



NATIONAL HEALTH REFORM

ACCESS TO CHIROPRACTIC CARE IS ESSENTIAL – AND A PARADIGM SHIFT TO "WELLNESS" CARE IS NEEDED:

Chiropractic care is an **ESSENTIAL** component of the nation's health delivery system. As part of their reform efforts, Members of Congress and Obama Administration officials should seek to fully integrate chiropractic care into a delivery system newly oriented and prioritized towards the delivery of wellness care, with a goal of fully

MAXIMIZING CHIROPRACTIC'S POTENTIAL TO:

1. Increase the quality of health care offered;
2. Improve patient outcomes and levels of patient satisfaction;
3. Expand patient treatment options and choice of provider;
4. Improve the overall health status and quality of life of the public by providing an effective, holistic wellness approach to health care;
5. Reduce medical errors and improve patient safety (*chiropractic care is inherently safer and less complicated in comparison to the use of surgical intervention, hospital stays, and the use of pharmaceuticals*);
6. Expand the nation's capacity to deal with a major healthcare emergency.

No reform effort, no matter how well intended, structured or funded, will succeed fully -- *or achieve its maximum potential to benefit the American people* -- **unless such effort is coupled with a broad transformational change – a paradigm shift—away from the current health delivery system, which is largely oriented towards providing care for those who have already become seriously ill, to a more forward thinking and progressive system that has as its main focus comprehensive wellness care and disease prevention.** Given the high cost of providing health care generally, the undeniably high incidence of preventable disease that exists, coupled with America's rapidly aging population -- **it is both logical and imperative that we move towards a "wellness" model of care as the primary and favored model of health care delivery as rapidly as possible.**

EXISTING BILLS INCLUDE IMPORTANT PROVISIONS THAT SHOULD BE RETAINED:

The American Chiropractic Association (ACA) recognizes that considerable divisions continue to exist within the Congress on how best to move forward regarding the important issue of health care reform, and that as of the date of the issuance of this Issue Brief, no final decisions have been made with respect to the disposition of HR 3590 (Senate) and HR 3962 (House), reform bills. These bills contain many important provisions intended to improve access to health care services and to make such services more affordable. **Any final legislation to be enacted into law that is based on them, or successor proposals to them, should as a minimum retain the following:**

(OVER)

1. **The patient-centered medical home and national health care workforce commission provisions (Sections 3502; 5101) contained in the HR 3590 the Senate passed bill.**
2. **The federal provider non-discrimination provision (Section 2706) of HR 3590 the Senate passed bill.**
3. **The provision (Section 238) contained in HR 3962 the House passed bill that would ensure the preservation of state-enacted provider non-discrimination laws.**
4. **The repeal of the existing anti-trust exemption for insurance companies.**

CONGRESS SHOULD ALSO:

1. Ensure that any federally defined package of "minimum benefits" that may be established specifically includes chiropractic care provided by doctors of chiropractic;
2. Ensure that the availability of chiropractic is equal to the availability of traditional medical care in all federally established or regulated plans, including managed care plans, and that any discriminatory policies adverse to chiropractic patients and providers are eliminated;
3. In pursuit of "Medical Home" or "coordination of care concepts", avoid the creation of a gatekeeper scenario that would serve as an impediment to accessing chiropractic care.

IMPORTANT FACTS ABOUT CHIROPRACTIC:

- Doctors of chiropractic are educated and trained to diagnose patients by taking a detailed medical history coupled with a physical exam and inspection. Doctors of chiropractic are educated in fully accredited colleges and universities in a post graduate environment, and receive the equivalent of a four-year clinical doctorate degree.
- It is estimated that doctors of chiropractic treat over 30 million people annually. Today, next to medical doctors and dentists, doctors of chiropractic comprise the largest number of doctorate level, portal-of-entry, primary-care providers in the nation.
- Doctors of chiropractic typically employ a holistic approach to the treatment of illness, with an appropriate emphasis on wellness concepts that involve diet, nutrition, exercise, and positive lifestyle changes.
- Doctors of chiropractic employ a non-surgical and non-pharmaceutical approach to health care that utilizes "spinal manipulation" to treat a range of neuro-musculoskeletal conditions. *(The range of conditions treated typically includes: back pain, neck pain, pain in the joints of the arms or legs, and headaches and other spinal-related maladies -- conditions that the vast majority of Americans will experience one or more times during their lives).*
- Cost savings, including the avoidance of unnecessary surgeries and the reduced use of prescription medications, is one of the major benefits to the utilization of chiropractic care. The cost to society of back pain alone is estimated to exceed \$50 billion dollars annually *(treatment, loss of productivity, etc).*
- Chiropractic treatment does not involve the use of drugs or surgery, the treatment is not only cost-effective, but is also low-risk. Complications are rare and patient satisfaction with chiropractic care is typically higher than care being offered by other providers attempting to treat similar conditions by other means, such as "traditional" medical care.
- Doctors of chiropractic are licensed to practice in all fifty states, and in most states are allowed by law to use the term "physician" in describing their services. Doctors of chiropractic are considered physicians under Medicare.

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