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.\textsuperscript{1,2,3}

Research has found that prescription opioid pain medications are ineffective in the treatment of chronic low back (spinal) pain.\textsuperscript{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.

$874 billion

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

"From 1999 to 2008, overdose death rates and substance use rates quadrupled in parallel to sales of prescription pain relievers.”\textsuperscript{6}
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

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

“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

“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
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.

$1,513 vs. $6,766

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

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.

AND SIGNIFICANT HEALTH CARE SAVINGS

2:1

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

- Optum

30x

*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

- Spine

$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

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

- Journal of Manipulative and Physiological Therapeutics

- Acupuncture Research
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

CDC

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

THE JOINT COMMISSION

Nonpharmacologic strategies, including chiropractic, have a role.19

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.

References


