



Your Career in

Chiropractic

ACA
American
Chiropractic
Association



The American Chiropractic Association (ACA), based in Arlington, Va., is the largest chiropractic organization in the country with approximately 15,000 members. The ACA provides lobbying, public relations, professional and educational opportunities for doctors of chiropractic; funds research regarding chiropractic and health issues; and offers leadership for the advancement of the profession. The ACA promotes the highest standards of ethics and patient care, contributing to the health and well-being of millions of chiropractic patients.

Contact:

American Chiropractic Association | 1701 Clarendon Blvd. | Arlington VA 22209
703-276-8800 | memberinfo@acatoday.org | www.acatoday.org



The Student American Chiropractic Association (SACA) is the representative organization of the ACA's student members. It consists of more than 5,000 students on all 18 U.S. chiropractic college campuses. SACA's mission is to enhance the chiropractic profession by inspiring active student involvement in ACA and in the profession as a whole. Through SACA, students are provided with opportunities to improve their leadership skills and are prepared for successful careers and a lifetime of informed decision making.

Contact:

American Chiropractic Association | 1701 Clarendon Blvd. | Arlington VA 22209
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Chiropractic: A Drug-free, Non-surgical Approach to Health Care



Chiropractic is a health care profession that focuses on disorders of the musculoskeletal system and the nervous system, and the effects of these disorders on general health. The chiropractic approach to health care is holistic, stressing the patient's overall health and wellness.

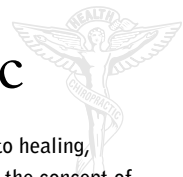
Doctors of chiropractic (DC) – often referred to as chiropractic physicians – practice a drug-free, hands-on approach to health care that includes patient examination, diagnosis and treatment. As they evaluate their patient's condition, general health status and overall function, doctors of chiropractic pay particular attention to posture, motion, balance, nerve function and strength. Doctors of chiropractic have broad diagnostic skills and are also trained to recommend therapeutic and rehabilitative exercises, as well as to provide nutritional, dietary and lifestyle counseling.

Chiropractic physicians are considered first-contact providers (i.e. primary care providers), and are so defined in federal and state regulations, including within the Medicare program. For many conditions, such as lower back pain, chiropractic care may be the primary method of treatment. When other health conditions exist, chiropractic care may complement or support medical treatment by relieving the musculoskeletal aspects associated with the condition.

Doctors of chiropractic assess patients through clinical examination, laboratory testing, diagnostic imaging and other diagnostic interventions to determine when chiropractic treatment is appropriate or when it is not. Some doctors of chiropractic also employ additional procedures such as therapeutic ultrasound, electrical muscle stimulation, ice and heat, traction, soft-tissue massage and rehabilitative exercises.

Research, scientific studies and government analyses continue to support the safety, efficacy and cost-effectiveness of chiropractic spinal manipulation. A significant amount of evidence shows that the use of conservative chiropractic care for problems such as acute and chronic lower-back pain, neck pain, headaches and many other neuromusculoskeletal conditions can be just as effective—and sometimes more effective—than traditional medical care. Additionally, a study in the *American Journal of Public Health*, showed chiropractic patients were more satisfied with their care after four weeks of treatment than were medical patients.

Philosophy of Chiropractic



Doctors of chiropractic believe in a holistic (“total person”) approach to healing, which typifies the new and changing attitude towards health. It is based on the concept of “maintaining health” versus “treating disease.” Chiropractic philosophy includes:

- recognition that a relationship exist between lifestyle, environment and health
- understanding the cause of illness in order to eliminate it, rather than simply treating symptoms

- recognition of the importance of the nervous system and its intimate connection with the human body
- a patient-centered, hands-on approach focused on influencing function through structure
- focus on early intervention, emphasizing timely diagnosis and treatment of conditions

Interesting Facts about Chiropractic

- More than 22 million Americans will seek chiropractic care this year.
- 60% of chiropractic patients are female.
- The majority of chiropractic physicians practice in suburban settings as compared to rural and urban settings.
- About 31% of doctors of chiropractic share an office with one or more doctors of chiropractic.
- Nearly 87% of all insured American workers have coverage for chiropractic services in their health care plans.

