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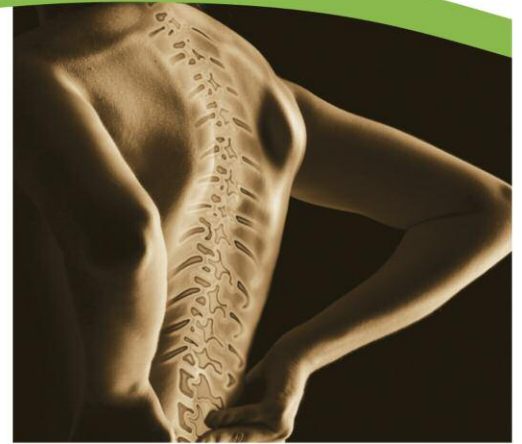
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Expert Insights

Blogs by Anthony Lombardi, Mark Sanna, Drew Stevens, Alex Niswander, Kelly Robbins, Perry Chinn, Shawne Duperon, and the *Chiropractic Economics* editorial staff. Here's what's new:



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Anthony J. Lombardi, DC
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Mattya Baospear

The University of Manchester (UK) and the University of Roma TRE (Italy) are conducting a not-for-profit survey on "Lifestyle, Diet, Health & Medicine." The objective of this survey is to assess people's perception of health and disease with respect to lifestyle habits and dietary regimens in comparison with and relation to traditional and complementary alternative medicine. We also have set up a secure https connection. We anticipate the survey may take 10 minutes or more of your time, and there will be a prize draw.

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- ▶ The importance of water for proper digestion

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- ▶ Chiropractic care can help alleviate pain caused by common knee problems

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Let me know what's on your mind:
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dsosnoski@chiroeco.com

You may even have experienced some form of this technological merry-go-round yourself. Early adopters tend to take the biggest risks, but late adopters often play catch-up and pay a price. There's a sweet spot you can hit right in the middle.

This issue of *Chiropractic Economics* will get you up to speed on electronic health record (EHR) and practice management software, but

do exercise caution and perform due diligence. The right products should fit your practice like a glove, and reassure you that you made a wise selection.

Arm yourself with knowledge and do what's best for your practice.

To your success,

Daniel Sosnoski, editor-in-chief



A decade of chiropractic progress

A countdown of the past 10 years in chiropractic history.

November 2008 Thanks to lobbying by the American Chiropractic Association, the U.S. Congress expands chiropractic services to 11 additional military bases.

December 2008 President-elect Barack Obama addresses the chiropractic profession in an open letter commenting on the role doctors of chiropractic fulfill in the U.S. healthcare system. He specifically refers to expanding the range of chiropractic services covered by Medicare, and increasing the use of chiropractic care by the Department of Veteran Affairs and Department of Defense.

January 2009 Medicare increases its rate of payment for chiropractic services.

February 2009 The \$800 billion stimulus package begins to wind its way through Congress, and some \$20 billion of it is earmarked for what will eventually become the HITECH Act that offers physicians with monetary incentives to implement EHR software systems.

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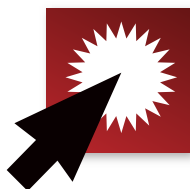
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1. Sasaki H, Sunagawa Y, Takahashi K, et al. Innovative preparation of curcumin for improved oral bioavailability. Biol Pharm Bull. 2011;34(5):6605.

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TOP NEWS

Mayer Hunt, DC, named ICA's 2014 chiropractor of the year

Julie Mayer Hunt, DC, was recently honored by the International Chiropractors Association (ICA) as the 2014 Chiropractor of the Year. Hunt's award was announced at the ICA's Annual Meeting held on the Cleveland College campus in Overland Park, Kansas. The presentation was made by International Chiropractors Association president Michael S. McLean, DC, FICA, at the ICA Awards Banquet during the ICA Round-Up Conference that weekend.

"We are deeply grateful to this exceptional individual who has distinguished herself through such extraordinary levels of service to the ICA and the chiropractic profession," McLean said as he presented the award to Hunt.



To read the full article, visit ChiroEco.com/mayerhunt.

Source: International Chiropractors Association, chiropractic.org

Historic agreement reached for 2017 joint chiropractic conference

An agreement has been reached for a joint 2017 conference in Washington, DC, for the World Federation of Chiropractic's 14th Biennial Congress, the Association of Chiropractic Colleges' Research Agenda Conference, and the National Chiropractic Leadership Conference hosted by the American Chiropractic Association (ACA).

"This premier event will showcase the many clinical, research, and other professional advances made by the chiropractic profession in the United States and around the world," ACA president Anthony Hamm, DC, said. "Additionally, it will highlight the profession's unity and strength by bringing together DCs from across the profession and the world."



For further details about the conference, visit ChiroEco.com/conf2017.

Source: American Chiropractic Association, acatoday.org

Chiropractors exempt from massage establishment regulation

Effective July 1, chiropractic physicians, allopathic physicians, and osteopathic physicians employing licensed massage therapists to perform massage on their patients at their place of practice are exempt from massage establishment licensing and regulation.

