



IMPORTANT FACTS ABOUT CHIROPRACTIC

Chiropractic Physicians: A Low Cost Solution to High Cost Health Care

- A study in the December 2012 issue of the medical journal *Spine* showed that patients whose first provider was a chiropractic physician, also referred to as a doctor of chiropractic (DC), had reduced odds of lumbar spine surgery (spine surgery resulted in approximately 43% of cases when patient was seen first by a surgeon versus only 1.5% when patients were seen first by a DC).
- A 2012 study published in the *Annals of Internal Medicine* found that patients with acute and subacute neck pain, spinal manipulation therapy provided by DCs was more effective than medication in both the short and long term.
- A 2010 study by Blue Cross Blue Shield of Tennessee for low back pain care initiated with a Doctor of Chiropractic saves 40 percent on health care costs when compared with care initiated through a medical doctor.
- A 2010 study at the University of British Columbia found that for lower back pain of less than 16 weeks guidelines-based care provided by chiropractic physicians is significantly more effective than “usual care” provided by medical physicians.
- In a 2009 report by Arnold Milstein, MD, MPH of Mercer Health Benefits, and Niteesh Choudhry, MD, PhD, of Harvard Medical School found “...when considering effectiveness and cost together, chiropractic physician care for low back and neck pain is *highly cost effective*, [and] represents a good value in comparison to medical physician care...”

Doctors of Chiropractic Can Improve the Primary Care Workforce Challenge

- Using chiropractic physicians as first providers saves costs
- DC care is not an add-on, it is a direct substitution for other care
- Better functional improvement outcomes and higher satisfaction with DC care
- Reduction in hospital admissions, hospital days, pharmaceuticals and surgeries with chiropractic care
- Lower overall total annual health care costs with inclusion of chiropractic benefit
- Chiropractic care more effective for treating neck and low back pain & lowers annual spending

Doctors of Chiropractic Well Trained for Primary Care

Like other primary health care doctors, DC's training includes subjects related to evaluating and caring for patients as well as completion of a minimum of a one-year clinic-based program dealing with front line patient care. In total, the curriculum includes a minimum of 4,200 hours of classroom, laboratory and clinical experience. DC's training is approved by an accrediting agency recognized by the USDOE. Before initiating practice, DC's must pass national board examinations and become state-licensed.

The Case for Full and Non-Discriminatory Inclusion of Chiropractic Physicians in Tennessee's Health System

- Over 70,000 chiropractic physicians practice across the nation providing care for tens of millions of the U.S. population annually.
- DCs are defined as physicians by the Federal Employee Health Benefit Program, Medicare, and the Federal Workers' Compensation program. Chiropractic services are essential and already mandated by law as core benefits for Medicare, Medicaid, active military personnel and veterans.
- For example, studies show that up to 75% of Americans experience low back pain in their lifetime. The cost of treating spinal pain has made it the sixth most expensive medical condition in America at \$86 billion in 2005--a 65 percent increase since 1997. DCs provide unparalleled expertise in the care of neuromuscular and musculoskeletal disorders and their services are a cost-effective care option for these conditions.
- A 2010 study of patients with low back pain who initiated care with a chiropractic physician resulted in 40% lower health care costs when compared with care initiated through a medical doctor.
- Another study found that patients using chiropractic physicians as their primary care providers had significant decreases in hospital admissions (43%), pharmaceutical costs (52%) and outpatient surgeries and procedures (43%).
- Using conservatively-focused chiropractic physicians as fully as possible is a sensible and logical way to encourage the use of more conservative and less costly testing and treatment interventions where appropriate.