Personal Qualifications

Doctors of chiropractic should have an interest in science and a desire to help people. In treating patients they should have empathy, tact, patience, a keen sense of observation and the ability to inspire trust and confidence. They do not need great strength, but they do need endurance, energy and considerable hand dexterity. Doctors of chiropractic should be able to work independently and handle responsibility. Good judgment and an even disposition will help them in their practice, as will good business sense.

Education

Individuals interested in a career in chiropractic need to begin preparing for their future in high school by taking courses in biology, chemistry, physics, math and English. Once in college, students need to complete at least 90 semester hours of pre-medical courses, including biological sciences, inorganic and organic chemistry, physics, psychology, social sciences and English. Most applicants to chiropractic college have earned a bachelor's degree from an accredited post-secondary institution.

There are currently 15 accredited chiropractic degree programs at 19 locations across the United States. College accreditation is overseen by the Council on Chiropractic Education, an agency certified by the Department of Education. To learn more about these programs, visit the Web site of the Association of Chiropractic Colleges at www.chirocolleges.org.

As part of the professional program, chiropractic students are trained to know all structures and functions of the human body and to recognize the interrelationship of all parts.

Chiropractic education centers on the concept of health, not disease. Chiropractic programs require a minimum of 4,200 hours of combined classroom, laboratory and clinical experience. Generally, the first two years of chiropractic study emphasize classroom and laboratory work in basic science subjects such as anatomy, physiology, public health, microbiology, pathology and biochemistry. The last two years cover courses in manipulation and adjustment of the spine and extremities. Students get significant clinical (hands-on) experience related to the evaluation of and caring for patients. Further, students must complete a minimum of a one-year clinical-based program dealing with physical and laboratory diagnosis, neurology, orthopedics, geriatrics, physiotherapy and nutrition.

Curriculum

According to the Council on Chiropractic Education, the curriculum for a doctor of chiropractic program must include the following subjects:

- Anatomy
- Biochemistry
- Physiology
- Microbiology
- Pathology
- Public Health
- Physical, Clinical and Laboratory Diagnosis
- Gynecology
- Obstetrics
- Pediatrics
- Geriatrics
- Dermatology
- Otolaryngology
- Diagnostic Imaging Procedures
- Psychology
- Dietetics/Nutrition
- Biomechanics
- Orthopedics
- Neurology
- First Aid and Emergency Procedures
- Spinal Analysis
- Principles and Practices of Chiropractic
- Clinical Decision Making
- Adjustive Technique
- Research Methods and Procedures
- Professional Practice Ethics

Note: Each subject does not necessarily have to be taught in an individual course.

Financing a Chiropractic Education

Most chiropractic students finance their studies with a combination of loans, scholarships and grants. There are many forms of financial aid available to qualifying students such as Perkins Loans, Federal Stafford Loans and Federal Work Study Programs. In addition, many chiropractic colleges offer scholarships and grants. Financial aid officers at each school can provide information about the financial opportunities available for students.

Study Abroad

Several chiropractic colleges offer students an opportunity to gain invaluable education, cultural insights and a global perspective through study abroad programs. Consult with individual colleges to learn more about available opportunities.

Accreditation

To assure that the highest educational standards are maintained, all doctor of chiropractic degree programs must meet exacting requirements to be accredited. First, there must be a standardized, high-quality curriculum. Second, guidelines are set for faculty qualifications, faculty-student ratios, library holdings and the physical structure of the buildings on campus, as well as for school governance, administration and financial stability.

Certification and Licensure

All fifty states, the District of Columbia, the Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico regulate the practice of chiropractic and grant licenses to doctors of chiropractic who meet the established educational and examination requirements. Chiropractic physicians can practice only in states where they are licensed. For licensure, most states recognize either all or part of the four-part test administered by the National Board of Chiropractic Examiners.