HB 1065 by Rep. Kerner (D-Palm Springs) and Sen. Latvala (R-Clearwater) requires owners of massage establishments and all licensed massage therapists to undergo fingerprinting and criminal background checks by Jan. 15, 2015. Those found to have committed certain crimes listed in the bill are barred from initial licensure and existing licenses are subject to emergency suspension. The purpose of the bill is to fight prostitution practiced in massage parlors.



To learn more about the exemption, visit ChiroEco.com/exempt.

Source: Florida Chiropractic Association, fcachiro.org

COLLEGE NEWS

Palmer College of Chiropractic scholarship fund increased

The following letter from the chairman of the Palmer College of Chiropractic Board of Trustees, Trevor Ireland, DC, is being distributed to the Palmer community.

To the Palmer Community,

Last spring we informed you that the leadership of The Chiropractic International Alumni Association (TCIAA) had transferred its remaining assets, totaling slightly under \$1 million, to the College, as instructed by the Iowa District Court.

I'm pleased to report that following up on the TCIAA's good-faith efforts, final legal agreements have been signed by Palmer College of Chiropractic and the former TCIAA, and approved by the Court.



To read the full letter, visit ChiroEco.com/palmerfund.

Source: Palmer College of Chiropractic, palmer.edu

Council on Chiropractic Education begins governance reform

The Council on Chiropractic Education (CCE) held its annual public session in Scottsdale, Arizona, on July 11. International Chiropractors Association president Michael McLean, DC, FICA, addressed the CCE's governing council on the subject of timely governance reform with expectations of concrete progress in advance of the next National Advisory Committee on Institutional Quality and Integrity (NACIQI) hearings in 2016. NACIQI is the U.S. Department of Education body that advises the Secretary of Education on official recognition of educational

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


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 For a list of reforms passed at the session, visit ChiroEco.com/ccsession.

Source: International Chiropractors Association, chiropractic.org

25 complete doctor of chiropractic program at Sherman College

Twenty five students from around the world received the doctor of chiropractic degree from Sherman College of Chiropractic in Spartanburg, South Carolina, on Saturday, June 21. The commencement was a shared ceremony for June and September 2014 graduates.

Justin M. Berg of Illinois, recipient of the Milton W. Garfunkel Award, presented the farewell address to his classmates. The Garfunkel Award is the highest award given at graduation.

 To read the article in its entirety, visit ChiroEco.com/shermangrads.

Source: Sherman College of Chiropractic, sherman.edu

INDUSTRY NEWS

ICA and chiropractic community mourn the passing of chiropractic leader James Sigafosse

James M. Sigafosse, DC, FICA, passed away on the afternoon of Thursday, July 3, after a short illness. He was surrounded by his family.

Recognized worldwide for his inspirational chiropractic philosophy and motivational teaching, Sigafosse has been a powerful leader, teacher, and inspiration to generations of chiropractors. He also authored many books and a variety of audio and video educational products utilized by chiropractors all over the world. He will be sorely missed.

 To read the full article, visit ChiroEco.com/sigafosse.

Source: International Chiropractors Association, chiropractic.org

ACA urges House, Senate to further integrate chiropractic in Veterans Affairs

The American Chiropractic Association (ACA), in a letter to U.S. House and Senate conferees regarding legislation addressing recent health care issues uncovered at the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), urges lawmakers to further integrate the essential services provided

by DCs in the VA healthcare system.

The letter, addressed to chairman Jeff Miller (R-Fla.) and ranking member Mike Michaud (D-Maine) of the House Committee on Veterans Affairs and chairman Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.) and ranking member Richard Burr (R-N.C.) of the Senate Committee on Veterans Affairs, reminds legislators that chiropractic physicians deliver conservative care for neuromusculoskeletal conditions necessary for America's veterans.

 To read more about the letter, visit ChiroEco.com/valetter.

Source: American Chiropractic Association, acatoday.org

New NCLAF 'war chest' supports chiropractic's legal, legislative advocacy

The American Chiropractic Association (ACA) has announced plans to merge the profession's longstanding national legal action initiative, the National Chiropractic Legal Action Fund, with its legislative advocacy initiative, the Chiropractic Health Advocacy Mobilization Project, into a single, unified entity capable of doing battle on both fronts simultaneously and in a complementary, coordinated fashion.

The new initiative, the National Chiropractic Legal-Legislative Action Fund, will seek support and participation from DCs across the nation and from all walks of the profession.

 To read the full article, visit ChiroEco.com/warchest.

Source: American Chiropractic Association, acatoday.org

Carlson Vitamin D3 and Super 2 Daily rated no. 1 by Labdoor

Carlson Vitamin D3 1,000 IU in soft gels and Super 2 Daily in soft gels were both ranked as the No. 1 highest-quality supplement by Labdoor in the Vitamin D and Multivitamin categories respectively.

Labdoor, an independent analysis service for consumers, supplies product safety grades to help consumers research, find, and buy the best supplements. Among a number of other supplements, Carlson Vitamin D3 1,000 IU and Super 2 Daily were rated based on purity and label accuracy, as well as nutritional value, ingredient safety, and efficacy.

 For more details regarding this award, visit ChiroEco.com/labrank.

