

CHIROPRACTIC: A DRUG-FREE APPROACH TO TREATMENT OF MUSCULOSKELETAL PAIN



\$874 billion

“Musculoskeletal pain, led by spinal disorders, costs the U.S. health care system \$874 billion per year and is the most common cause of severe long-term pain and disability.”^{1, 2, 3}

Research has found that prescription opioid pain medications are ineffective in the treatment of chronic low back (spinal) pain.⁴ Chiropractic care offers a non-drug approach to spinal pain and other musculoskeletal conditions that is effective, saves money and may help some patients avoid the risks of addiction associated with opioid use.



2 million

“In 2015, two million Americans had a substance use disorder involving prescription pain relievers...with 20,101 overdose deaths related to prescription pain relievers.”⁵

- HHS

400% increase

“From 1999 to 2008, overdose death rates and substance use rates quadrupled in parallel to sales of prescription pain relievers.”⁶

- CDC

CHIROPRACTIC CARE IS AN EFFECTIVE NON-DRUG ALTERNATIVE TO OVER-THE-COUNTER AND PRESCRIPTION PAIN MEDICATIONS.

The American College of Physicians Clinical Practice Guideline on Low Back Pain recommends **the use of non-drug, noninvasive treatments—including spinal manipulation**—before moving on to over-the-counter and prescription pain medications.⁷

“Among patients with acute low back pain, spinal manipulative therapy was associated with **modest improvements in pain and function** at up to 6 weeks with transient minor musculoskeletal harms.”⁸

- Journal of the American Medical Association

“[Evidence suggests] that therapies involving manual therapy and exercise are **more effective than alternative strategies** for patients with neck pain.”⁹

- Bone and Joint Decade 2001-2010 Task Force on Neck Pain and Its Associated Disorders



“Patients with chronic low back pain treated by chiropractors **showed greater improvement and satisfaction at one month** than patients treated by family physicians. Satisfaction scores were higher for chiropractic patients. A higher proportion of chiropractic patients (56% vs. 13%) reported that their **low back pain was better or much better**, whereas nearly one-third of medical patients reported their low back pain was worse or much worse.”¹⁰

- Journal of Manipulative and Physiological Therapeutics

“It is unlikely that chiropractic care is a significant cause of injury in older adults....Among Medicare beneficiaries aged 66–99 with an office visit risk for a neuromusculoskeletal problem, risk of injury to the head, neck or trunk within 7 days was **76% lower among subjects with a chiropractic office visit** as compared to those who saw a primary care physician.”¹¹

- Spine

CHIROPRACTIC CARE IS ASSOCIATED WITH A REDUCTION IN THE USE OF OPIOIDS...

In one study, the rate of opioid use was lower for recipients of chiropractic services (19%) as compared to non-recipients (35%). The likelihood of filling a prescription for opioids was also 55% lower in the chiropractic recipient cohort. The average annual per-person charges for opioid prescription fills were 78% lower for recipients of chiropractic services as compared to non-recipients.

55% lower

Likelihood of filling of a prescription for opioids in chiropractic recipients

\$1,513 vs. \$6,766

Chiropractic management

Medical management

In addition, average per person charges for clinical services for low back pain were significantly lower for recipients of chiropractic services, \$1,513 for chiropractic management vs. \$6,766 for medical management.¹²



MORE CHIROPRACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH FEWER OPIOID PRESCRIPTIONS

Opioid prescriptions for Medicare patients

Per capita Doctors of Chiropractic

A higher number of chiropractors per capita was associated with a lower proportion of younger Medicare patients who fill opioid prescriptions. To learn more about the benefits of chiropractic care, visit acatoday.org/patients.

Source: Weeks, William B. et al. Cross-Sectional Analysis of Per Capita Supply of Doctors of Chiropractic and Opioid Use in Younger Medicare Beneficiaries. Journal of Manipulative and Physiological Therapeutics, 2016, Vol. 39, Issue 4, 263-266.

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....AND SIGNIFICANT HEALTH CARE SAVINGS

2:1

"Healthcare plans that formally incorporate chiropractic typically realize a 2 to 1 return for every dollar spent."¹³

- Optum

30x

Following work-related low back injury, patients who visited a chiropractor were nearly 30 times less likely (1.5 vs. 42.7%) to require surgery as compared to those who chose a surgeon as their first provider.¹⁴

- Spine

up to 40% less

"Paid costs for episodes of care initiated with a DC were almost 40% less than episodes initiated with an MD. Even after risk adjusting each patient's costs, we found that episodes of care initiated with a DC are 20% less expensive than episodes initiated with an MD."¹⁵

- Journal of Manipulative and Physiological Therapeutics

\$83.5 million

"For Medicare patients with back and/or neck pain, availability of chiropractic care reduces the number of primary care physician visits, resulting in an annual savings of \$83.5 million."¹⁶

- Journal of the American Board of Family Medicine

THE USE OF NON-DRUG APPROACHES FOR PAIN TREATMENT HAS RECEIVED WIDE SUPPORT.



FEDERAL DRUG ADMINISTRATION

"Nonpharmacologic therapies [including chiropractic] can play an important role in managing pain."¹⁷



THE JOINT COMMISSION

Nonpharmacologic strategies, including chiropractic, have a role.¹⁹



CDC

"Extensive evidence suggests some benefits of nonpharmacologic and nonopioid pharmacologic treatments compared with long-term opioid therapy, with less harm."¹⁸



STATE ATTORNEYS GENERAL

When patients seek treatment for chronic pain, doctors should be encouraged to explore non-opioid alternatives including physical therapy, acupuncture, massage, and chiropractic care.²⁰



Support legislation that provides greater access to safe and effective chiropractic services.

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