While state licensure requirements vary by state, the vast majority of individuals will be required to:

- Provide proof of graduation from a chiropractic degree program
- Provide proof of a passing score on the National Board Exam
- Undergo a criminal background check
- Pass an exam regarding state scope of practice laws
- Submit a list of personal references
- And, some states require a separate practical exam

With one exception, all states require doctors of chiropractic to complete a specified number of hours of continuing education each year as part of their license renewal.

Special councils associated with the American Chiropractic Association also offer programs leading to diplomate certification for those who complete postdoctoral training in clinical specialties such as orthopedics, neurology, sports injuries and physical fitness, occupational health, nutrition, physiological therapeutics and rehabilitation, diagnostic imaging, pediatrics, applied chiropractic sciences and acupuncture. A "diplomate" is a doctor of chiropractic who has made significant achievements beyond the mandatory educational requirements and who is certified by an examining board.

Employment Outlook

Doctors of chiropractic represent the third largest doctoral-level health care profession in the United States, after medical physicians and dentists. Nearly 82 percent are in full-time practice, with the average chiropractic physician working between 40 and 45 hours per week. The majority (61 percent) of doctors of chiropractic work in an office in which they are the only doctor. Nearly one-third (31 percent) share an office with one or more chiropractic physicians, while the remaining doctors either work in a multidisciplinary setting, academia or research. There are also opportunities for chiropractic physicians to work with organizations, such as the World Health Organization, health insurance companies or sports teams.

Chiropractic offers a career of opportunity and service. In private practice, the doctor determines working hours and is able to arrange these hours by appointment for the convenience of all. The doctor also decides vacation time and which days he or she will take off during the week.

Job prospects for new chiropractic physicians are expected to be good. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics predicts that openings for doctors of chiropractic will grow faster than average for health-related occupations, as demand for complementary medicine increases. Additionally, chiropractic has been listed in the top 15 of several publications' "Best Jobs in America" lists because of the high growth potential, good salaries and intellectual stimulation. In this occupation, replacement needs arise in large part from retirements. However, there are also acute shortages of DCs that exist in some areas of the United States.

Salary

According to the 10th Annual Salary & Expense Survey conducted by *Chiropractic Economics*, the mean annual income for doctors of chiropractic is approximately \$94,000, depending on experience, geographic location and practice setting. In chiropractic, as in other types of independent practice, earnings are relatively low in the beginning and increase as the practice grows.

Profiles





Adana Moses

Undergraduate Education: California's Loyola Marymount, Bachelor of Arts in Business, 2004

Chiropractic Education: Cleveland Chiropractic College - Los Angeles

Why did you decide to pursue a career in chiropractic?

During my undergraduate years, I worked for a doctor of chiropractic. I was looking for an office job that was close to home and the doctor was looking for someone during the hours that I was available. The doctor has a family wellness practice where she focuses on pregnancy and pediatrics. I've always loved kids and through this experience I realized that chiropractic was the career for me.

Have any of your undergraduate courses been particularly helpful to you in your chiropractic studies?

I think the business-focused classes were beneficial because doctors of chiropractic need business skills in addition to their clinical knowledge, especially if they open their own practices. Basic sciences were also helpful and laid a foundation for the more advanced chiropractic courses.

What do you find most challenging about chiropractic college?

Time management is the most difficult part of pursuing a chiropractic degree. It was a difficult transition from my undergraduate program, where I thought I was busy, to having an incredibly intense course load. It takes some time to adapt to the new schedule, and it's important to find a balance between classes and your life outside of school.

What are your plans following graduation?

I plan to pursue a specialization in pediatrics and pregnancy. I also plan to open my own practice one day.

What made you decide to get involved with Student ACA (SACA)?

I love being involved and taking on leadership positions. I was learning about SACA when the students in the leadership positions graduated and a bunch of us just decided to step up and take over. I didn't have a lot of information about what I was getting into, but I've been learning as I go.