Source: Carlson Laboratories, carlsonlabs.com

Olympic gold medalist skater Chad Hedrick visits Foot Levelers

Olympic gold medal-winning speed skater Chad Hedrick visited Foot Levelers headquarters in Roanoke, Virginia, on Friday, July 18. Hedrick visited Roanoke as the special guest of the Virginia Amateur Sports Subway Commonwealth Games, an Olympic-style event celebrating its 25th anniversary in 2014.

Foot Levelers is in its first year as a premier sponsor of the Commonwealth Games, which, like Foot Levelers, promotes healthy lifestyles to people of all ages and all activity levels.


 To read more about Hedrick's visit, visit ChiroEco.com/hedrick.

Source: Foot Levelers, footlevelers.com

HEALTH NEWS

F4CP cites report documenting role of chiropractic in better cost management of low-back pain

The Foundation for Chiropractic Progress (F4CP), a not-for-profit organization dedicated to raising awareness about the benefits of chiropractic care, points to the findings of a new study, "Tracking Low Back Problems in a Major Self-Insured Workforce: Toward Improvement in the Patient's Journey," (*Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine*; June 2014), which underscores the value that chiropractic brings to the delivery of care for low-back pain.

The study examined the total direct (medical, pharmaceutical) and indirect (lost productivity, absenteeism, workers' compensation, short- and long-term disability) cost outcomes associated with care for back problems reported by workers at a major self-insured heavy manufacturer in the U.S. 

 For more details about the study, visit ChiroEco.com/backstudy.

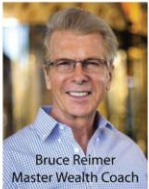
Source: Foundation for Chiropractic Progress, f4cp.com



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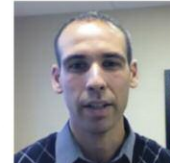
"I have been working with Bruce since 2005. He provided me with a very detailed system for identifying where I was, where I wanted to be and a roadmap to get there. My expectations have been met and exceeded."

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"For the first 25 years of practice I averaged 5 thousand dollars in savings and this year I will save over 100 thousand. I will also cut my income tax bill in half and will be debt free in seven years or less. When the student is ready, the teacher will appear."

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"After being in practice for 4 years we really hadn't saved anything. Within 6 months of working with Bruce we had saved \$50,000. It blew my mind! Bruce has really put in the time and effort to make sure we understand what we are doing with the resources we bring in."

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"Five months into the program we have gone from saving 0 to over \$135,000 per year. The Chirowealth program has been life-changing and eye-opening. We now have a clear plan of action for implementing our dreams and goals."

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"I can't thank Bruce Reimer enough for the commitment he's made to me and my family, how it's affected our lives, and the person he's helped me become. For the first time in my life I feel I truly have balance and peace in WHO I am, WHERE I am, and where I'm GOING."

Dr. Mike Bucknell



"Chirowealth showed me how to create and capture my practice profits. I have saved more money in the past eight months than I did in the first five years of practice."

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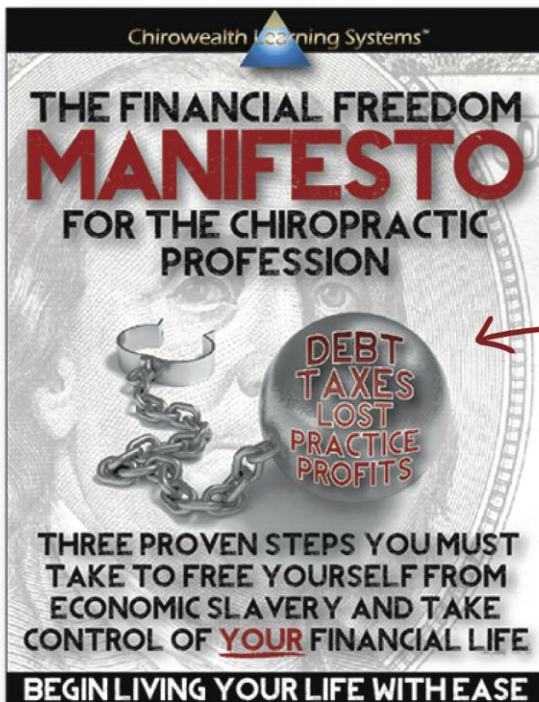
"Bruce helped us get a tax refund check for \$15,000, money that we overpaid last year that was overlooked by our former accountant. We expect to save at least \$25,000/year in taxes in the years to come."

Dr. Corinne & Scott Weaver



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How can you strengthen chiropractic schools? Recommend One

BY CHIROPRACTIC ECONOMICS STAFF

CHIROPRACTIC, WE HAVE A PROBLEM. AND IT CONCERNS chiropractic college recruiting. But what if there were a way to enlist the great body of practicing DCs in the effort of bolstering the number of new students? As of today, there is, and it's called "Recommend One." If each DC recommends just one student to enter the profession, the result will be transformative.

First, though, consider the need. Even as the effects of the Great Recession are fading in the rearview mirror, the numbers of new students entering chiropractic schools aren't recovering in kind.

"It's been the elephant in the room that nobody wants to talk about," says **Joseph Doyle**, president and CEO of *Chiropractic Economics*. "Enrollment has declined since 1996, when we had about 15,000 students in chiropractic school, and today we might have 9,700 or so — a 35 percent drop."

