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Youth leadership and representation in Healthcare: The importance of youth having a voice in the Healthcare sector.

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Introduction

With a history that spans over a century from its origin, Chiropractic has become a healthcare choice for many within the global population. The Chiropractic fraternity has been privileged to have witnessed numerous incredible leaders through generations of the profession's development. We are proud of both the men and women who have represented the Chiropractic profession in such monumental ways, and we continually commend and celebrate the effort made by them to have taken us leaps and bounds from where we once began.



Chiropractic as a profession has faced many challenges and hardships. Continuous battles for recognition and acceptance as well as the fight for licensure has been something the youth is not always able to fathom. The perception that these are the same challenges faced by new graduates and current scholars is a debatable concept. As with any matter in life, time shows change, development, and new insights. The same can be said with the challenges to which we bear witness as the Chiropractic profession.

We have found ourselves in a continuously developing and changing profession. However, this same profession is not fully understood or considered as a healthcare choice by the entirety of the global population. A lack of awareness and understanding of who Chiropractors are and what Chiropractic entails can be highlighted amongst others as one of the greatest modern-day challenges that the Chiropractic profession faces. The inclusion of the youth of Chiropractic in advocacy and interaction at high level proceedings gives the profession the opportunity to address matters of importance in a new and innovative manner.

As a member of the Board of Directors of the World Congress of Chiropractic Students – a true youth leadership organisation – it is evident that through platforms of meaningful youth

engagement and interprofessional collaboration new ideas of progress can be developed and discussed. Opportunities which welcome youth into critical and major discussions are vital for the development of future leaders and the skills which they will possess. When presented with the opportunity and platforms of meaningful engagement, we as the youth in healthcare need to embrace and reap the most out of it to have our voices and opinions heard.

I encourage the youth to step up when avenues such as these present themselves to come together and constructively interact with the professional bodies, organisations, and federations to advocate on behalf of the youth in healthcare and make the positive impact you wish to see in global health governance. To see change which may matter to you or to address a crisis which you may identify with, active engagement and consistent work is required on advocacy strategies, reviewing policy decisions, and formulating statements that matter to our generation and profession

It is truly a feeling of empowerment to know that these are the opportunities available to us if we step up to the plate and are willing to take the reins and make something of it. Platforms of constructive and meaningful engagement allow us to experience the perspectives, opinions, and mindsets of others who are not in our field of the healthcare sector. It gives us the forum for greater discussions and lets us advocate on how Chiropractic can contribute towards and have a more meaningful place within the global healthcare sector.

Chiropractic students need to acknowledge that they are the future leaders of this profession. It is up to these professionals-in-the-making to represent this profession and make sure we maintain and further develop the progress made by every chiropractic leader before us. In order to achieve this, we cannot fall victim to complacency. Those before us have afforded us a seat at the table. Now is the time to decide what to do with that seat and establish what impact we are willing to make, what opinion we are able to voice and what change we wish to see.

To the Youth I say, take the opportunities given and do not be afraid of what the task encompasses. Be fearless in your pursuit to learn and you will always find someone to guide you along your path. Achieving this goal will be an incredible representation of the Chiropractic profession and the youth of healthcare at large.

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Cite: Tagari MY. Youth leadership and representation in Healthcare: The importance of youth having a voice in the Healthcare sector. *Asia-Pac Chiropr J.* 2021;2.2. URL apcj.net/wccs/