Describe a typical day as a chiropractic student.

Early in the program, students spend their time attending classes and labs. You may have a break for lunch, but during that time there are usually speakers or other events. For example, I had classes in the mornings from 7 a.m. to 2 p.m., and then I was in clinic from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m. Now that I'm in my last trimester it is all clinic work. As far as homework goes, there is always reading to do either for weekly quizzes or bigger midterms.

What is one piece of advice you would give someone interested in pursuing a career in chiropractic?

I would really suggest not only being involved in school, but getting involved outside of the chiropractic classroom as well. There are clubs to join, volunteering to be done and networking to begin. Get involved early and find a chiropractic mentor.



Brandon Lemuel, DC

Practice: Palmetcare Chiropractic located in Vienna, Va.

Undergraduate Education: Michigan's Saginaw Valley State University, Bachelor of Science, 2002

Chiropractic Education: Palmer College of Chiropractic, Doctor of Chiropractic degree, 2006

Why did you choose a career in chiropractic?

I had been seeing a doctor of chiropractic since I was 12 years old, but I never considered a career in chiropractic until halfway through my undergraduate program. I was following a pre-med track because of my love for the sciences and for helping people, but I never felt passionate about becoming a medical doctor. When a friend explained the chiropractic philosophy—helping people without the use of drugs or surgery and allowing the body to heal itself—I finally felt like I had found my true passion in life and I set out to become a doctor of chiropractic.

What made you decide to open your own practice?

From early on, I can remember my father saying to me “Be a leader, not a follower.” I began my chiropractic career as an associate and then decided to open my own practice a year-and-a-half later. In my opinion, the best opportunity for me to make my vision and mission a reality is by owning my own practice.

What do you find most rewarding about a career as a DC?

The most rewarding part of being a chiropractor is helping people achieve their health and wellness goals. It is great to provide some relief from pain, but the true reward is helping people experience the daily activities of life to the fullest.

What is your favorite thing about being your own boss?

My favorite thing about being my own boss is knowing that the health of the practice is a direct reflection of me. I'm the one being held accountable. Also, being my own boss allows my creative side to be expressed through trying new things and working to improve every day.

What was the hardest part of opening your own practice?

In the beginning, having all the responsibility for the practice can be overwhelming and you don't necessarily see the fruits of your labor right away. But I had faith and believed in my mission and all of my hard work has paid off.

Describe a typical day in your office.

As of right now, I'm a one-man show. I always arrive one hour early to prepare both the office and myself for a busy day. I don't have a set schedule that I follow everyday, but I spend time adjusting and educating patients, answering the phones, scheduling appointments, filing office paperwork, marketing and scheduling local outreach and lectures. Every day is high energy and very rewarding.

What is one piece of advice you would give someone interested in pursuing a career in chiropractic?

The best advice I can give someone is to follow your passion. Listen to your inner voice—if you are committed to health care without the use of drugs and surgery and you love helping people, chiropractic will be a very rewarding career choice.



Elise Hewitt, DC, CST, DICCP, FICC

Practice: Portland Chiropractic Group located in Portland, Ore.

Undergraduate Education: University of Colorado, Bachelor of Environmental Design (B EnvD) with honors, 1982

Chiropractic Education: Western States Chiropractic College, Doctor of Chiropractic degree, summa cum laude, 1988; Board Certification in Chiropractic Pediatrics (DICCP), International College of Chiropractic Pediatrics, 2001

Why did you choose a career in chiropractic?

Growing up I had never even heard of a doctor of chiropractic. I was originally pre-med and planning on attending medical school when I learned about chiropractic. I realized that it aligned much more closely with my own personal philosophy of health.

Why did you decide to specialize in chiropractic pediatrics?

I've always loved working with kids, but it took me a little while to realize that I could sustain a practice exclusively on pediatrics. When I first opened my practice, I would treat anyone, and patients would call on the weekends asking me to come into the office and help them. I would always go, but I didn't necessarily look forward to it—unless a mother had called asking me to help her child. In that case I would get excited and finally I realized that I should just focus on the aspects of my career that excited me.