Seeing a need to address this, Doyle reached out to strategic partners in chiropractic and began developing the Recommend One program. **Kent Greenawalt**, CEO of Foot Levelers and F4CP chairman remembers joining the effort: "It was so simple and elegant, and I believe will be very effective. Joe backed his thoughts with research that found 68 percent of DCs would recommend a student. Recommend One has the potential to change the face of chiropractic." Greenawalt's role is to help link the Recommend One program with the Discover Chiropractic initiative organized by the Foundation for Chiropractic Progress (F4CP). "Standard Process and Foot Levelers kicked in \$100,000 to fund a study that verified the extent to which chiro-

practic is underutilized in this country," Greenawalt says.

A key player for college participation who joined the project early is **Brian McAulay**, DC, PhD, the president of Parker University and president of the ACC. McAulay remembers hearing about the project from Doyle: "Joe met with me at the ACC Research Agenda Conference, where he shared his vision that supporters of chiropractic and vendors could team with the colleges and address the underutilization of chiropractic that is hurting the whole healthcare system."

McAulay notes that Recommend One expands the market of future DCs. Most chiropractic students come from families of DCs or are patients themselves. "Recommend One provides the doctor who's focused on his or her practice with an easy way to recommend chiropractic as a career. It takes the burden of explaining the realities of a career in chiropractic off the DC, as the Recommend One website has everything a person needs to know?" If a DC sends a patient to the Recommend One website, they'll automatically be taken to DiscoverChiropractic.com and have the opportunity to study the profession. "They can use the map to find regional support resources and colleges. We've had 33,000 hits since the beginning of 2014," McAulay says.

The program's success relies on the power of exponential growth. "Let's say there's 60,000 DCs currently practicing and only 5 percent of the profession participated, that'd still be 3,000 new students entering the profession," Doyle says.

There's considerable potential among those who've gone to chiropractic school



Kent Greenawalt



Brian McAulay



Joseph Doyle

If each DC recommends just one student to enter the profession, the result will be transformative.

to reach back and recommend someone who might be interested in the profession, and other parties may assist in spreading the word about the program. “Another component to this is that the vendors can help us distrib-


ute educational materials about Recommend One by including them in order shipments, and then there’s the state association component, as they too can disseminate information about the program,” Doyle says. He envisions

colleges participating through alumni associations, whose members can recommend people in their communities — patients from their practices. “Then there are the media companies, like ours, who can get the word out that these materials are available.”

Surprisingly, research shows that while a majority of DCs would recommend chiropractic as a career, over 70 percent would recommend a school other than their alma mater. “That makes it a jump ball for everyone, and it places a challenge before the schools who need to come forward and make the case as to why they should be considered as the school to attend,” Doyle says.

The program will also celebrate “champion DCs” who rise above and beyond in driving students to chiropractic school. Colleges that see an influx of students recommended by one doctor have the opportunity to provide recognition. “Schools may choose to start nominating DCs for special acknowledgment,” McAulay says. And doctors will have the resources to start recruiting. “Right after the FCA convention, docs will be able to return to their practices and start handing out Recommend One brochures,” McAulay says.

Doyle notes that in addition to the state chiropractic associations, the ACA, ACC, and COCSA are also getting behind Recommend One. “General Becky Halstead has agreed to be a spokeswoman, and Debbie Brown of FCA has been so kind to give us time during the Plenary Session,” Doyle says.

For his part, Greenawalt urges every field practitioner to take a moment and recommend a student or even one of his or her patients if appropriate: “It only takes a moment to ask, ‘Have you ever thought about being a DC?’ It’s easy, and you’ll be amazed at the response.” 



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Arginine and citrulline to the rescue

You have options in addressing problems with erectile function and blood flow.

BY COREY SCHULER, DC, CNS, AND JEREMY APPLETON, ND, CNS



THINKSTOCK

MEN RARELY GO TO THE CHIROPRACTOR SPECIFICALLY to discuss sexual health issues. However, the prevalence of sexual dysfunction, its impact on the quality of life, and the significant level of patient trust afforded to chiropractors make it a natural discussion. In fact, it may be even more relevant than first imagined.

In a review of more than 11,000 medical records, researchers reported in *Spine* that pain medication may be associated with erectile dysfunction.¹ In one study, erectile dysfunction was present in almost 60 percent of men with chronic low-back pain and in only 25 percent of controls.² Given those odds, it's good to be prepared.

On the whole, erectile dysfunction can have several contributing factors, but most commonly it will be a vascular issue, if not depression. That is where safe and useful approaches including two amino acids, arginine and citrulline, enter the scene.

Arginine is a semi-essential amino acid involved in numerous biochemical pathways in the human body. It is involved in immune function, ammonia metabolism, and the secretion of hormones. Arginine is used to make nitric oxide (NO) in the body, a molecule that works on blood flow in the cardiovascular system by controlling the relaxation of blood vessels.

