



April 3, 2017

The Honorable Chris Christie
Office of the Governor
PO Box 001
Trenton, New Jersey 08625

Dear Governor Christie:

The American Chiropractic Association (ACA) commends the Trump Administration for making the opioid crisis a top priority, and we congratulate you on your recent appointment to helm the president's special panel tasked with fighting this deadly epidemic.

America's doctors of chiropractic share the administration's concern regarding the rampant overuse and abuse of prescription opioid pain medications in the United States. We believe that innovation on many fronts will be needed to combat this problem, and we would like to offer the assistance of the nation's chiropractors in this important initiative.

In particular, we would like to recommend Norman Kettner, DC, a participant of our internal opioid task force, as a potential member of your panel. Dr. Kettner is chair of the Radiology Department at Logan College of Chiropractic in Chesterfield, Mo. Over his career, he has contributed to greater understanding and collaboration among providers and awareness of the benefits of complementary and alternative (CAM) therapies through his lectures on the subject at Saint Louis University School of Medicine, Washington University School of Medicine and Walter Reed Army Hospital. The chiropractic profession's role in working with medical doctors and other providers to help alleviate the opioid epidemic has been a special interest of Dr. Kettner, who currently co-chairs an American Pain Society CAM shared interest group with an MD from Harvard University. He would bring a fresh perspective to your panel's discussions, especially as they relate to finding effective, non-drug forms of pain management. Dr. Kettner's *curriculum vitae* is attached.

Many cases of opioid addiction – and eventual heroin use -- can be traced back to an epidemic of chronic pain that has for too long been improperly treated in this country. Back pain, in particular, has been identified as one of the most common reasons why primary care physicians prescribe opioids, despite the fact that a 2016 review and meta-analysis of relevant research published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* reveals that these drugs are essentially ineffective for treating chronic low back pain.

The chiropractic profession offers a non-drug, noninvasive approach to chronic low back pain management that is supported by research. This conservative approach may include trying spinal manipulation combined with exercise and stretching prior to moving on to procedures involving higher risk. Active self-care and complementary and integrative strategies may provide a solution for many chronic pain sufferers.

In fact, earlier this year, the American College of Physicians (ACP) updated its clinical guidelines for acute and chronic low back pain to promote the use of conservative treatments such as heat, massage, acupuncture and spinal manipulation before moving on to over-the-counter and prescription painkillers. It should be noted that all of these services are commonly offered by chiropractors, who are acknowledged experts in the use of spinal manipulation.

Several other groups have already taken the initiative to promote conservative treatments first for pain. In 2015, the Joint Commission, which certifies more than 20,000 health care organizations and programs in the U.S., revised its pain management standard to include chiropractic services and acupuncture. Similarly, in 2016 the Oregon Health Plan switched gears and began prioritizing chiropractic and other complementary therapies over painkillers for patients.

ACA believes patients across the country would benefit tremendously if health care professionals could work more collaboratively to identify individuals who could benefit from conservative forms of care for pain. We recognize that each patient is unique and care plans should be tailored to focus on what is the safest, most effective treatment for the individual. With this in mind, chiropractors stand ready to work together with President Trump's opioid panel as well as federal and state legislatures, medical physicians and community groups across the country to help address this epidemic, which has caused unnecessary suffering, enormous loss of human potential, and massive financial and personal costs.

I would welcome the opportunity to talk further with you about Dr. Kettner or how the chiropractic profession could work together with the Trump administration and its partner organizations toward a solution. I can be reached by email at David.Herd@outlook.com or by phone at (315)789-2223.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David A. Herd, DC". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

David A. Herd, DC

President

American Chiropractic Association