

## Building Social Equity to Expand Your Practice

If you have never heard the term social equity, you are not alone. The concept or term was originally developed primarily to address the needs of certain “protected classes” and has been widely addressed in public policy and applied extensively in the dialog of affirmative action initiatives. The National Academy of Public Administration defines Social Equity as; **“The fair, just and equitable management of all institutions serving the public directly or by contract; the fair, just and equitable distribution of public services and implementation of public policy; and the commitment to promote fairness, justice, and equity in the formation of public policy.”**

As chiropractors and leaders in our communities, I believe that it is time for us to make sure that we begin to assert our position as valuable, responsible, compassionate, and respectful contributors to the distribution of public health services in our communities. I believe that in many cases we are the most valuable and least recognized contributors to the public health delivery system. This is a position of negative social equity and is primarily the result of an isolationist attitude that we have developed as sole proprietors and individuals in the market place.

The first part of the definition recognizes the management of institutions. It is important that we begin to look at the way we manage expectations, perceptions, and accessibility to chiropractic, not only the way we manage the day to day functions of our delivery of services and practice procedures. We need to become better connectors with people and more willing participant in the global discussion of what it means to be whole, complete, and well. If we hope to see chiropractic become the leading model of health care then we must be willing to build social justice through our commitment to share our vision and values with more people more often.

The second part of the definition recognizes the **“fair, just and equitable distribution of public services and implementation of public policy”**. There **appears to have been** a turn in policy as far as the distribution of chiropractic in the military with the recent news about greater access, but will there be equal compensation and fair, just, and equitable distribution? It is not enough to wait for policy makers to open a free market for chiropractic wellness services, we must make it happen ourselves while the rusty cogs of government policy grind through the process of change! The second issue that we face if we wait for public policy to create distribution channels is one of probable incongruency between public policy and the chiropractic wellness paradigm. Is the policy that will support the distribution of chiropractic going to be aligned with the paradigm with which we implement our services? I believe that implementation is equally or more important to the success of public health as is the distribution. Do enough people in our communities understand the difference in the value to their experience in life between the delivery of chiropractic in a vitalistic sick care model versus the value they will derive from the application of chiropractic in a holistic wellness model? If not, whose responsibility is it to create that awareness, policy makers or ours?

The last segment of the definition above introduces **“the commitment to promote fairness, justice, and equity in the formation of public policy”**. I believe that for public policy to be fair, just, and equitable, it must reflect the will of the people. And the will of the people is dictated by their concept of what is

valued and meaningful. From that I have to assert that statistically speaking, there are not enough people that comprehend and engage in a chiropractic wellness lifestyle today to effectively cause a shift in public policy which would dictate fair, just, and equitable distribution and implementation of true chiropractic. If you agree with my assertion, and you want to help build social equity and lead public awareness in a direction that we will ensure there are enough educated, inspired, and fully engaged individuals that understand the value of and meaning of a chiropractic wellness lifestyle, then lets join together. Lets become the voice and movement that will create social equity on the health care front. Together we can make a tremendous difference and forever change the direction and momentum of health care and stand tall as the leaders of a new paradigm that creates opportunity for others, and expands their possibilities for living a full and abundant life in a chiropractic wellness lifestyle. I believe that it is only through our leadership and the relationships of trust and respect we build with those in our community that we can or we will develop the social capitol we need to create the social equity that is required to make an impact that will change the course of human potential forever.

This is not only about feeling well, it is about being well and chiropractic can and will be well if we commit to individually and cumulatively create the foundational success system we call the success triad. Thank you for your love of chiropractic and your commitment to leadership! “Be Genuine, See Clearly, Act Purposefully”!

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