That's not all arginine can do; this amino acid supports many bodily

functions beyond blood flow, including athletic performance, wound healing, blood sugar metabolism, gastrointestinal function, female and male fertility, and managing dementia in the elderly.³

Citrulline is another amino acid, found most commonly in watermelon juice.⁴ Since it is a nonprotein amino acid, scientists used to think of it only as an intermediate metabolite, such as in the formation of urea.^{5,6} But newer research shows it is actually a donor of arginine and NO, and (like glutamine) essential under certain conditions, particularly those that stress the intestinal tract. Citrulline is an antioxidant and vasodilator, and serves many other vital functions.⁷



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When NO means yes

Arginine is great for athletes because it reduces the oxygen cost of aerobic exercise, supports healthy blood pressure, and enhances exercise tolerance. Athletes often suffer in silence from erectile dysfunction (ED). Cyclists are a particularly vulnerable group with a 13 to 24 percent incidence.⁸

Of the numerous studies on arginine supplementation, many have focused on its ability to improve NO function.⁹ Arginine also may increase blood flow to the heart, treat angina pectoris, improve the efficiency and vigor of exercise, and increase the efficiency of the heart's pumping.^{10,11,12}

In general, arginine helps people feel better and has been shown to alleviate anxiety and even reduce levels of the stress hormone cortisol.¹³ People who have had angina or heart attacks can benefit from arginine supplementation, too; it helps quench free radicals that can accelerate atherosclerosis and modulates cholesterol levels in a protective manner.¹⁴ These characteristics indicate a sexual health application.

For example: Statin medications have performed well in meta-analyses to improve ED, performing 33 to 50 percent as well as phosphodiesterase-5 inhibitors. However, these medications may also cause or worsen ED in some men.^{15,16}

Most studies using arginine to support erectile function have studied it in combination with other ingredients, such as French maritime pine bark extract,¹⁷⁻²⁰ yohimbine,^{21,22} or adenosine monophosphate.²³ Only a few studies have looked at arginine alone for treating ED.

In a small, uncontrolled trial, men were given 2.8 grams of arginine per day for two weeks. Forty percent of the men in the treatment group experienced improvement, compared to none in the placebo group.²⁴

In a double-blind trial, men with erectile concerns took 5 grams of arginine per day or a matching placebo for six weeks.²⁵ Nine of 29 (31 percent) patients taking L-arginine reported a significant subjective improvement in sexual function. All nine patients treated with L-arginine and who subjectively improved sexual performance had an initially low level of urinary nitric oxide, and this level had doubled at the end of the study. Men given just 500 milligrams of L-arginine three times daily in another trial experienced no improvement over placebo.²⁶ These results suggest that higher doses may be needed, and men with lower nitric oxide levels might benefit the most.

In a single blind, short-term study regarding men seeking support for erectile function, L-citrulline was given 1.5 grams per day for a month. Researchers concluded it was safe, psychologically well-accepted, and satisfying to test subjects who reported improvement from three to four on the Erection Hardness Scale (EHS).²⁷ Note that the EHS ranges from one to four, so a 25-percent improvement is significant.²⁸

General indications for citrulline supplementation include supporting nutritional status during intestinal challenge,

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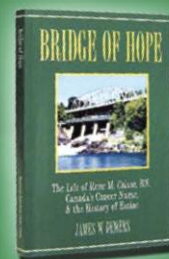
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support of normal muscle mass, and cardiovascular functions that benefit from enhanced NO production including erectile function.²⁹ Studies in healthy volunteers show that oral citrulline supplementation raises blood arginine levels more effectively than direct arginine supplementation.³⁰ Citrulline also supports healthy red blood cells, lowers elevated blood pressure and cholesterol, keeps blood sugar in line, stimulates immune function, and helps fight dementia.

Supplement safely

Arginine supplementation has not been associated with any significant adverse effects. People with kidney failure or liver disease may be unable to appropriately metabolize and excrete supplemental arginine and should only take arginine supplements under the supervision of a qualified healthcare professional.


Older data from test tube studies suggests that people with herpes simplex might want to avoid arginine.³¹ The assumption is that arginine might stimulate replication of the virus or provoke an outbreak; however, this caution has not been validated by controlled clinical trials.

Until more is known, arginine should be used with caution in persons with asthma and cancer.

Citrulline is generally recognized as safe for oral use and is well tolerated.³²⁻³⁷ No adverse effects were observed in healthy subjects given different loading doses of 2, 5, 10, or 15 grams.

When men face erectile dysfunction, they commonly do one of three things: Ask their primary care physician to prescribe one of the many popular ED medications, seek evaluation of their testosterone levels, or nothing. In your practice you likely see men in all three categories.

In the art of caring for the whole person with a focus on quality of life, chiropractors are uniquely positioned to help men who have either tried

other methods or are not reporting their problems elsewhere. Focusing on blood flow, using safe and effective methods, and providing a sensitive ear and caring counseling should be the first approaches. 