How much additional schooling was required to earn your diplomate certification?

The Diplomate in Clinical Chiropractic Pediatrics was a three year program. I had one module a month for three years with exams at the end of each year. Once I had passed the program exams from Palmer, I was eligible to take the board exams and, passing that, I earned my diplomate.

Why did you decide to offer acupuncture, naturopathy and massage services in addition to chiropractic?

I do not believe that any one practitioner has all the health answers. Everybody needs a mix of different types of health care and an integrative approach is the best way to go. Our main goal in treating patients is to maximize their health. We figured that the more we could offer patients right there in our office, the better. Being in the same office allows us to talk with each other about patient

cases and decide the best course of treatment. Besides my colleagues in my office, I regularly work with lactation consultants, occupational therapists, and pediatricians.

What do you find most rewarding about a career as a DC?

I have been doing this for 20 years now and I never get tired of it. I still get amazed every time I put my hands on a patient. It's a wonderful feeling to be able to help these children, all patients really, live a much better life. I enjoy being able to take someone with health problems and help them reach 100 percent of their potential.

Describe a typical day in your office.

The majority of my day is spent treating patients. I see younger children in the morning, take about an hour-and-a-half for lunch, filling out paperwork and returning phone calls and then I typically see more school-aged children in the afternoon.

A treatment lasts between 15 and 30 minutes and includes a full spinal check and a look at the craniosacral system. I also spend time talking with the parents about any questions or concerns they may have. The most common topics I discuss with parents are diet, exercise, car seats, posture and heavy backpacks.

What is one piece of advice you would give someone interested in pursuing a career in chiropractic?

Get out there and observe as many doctors as you can. You'll learn about what you like and what you don't like in terms of treating patients and running an office. When I first graduated, I did vacation relief for other chiropractors and I got to jump into a lot of different practices and see all of the different techniques and management styles. I think it really helped me to discover the kind of doctor I wanted to be.



Michael Minardo, DC, DACBSP

Practice: Infinity Sports Medicine located in New York, N.Y.

Undergraduate Education: New York City's Wagner College, Bachelor of Science, 1982

Chiropractic Education: New York Chiropractic College, Doctor of Chiropractic degree, 1985; Diplomate of the American Chiropractic Board of Sports Physicians, 1996

Why did you choose a career in chiropractic?

I knew I wanted a career in the healing arts and I enjoy hands-on work. I felt that chiropractic was an emerging complementary health care system that could bridge the gap between traditional medicine and the more alternative healing arts.

Why did you choose to specialize in sports chiropractic?

I have always participated in sports, from childhood through the present. I saw the need for musculoskeletal care in sports and as soon as the diplomate program was introduced, I entered the first class.

What made you decide to join a multidisciplinary center after working in a private practice?

The evidence shows that a multi-modal approach to chiropractic for musculoskeletal injuries works best—that is, active care along with spinal manipulation. It is also easier to gain access to patients in a multidisciplinary practice. There is still a great deal of prejudice about chiropractic care that can be overcome in such a setting. When patients see doctors of chiropractic working side-by-side with medical doctors, doctors of osteopathy and physical therapists, they assume the chiropractor must be both competent and necessary otherwise he or she wouldn't be there.

What is the most rewarding part of working with a multidisciplinary team?

As a doctor of chiropractic I find it very rewarding to be able to help people feel and function better. Working in a multidisciplinary setting is rewarding because, with several different health care practitioners working together, the patient receives care that is more effective than if he or she had seen only one type of doctor at a time. I work with three physiatrists (doctors of physical medicine)

and five physical therapists and we can always brainstorm about what is best for the patient and then carry out that plan in real time.

What are some of the challenges?

There are very few challenges that I've encountered in my 10-plus years working with a multidisciplinary team. I can remember, early on, having to explain chiropractic care to some of the new physiatrists who had never worked with a doctor of chiropractic and didn't understand the benefits of chiropractic care. However, once they understood my musculoskeletal approach, they felt very comfortable recommending chiropractic to their patients.

