★ The [3] most important events/ accomplishments that our Board experienced over this past year

(1). The Massachusetts Board of Registration of Chiropractors (MA-Board) was honored to have been selected the 2002 recipient of the FCLB’s Outstanding Licensing Board Award. We appreciate the tremendous recognition that this award has brought and feel privileged to have our Board’s accomplishments highlighted throughout the chiropractic profession as well as within our own state regulatory agency.

(2). Over the past four-years, the MA-Board has been engaged in an aggressive program to monitor and improve CE compliance among our state’s doctors. The first three-years were very disappointing; CE compliance hovered within the mid-fifties percentile. Our efforts included random auditing of doctors’ CE documentation, auditing selected CE seminars as well as publicizing our focus on this issue. This past year the results have shown a significant 15% improvement in CE compliance. Education serves everybody’s best interest and an increasing number of chiropractic physicians are now heeding this message.

(3). The MA-Board has just recently put together the framework of our newest Board Policy Guideline addressing the topic of Practice Compliance Programs. This informative and useful guideline will outline what a chiropractic compliance program is and what a typical model should include. We expect this new guideline to be ready for posting on our MA-Board’s website very soon. Please consider visiting our site at www.state.us.ma/reg/boards/ch

In brief, a Practice Compliance Program is an essential safeguard that helps to protect a chiropractic practice and its doctors. It also serves to protect the public from unnecessary costs to our health care system through improper coding and billing, unnecessary and unreasonable services, as well as improper inducements, kickbacks and self-referrals. A practice compliance program includes a plan that comprises the written policies and procedures that govern the administrative operations of a practice. A compliance plan address the clinical record keeping procedures that are employed as well as housing the practice resource manuals that are relied upon to make patient clinical care and billing/coding determinations. A compliance plan should have a compliance officer who is responsible to oversee every aspect of the plan and ensure that corrective action response to remedy a problem is properly implemented. It is important to show diligence in selecting this compliance officer any as with any hired employee that they are trustworthy. A compliance plan has a system to educate employees as to their responsibilities as well as promoting open dialogue and enforcing disciplinary consequences for not following the practice’s policies and procedures. A compliance plan should also have a system of external and internal monitoring so that the plan continues to function as it was designed. It is the MA-Board’s opinion, that every chiropractic office should have a compliance program. These programs not only serve to protect our practices but ultimately enhance the quality chiropractic services within our communities as well.
The most difficult challenge that our Board faced over this past year

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts, like most other states, has had to deal with diminished tax revenues and subsequent reorganization within state agencies. This has resulted in significant changes to our board staff. We were saddened by the resignation of our Director of the Division of Professional Licensure. This and other key personnel changes have presented new challenges of training and coordinating new staff members, under a declining budget. These constraints coincided with our being in the midst of revamping fundamental internal board procedures. Fortunately, the MA-Board has been able to meet these challenges, come to a consensus on our new procedures and quickly educate our new staff. From these changes, we have been able to help alleviate some of the load within our prosecutions unit through the use of consent agreements and monitoring/auditing programs, which will benefit the doctors, their patients as well as our limited state resources.

How the FCLB helped us achieve a Board goal over this past year

One of our stated goals last year was to introduce our New Licentiate Program and our Practice Compliance and Recordkeeping Seminar to our fellow FCLB member boards. These two programs involve educating our newly licensed doctors on the proper standards of practice within our state as well as reinforcing those clinical standards among our seasoned practitioners. The MA-Board has documented that this system of proactive instruction has actually decreased the number of formal complaints that our board receives. We envisioned other states being able to utilize our programs as templates, which they could then mold to suit their own needs. Once again, we are appreciative to the FCLB for setting aside time for us to present an overview of these educational programs at the 2003 Annual May convention in Orlando Florida.