

cc: Dr. Roger Bulgee

File: PA program

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DURHAM, NORTH CAROLINA

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January 26, 1971

Dr. Louis deS. Shaffner, President
Medical Society of the State of North Carolina
Bowman Gray School of Medicine
Winston-Salem, North Carolina 27103

Dear Dr. Shaffner:

We have recently undertaken an educational experiment by enrolling an ex-chiropractor in our Physician's Assistant Program here at Duke and I wanted to be the first to inform you of this experiment. We realized at the onset that there might be some political repercussions but chose this course of action for several reasons.

First, this man has given up (out of disbelief) the practice of chiropractic. He has no desire to return to chiropractic as he has felt increasingly over the years that this is, in fact, a form of quackery.

Second, he came to us highly recommended by the three M.D.'s in his rural Ohio community. They took care of his family, he referred most of his patients to them and he realized his most useful role was that of a quasi-physical therapist. He served in this way for many years (even having patients referred to him by the physicians for physical therapy) and because of his close relationship with these physicians, finally decided to get out of chiropractic completely.

Third, he has demonstrated an extremely high aptitude for medicine and did, in fact score higher on our pre-test examinations than any of our present students even after completing the first semester of clinical medicine. I feel this was due in part to his close relationship with the local physicians and the input they have had in his accumulated knowledge.

Fourth, he was further recommended by a cardiologist in Florida who has expressed a desire to hire him when he completes our Program.

Fifth, we have been faced in recent months with an increasing number of applications from chiropractors who want to leave their practice (and indeed some already have) to seek more meaningful roles in the delivery of health care, and who have no compunction against functioning in a dependent role with a practicing physician.

Sixth, we feel that if this experiment can be successful it might well prove to be a great boon to organized medicine in preventing further inroads by chiropractors by providing them with an alternate opportunity to function in the delivery of reputable health care services. This point seems particularly timely as we look to the inevitably increasing role of the federal government in effecting our future systems of health care delivery.

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I sincerely hope this experimental effort will not meet with disapproval by the State Medical Society but rather that they will try to view this experiment in light of its individual implications. I am sure that in your position you will undoubtedly hear of this along the way and wanted to be the first to inform you. If you have any questions about this decision, or if you would like to discuss it in further detail, please feel free to contact me at your convenience.

With best wishes for continued success as President of the Medical Society of North Carolina, I remain

Sincerely yours,



D. Robert Howard, M.D., Director
Physician's Assistant Program

DRH:ceb