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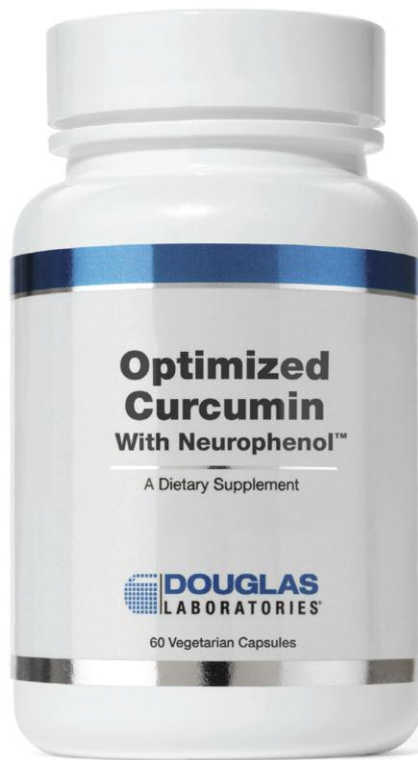
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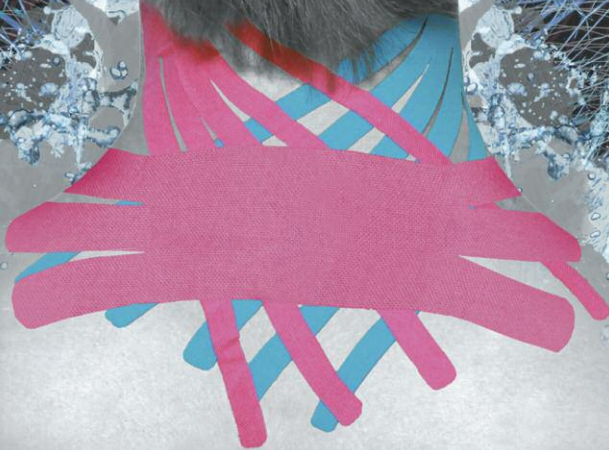
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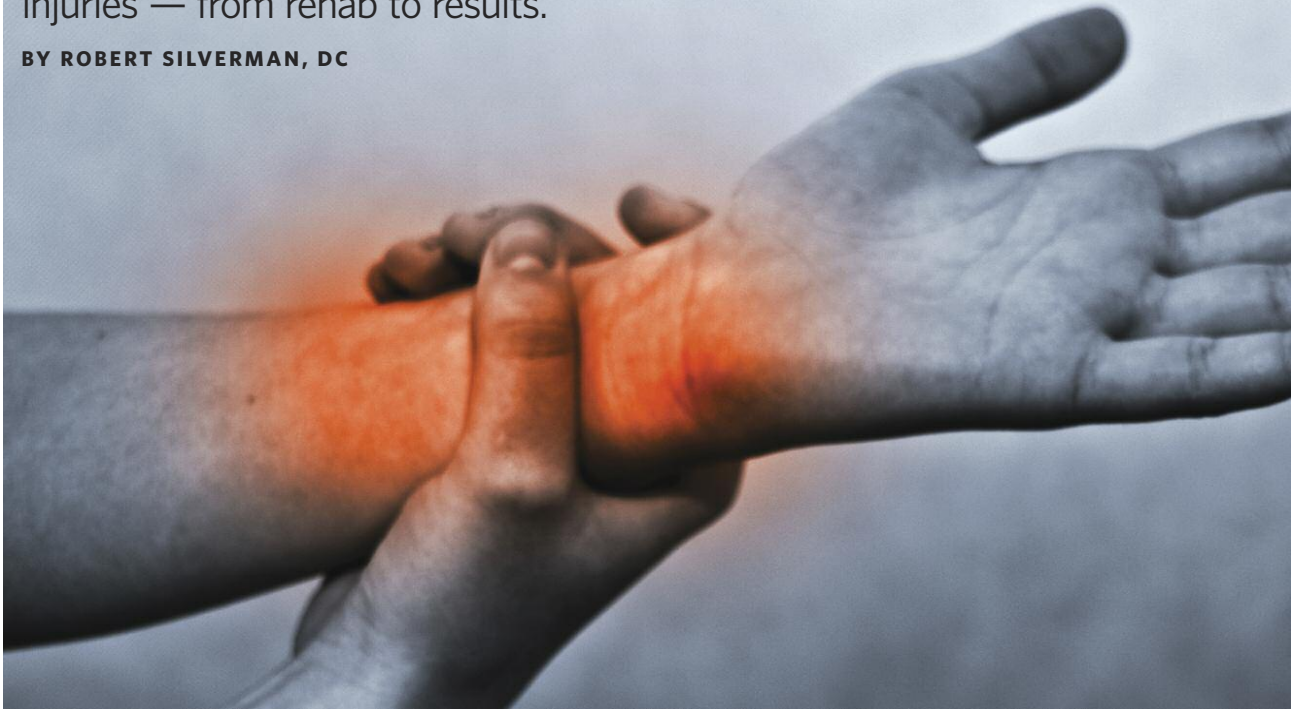
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More than skin deep

Low-level laser therapy for sports injuries — from rehab to results.

BY ROBERT SILVERMAN, DC

THINKSTOCK



SPORTS INJURY REHABILITATION IS ALL ABOUT GETTING BACK IN THE game quickly and with optimal health. A relatively new tool for the treatment of sports injuries is finding universal success. And doing so at the speed of light.