Describe a typical day in your office.

A typical day consists of evaluating new patients and treating those already on treatment programs. I also spend time interacting with the physiatrists and physical therapists on cases that we co-treat. We talk about care plans, exercise, diagnostic testing and areas in which we feel the patient has not made the progress we had expected.

What is one piece of advice you would give someone interested in pursuing a career in chiropractic?

I would recommend that the person choose a school that teaches current, evidence-based chiropractic. Surround yourself with doctors that practice this type of chiropractic and learn from them.



Accredited Chiropractic Programs and Institutions

Cleveland Chiropractic College - Kansas City
10850 Lowell Avenue
Overland Park, KS 66210
(800) 467-2252
www.cleveland.edu

Cleveland Chiropractic College - Los Angeles
590 North Vermont Avenue
Los Angeles, CA 90004
(800) 466-2252
www.cleveland.edu

D'Youville College
320 Porter Avenue
Buffalo, NY 14201
(800) 777-3921
www.dyc.edu

Life University
1269 Barclay Circle
Marietta, GA 30060
(800) 543-2033
www.life.edu

Life Chiropractic College West
25001 Industrial Blvd
Hayward, CA 94545
(800) 788-4476
www.lifewest.edu

Logan College of Chiropractic
1851 Schoettler Road
Chesterfield, MO 63017
(800) 782-3344
www.logan.edu

National University of Health Sciences
200 E Roosevelt Road
Lombard, IL 60148
(800) 826-6285
www.nuhs.edu

National University of Health Sciences
(St. Petersburg Campus)
P.O. Box 13489
St. Petersburg FL 33733
(727) 341-4772
www.nuhs.edu

New York Chiropractic College
2360 State Rte 89
Seneca Falls, NY 13148
(800) 234-6922
www.nycc.edu

Northwestern Health Sciences University
2501 W 84th Street
Bloomington, MN 55431
(952) 888-4777
www.nwhealth.edu

Palmer College of Chiropractic (Iowa)
1000 Brady Street
Davenport, IA 52803
(800) 722-2586
www.palmer.edu

Palmer College of Chiropractic (Florida)
4777 City Center Parkway
Port Orange, FL 32129
(866) 585-9677
www.palmer.edu/PCCF

Palmer College of Chiropractic (West)
90 East Tasman Drive
San Jose, CA 95134
(800) 442-4476
www.palmer.edu

Parker College of Chiropractic
2500 Walnut Hill Lane
Dallas, TX 75229
(800) 438-6932
www.parkercc.edu

Sherman College of Straight Chiropractic
2020 Springfield Road
Spartanburg, SC 29304
(800) 849-8771
www.sherman.edu

Southern California University of Health Sciences
16200 E. Amber Valley Drive
Whittier, CA 90604
(800) 221-5222
www.scuhs.edu

Texas Chiropractic College
5912 Spencer Highway
Pasadena, TX 77505
(800) 468-6839
www.txchiro.edu

University of Bridgeport College of Chiropractic
126 Park Avenue
Bridgeport, CT 06604
(888) 822-4476
www.bridgeport.edu/chiro

Western States Chiropractic College
2900 NE 132nd Avenue
Portland, OR 97230
(800) 641-5641
www.wschiro.edu

Other Resources

Association of Chiropractic Colleges

4424 Montgomery Avenue, Suite 202
Bethesda, Maryland 20814
(800) 284-1062,
www.chirocolleges.org

Council on Chiropractic Education

8049 North 85th Way
Scottsdale, AZ 85258
(480) 443-8877
www.cce-usa.org

Federation of Chiropractic Licensing Boards

5401 W. 10th Street, Suite 101
Greeley, CO 80634
(970) 356-3500
www.fclb.org

National Board of Chiropractic Examiners

901 54th Ave.
Greeley, CO 80634
(970) 356-9100
www.nbce.org



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