**

- Why are you going? What are you seeking?
- Prepare to face competitors with fair professional challenge as quack MD manipulators
- Speak to professional groups about chiropractic
- Someone who can "open any door"
- Need to know who you will be targeting in your marketing

## **2. What are the top 3 things you do to build your practice?**

### **a) Regarding your patients**

- Gradually meet the people who can open any doors establish a good reputation with care given
- Adjust well known people
- Social contacts
- Always explain chiropractic to your patients
- Take care of my patients very well so they refer. All practice building here is referral as advertising is not allowed.
- Try to answer much of the patient's questions
- Tell people what chiropractic is and what it can do for them
- Striving at excellence in Chiropractic to generate satisfied patient referrals
- Quality service/ being result oriented and honest

### **b) Regarding your practice**

- Establish a good reputation with care given
- The best service possible
- Lecture
- Provide good service. You represent the profession. It is a huge weight to bare.
- Superb service
- Continually doing a good clinical job
- Good relationship with local medical professionals
- Continuing to give quality service / being patient for growth
- Keep a low profile, i.e. do not upset the locals especially medics
- Patient-patient referral
- Low overhead expenses / to be service oriented than money oriented

### **c) Regarding yourself**

- Be a real neighbor
- Consistency
- Come to work every day and do my best

- Reasonable fees
- Serve with care
- Talk to anybody and everybody and hand out cards afterwards
- Regularly speak of the work I do - ex: to every taxi driver--3 per day
- Endeavor to communicate all what you do
- Do not make inappropriate claims regarding your scope of practice
- Meet people. Your qualifications mean little until you have your hands on someone in your office. I walked around with my plastic spine and walked into every business and handed out my business cards. In broken Italian I just told people to come and have their spine checked. No, I did not feel comfortable, and my wife thought I was crazy (she refused to walk with me). Inevitably, the phone rang at least once after every "meet and greet on the street" session.
- Hard work
- Work on myself
- Keep going
- Be prepared to get depressed at the poor response especially from MDs

#### d) Specifics

- Advertise: Radio, Newspapers, Magazines, TV, Fliers.
- Meet all the medical physicians who are interested in chiropractic
- Health care classes are mandatory.
- Marketing
- Press releases
- Promotional flyers
- Referral from other health professionals
- Give out cards and pamphlets to tell who you are & what you can offer
- Provide written reports to GP referrals
- Newspaper and some TV ads
- Talking in front of groups
- Talk to groups; school careers days, organizations ex. Rotary
- Meet athletes and sponsor them. They are highly respected and admired by the public in general. They are also sensitive to their bodies and are great patients and referrers.

### 3. List the top 3 challenges you face continuously.

#### a) Cultural

- Language
- Being fluent in Spanish
- Understanding the culture I work in
- Being patient with 3rd world red tape
- Cultural differences
- Struggle in mastering Spanish
- Poverty conscience (of community)
- No priority of taking responsibility about their health consciousness
- Other so called chiropractors that are actually massage therapists, who have hurt people in the past
- Lack of awareness
- Language barriers
- Lack of chiropractic legislation causes certain barriers at times
- Heat culture/the language
- Economic and political hardship in the country causing patients to emigrate
- To expect one magic touch for healing for everything
- Continuous threat of negative people, and their cruelties towards others

#### b) Professional

- Ignorance in respect to the chiropractic profession
- Handling money issues in a third world, we don't want to give away services and we don't want to turn anyone down

- Getting x-rays. If they recognize their importance and communicate this to the patient. They will help find a way. People that can afford your care are generally connected. the process gets easier. Unless, of course, if you stop trying!
- People's overall lack of knowledge about the spine & the role it plays in the body
- Medical jealousy-ignorance
- Old medical fraternity mindsets/dogma
- No idea about the concept of chiropractic principles or practice
- Charlatanism masquerading as viable competition
- Requesting x-rays
- Ignorance
- Other health-workers may not necessarily see your services as relevant
- Avoiding 'stepping on toes' of medical professionals
- Patient education (working with the cause & not the symptoms)
- Medical doctors. Mostly not helpful... Same stuff, different laws
- Some health-workers may work against you
- Improper spinal care (by other healthcare givers) has turned many people off to spinal care.
- Lack of knowledge about chiropractic
- No colleagues in neighborhood to raise a joint voice

#### c) Personal

- Unexpected costs
- Attitudes I face in dealing with difficult patients-ex: Latino machismo and 2 class structures
- Distraction from purpose
- Misinformation
- Keeping at doing a good job on both rich & poor alike
- Keeping my mouth shut about the political situation here, so that I wont be arrested
- Educating your patients and local community about your practice
- Not having US conveniences, ex. good banking
- Impatience!
- Continual professional development
- Being isolated from my professional colleagues
- Getting enough money to keep up my continuing education requirements for my USA license, in case I have to abandon everything here due to civil unrest
- Getting bread, butter, milk, cooking oil, salt, sugar, flour, eggs, pet food and other basic food stuffs or just obtaining fuel for my car
- Getting myself adjusted. My biggest challenge... Let me know if you can help. Chiropractor wanted!