Trauma from sports injuries causes damage to the cells that make up soft tissues. These damaged cells release chemicals that provoke a natural inflammatory response in the body, which results in redness, swelling, warmth, and pain in the injured area. Persistent or recurrent inflammation can predispose athletes to early onset arthritis or degenerative changes in their joints.

The application of low-level laser therapy (LLLT) reduces short-term inflammation. Additionally, laser therapy significantly lowers the risk of arthritis, which frequently arises from sports injuries. Laser therapy is used by professional sports teams and athletes

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photons by way of a photochemical effect that is not photothermal; therefore, LLLT does not cause heat damage to the tissue.⁷

When cells are chemically damaged through injury, they stimulate the pain cycle. LLLT excites kinetic energy within the cells by transmitting healing stimuli in the form of photons. Once photons reach the cells of the body, they promote a cascade of cellular activities.

LLLT can ignite the production of enzymes, stimulate mitochondria, increase vasodilation and lymphatic drainage, promote ATP synthesis, and elevate collagen formation to prevent or decrease the formation of scar tissue.⁸ This is a critical step in reducing chronic and disabling myofascial pain syndromes. Simply put, LLLT enables athletes to feel relief faster and heal at the same time.

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The ease of using the laser and the speed at which athletes respond to it are key features of LLLT. Most laser treatment sessions last from just three to five minutes. Its versatility is unmatched because it can be a stand-alone treatment or used in conjunction with chiropractic adjustments, soft-tissue release, instrument-assisted treatments, kinesiotaping, and virtually any other rehab-oriented protocol.

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- ▶ Jumper's knees
- ▶ Tennis elbow
- ▶ Achilles tendonitis
- ▶ Chronic joint pain of the elbow, wrist, and fingers
- ▶ Plantar fasciitis
- ▶ Shoulder injuries

Among its many benefits, LLLT:

- ▶ Is nontoxic
- ▶ Has virtually no contraindications
- ▶ Is noninvasive
- ▶ Is easy to implement
- ▶ Creates no side effects or pain
- ▶ Is safe and effective
- ▶ Offers an alternative to analgesics, NSAIDs, and other medications
- ▶ Reduces the need for surgery

The key to choosing the right laser for your practice is to

understand the type that best treats the patients you normally see. For sports rehab, consider a laser with coherent light that has an NHN (lamp, nonheating) FDA clearance. These lasers use wavelengths of light from the visible light spectrum versus the infrared lamp (ILY) lasers, which cause topical heating of tissues. LLLT has been proven as an effective method for relief of pain and rapid healing.¹³ **CE**



ROBERT SILVERMAN, DC, CNS, CCN, CSCS, CKTP, CES, CIISN, DACBN, DCBCN, HKC, SASTM, teaches seminars nationwide and in Canada, and has a successful sports injury and performance private practice in New York. He can be reached at info@drobertsilverman.com or through drobertsilverman.com or erchonia.com

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THINKSTOCK

Natural hope for neuropathy

Research supports nutritional remedies for a common diabetic ailment.

BY TERRY LEMEROND

PINS AND NEEDLES. A BURNING THAT BEGINS IN THE FEET AND legs and progresses to the arms. An unpleasant crawling sensation that travels under the skin. Stabbing, intense leg pain that keeps one awake at night. The symptoms of peripheral neuropathy can develop suddenly or progress slowly, sometimes over years. Neuropathy is the most common complication of diabetes, affecting 50 percent of patients with Type 1 or 2.¹

Prescription drugs, including anti-depressants, anti-seizure medications, pain relievers, and anti-nausea drugs are used in the treatment of neuropathy. But none of them result in repairing delicate blood vessels and nerve endings or helping the body learn to properly metabolize sugar again. Fortunately, nutrition research has found that along with lifestyle choices, specific nutrients can relieve — and even reverse — the symptoms and causes of neuropathy.

Bioactive B vitamins

B vitamins are crucial for blood sugar metabolism and proper nerve function. Inadequate or deficient levels of B vitamins are often noted in patients with diabetes. Replenishing this vitamin not only improves blood sugar control but also reduces inflammatory homocysteine levels and relieves the pain of neuropathy.

Clinical effects in neuropathy treatment may be improved with the use of the active forms of specific B vitamins, which do not require conversion into a usable form by the liver. Pyridoxal-5'-phosphate (vitamin B₆), methylcobalamin (vitamin B₁₂), and folate (vitamin B₉) are examples of B vitamins in their active forms.

A study of epidermal nerve fiber density in patients with Type 2 diabetes treated with an oral combination of vitamin B₉, B₁₂, and B₆ reported that nearly 75 percent of patients showed an increase in nerve fiber density, and

slightly more than 80 percent of patients experienced reduced frequency and intensity of burning, tingling, and abnormal sensitivity to touch.²

Benfotiamine is a fat-soluble form of vitamin B₁ that is retained in the body at five times the concentrations of standard water-soluble thiamine. A scientific study at the University of Florida College of Medicine showed that benfotiamine prevented glucose toxicity and brought elevated blood sugar levels down to normal.³

This form of vitamin B₁ has also been clinically proven to reduce pain and complications of diabetic neuropathy, the “pins and needles” and “tingling” sensation that people with diabetes may feel in their feet and legs.