#### 4. What are the top 3 things you know you have to do to stay out of trouble?

##### a) Community

- Maintain good relations with the door openers
- Know people in high places
- Make friends in high places
- Follow the rules of the country
- Keep an eye over your shoulder in crime-ridden areas
- As above: Know and follow the laws
- Speak the language proficiently
- Compliance with the law
- Do not create enemies
- Don't irritate the wrong people
- Obey all human and public laws
- Education of patients and public
- Not make waves with heavyweight/well connected healthcare professionals
- Cooperation with other health professionals
- Take good care of your patients
- Patient referral base practice
- Respect local, cultural norms

### **b) Self**

- Pray a lot
- Objectivity
- Mind your P's and Q's
- Do not trust anyone
- Slow and stable growth in practice
- Always approach to things in a calm manner
- Be always ready and willing to apologize and acknowledge one's weaknesses
- Acceptance of life here on its terms
- Know how and when to tell good jokes/anecdotes in the new language
- Watch my backside and not go to places in potential danger
- Overcome fears and doubts
- Stay on purpose
- Watch what I say and do in not offending others
- Stay humble. Chiropractic is the essence of miracles. Your patients will treat you like royalty. Take no credit for your services and raise your standards.
- Don't get politically involved
- Stay excited about what I do
- Exercise and enjoy my personal time to stay viable personally

### **c) Specifics**

- Do not criticize medical profession
- Stay within chiropractic scope of practice
- Provide the best care possible daily
- Establish a base of people who will help you, lawyers, professional friends etc.
- Do not claim to treat non-musculoskeletal disorders
- Listen to my accountant and lawyer on changing business rules and tax rules
- Don't mix. There are lots of physical therapists and they are licensed. You are not, so you don't want to be prosecuted for practicing anything without a license. It still happens here.
- Know your legal rights
- Learn the laws. Ask for help. People will warm to you and local knowledge imperative.
- Always avail yourself to discuss with relevant authorities in the community
- Practice legally if possible; permits, licensure, health card, etc. Pay all taxes expected of you.
- Stay out of medical scopes of practice---patients will ask you what meds to take

**5. Finally, what are the top 3 things you feel still need to get done, that are doable, that can strengthen your survivability so the next generation will be assured the availability of chiropractic?**

### **a) Cultural**

- Distinguish our profession from local bonesetters, or anyone who manipulates without proper qualifications (i.e. anyone who is not a chiro)
- More awareness
- Educate the local community and medical professionals using 'soft' approach
- Tell the chiropractic story

### **b) Legal & Educational**

- Enlighten the door-openers about scientific chiropractic versus the charlatans
- Make sure the whole surrounding community knows of us and what we actually do and how we do it
- Recognition of title. People are being hurt by under qualified practitioners. This gives chiropractic a bad name.
- Allow a wide array of professional contact with others to market the profession - ex. offer by a College President to start a College proceeding here
- Encouraging the young to study chiropractic
- More education about chiropractic for public
- Assert the equivalent legal status of chiropractic



- Chiropractic college
- Inspire others to study chiropractic; without natives becoming chiropractors, chiropractic will develop slowly
- Set up some type of legislation
- We have a good chiropractic law we need a just government to allow the economy to come right
- Approval of Status of chiropractic as a health profession in Health Ministry of Turkey

#### c) Professional

- More chiropractors
- Saturate the market by adjusting as many people as possible
- Help as many patients as possible, making chiropractic better known
- Bring in more young chiros that are not enmeshed in massive school debt
- Get some native or Russian speaking DCs out here, in active full-time practice
- Treat more patients and hence built up a professional reliable name
- Educate other health care professionals about chiropractic
- Keep the "insurance mills" out of the arena as much as possible
- Get better PR coverage & exposure-radio, TV
- Keep an active and strong national association
- Research in the field of chiropractic
- Form alliances with well-known International Chiropractic Schools & promote the idea of university level courses in the country. The benefits are obvious!!!
- Unify chiropractors to work together. Work together to establish favorable laws and develop a chiropractic course.
- Objective studies on chiropractic
- Network with other health professionals and VIPs
- Explain to MD's what we do and how we do it, so that they aren't scared or intimidated by us
- Ensure CCE accreditation, etc, so the profession maintains its standards
- More chiropractors in Turkey and effective support of international associations and federations
- Set up training programs for achieving DC when the proper conditions are created

#### d) Personal

- Relax and not allow the added stresses of the culture get to me
- Improve own knowledge and skill base continuously
- Come to work every day and do my best
- Better my language skills
- Work on myself
- Take care of myself and my needs
- Keep going.
- Stay flexible yet firm to what the profession really is-hard even after 30yrs at it

## Addendum

A deep appreciation is expressed to the contributing pioneer DCs in compiling this first study. There are a lot of talented individuals in the chiropractic profession and if we are to see an acceleration of growth worldwide, some concerted efforts will be required to bring more substantial support from the profession to these individuals on the front line. Patients need their DCs to be successful in order to continue to have the availability of chiropractic care in their communities for the future of their families but the DCs need support, assistance and guidance from the profession for the local formal establishment of the profession.

The Chiropractic Diplomatic corps will continue to solicit "Pioneer Survival Surveys" to expand on this resource for all prospective DCs to gain optimal insight into planning, preparing and executing their personal dream of practicing in areas where the profession is barely present. The updated information will be made available through our website under the URL address: <http://www.ChiropracticDiplomatic.com/pioneer>