In a Serbian clinical study, patients with diabetes were treated with a combination of benfotiamine and vitamin B₆ for 45 days. At the end of the study, just over 85 percent of the patients reported a significant

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reduction in overall pain. Hyperpathia (pain due to the loss of muscle fibers) was also reduced from 90 percent of patients to around 30 percent. The researchers felt that these results “confirmed that benfotiamine was a good starting choice for the treatment of diabetic polyneuropathy.”⁴

Chelated minerals

Chromium is essential for blood sugar metabolism. It activates insulin receptors, helping prevent the buildup of glucose in the bloodstream. In one clinical study, individuals taking chromium reduced their fasting blood glucose level from an average of 197 to 103 in just three months, and their triglyceride and LDL cholesterol numbers were brought down to healthier levels as well.⁵

Zinc stabilizes pancreatic storage of insulin and inhibits oxidative stress

that promotes insulin resistance and diabetes. Research published in *Diabetes, Obesity, and Metabolism* reported that reduced zinc levels in the pancreas are associated with diabetes, and proper amounts of this mineral tend to keep insulin levels on an even keel.^{6,7}

Although many forms of minerals are available as supplements, amino acid chelated forms are more easily and efficiently used by the body. The bonding of a mineral to the amino acid glycine creates a mineral form that passes through the intestinal wall and is incorporated into the blood stream more efficiently.

Blood sugar lowering nutrients

Alpha lipoic acid can boost levels of glutathione to protect delicate nerves from oxidative damage. In a review by researchers at Oregon State University, the evidence shows that alpha lipoic acid (ALA) fights diabetic neuropathy

by helping to normalize the muscles’ blood sugar intake, which reduces the pain and tingling of peripheral nerves. Other laboratory research published in *Diabetes* found that ALA reversed markers of diabetic neuropathy and improved peripheral nerve function.^{8,9}

Boswellia (*Boswellia serrata*) is one of nature’s most powerful anti-inflammatory medicines. It is a specific inhibitor of 5-LOX, an enzyme that activates inflammation-inducing leukotrienes. One of the biggest challenges for people with diabetes and nerve damage is the pain and inflammation that accompany the condition.^{10,11}

The most active and beneficial of the boswellic acids is known as AKBA (acetyl-11-keto- β -boswellic acid). However, not all boswellia extracts are equally beneficial. *For example:* In unstandardized boswellia products, AKBA levels can be quite low —

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sometimes as small as 1 percent. To make sure you get the best product, look for boswellia standardized to at least 10 percent AKBA. Additionally, unstandardized boswellia contains a pro-inflammatory compound called beta boswellic acid (BBA), which must be reduced to less than 5 percent for optimal effectiveness.

Heal naturally

There is a growing awareness of the benefits of nutrients for slowing or reversing disease.

For example: Following the clinical trial published in *Diabetes Research and Clinical Practice*, researchers concluded that micronutrients, including B₁, B₂, B₆, B₁₂, folate, and zinc could “ameliorate diabetic neuropathy symptoms.”¹² These interventions are starting to garner wider acceptance as linchpins for effective treatment protocols.

The damage done by elevated blood sugar levels (as seen with Type 2 diabetes) happens over time. The disease is not always noticed at first. But through a sensible exercise regimen, disciplined eating habits, and well-guided use of nutrient ingredients, the pain, numbness, and tingling of neuropathy can be overcome. 



TERRY LEMEROND is a natural health expert with more than 40 years' experience. He has owned health food stores, founded dietary supplement companies, and formulated more than 400 products. A published author, he appears on radio, television and is a frequent guest speaker. He can be contacted through europharmausa.com.

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











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THINKSTOCK

When it isn't working

Let them know before letting them go.

BY MONICA WOFFORD, CSP

LYDIA HAD BEEN WITH THE DOCTOR'S OFFICE FOR AS LONG AS anyone could remember. She had more history with the practice than some of the doctors, and the standing joke was that she'd been around forever. The problem was she wasn't doing a great job anymore and, in fact, the work she had done since her arrival had always been OK, but never really exceptional.

The docs had talked about it for years and knew they needed to do something, but how could they let go of someone they'd considered a friend and who had been there so long? Could they really let her know how they felt? Could they really let her go?

This type of problem is not uncommon. What these DCs had

done, instead of letting Lydia go, was talk about how much better things would be if they put someone else in her role. They wanted an employee who could provide the level of customer service they needed and who would follow through.

What they didn't do, however, was let her know how they felt. As the saying goes: "You can't fix what you don't know is broken." It's only human nature to not want to hurt someone's feelings. So how do you run a business and manage the performance of the employees you have the privilege of leading, while letting go of those who perform at a lower standard than desired?

You let them know and then you let them go. Here are five ways to do that,

while perhaps even maintaining a positive relationship.

Be clear

Subtlety is a poor tool to guide performance. Your role as the leader of the office is to clearly share information critical to performance. Be straightforward with your expectations.

Tell employees what works and what doesn't, what you expect and what you will not tolerate, and what has changed and how they can modify their performance to fit the new standard.

If you have delegated employee performance management to an office manager, be clear on what you expect, so that person can effectively carry out your wishes. The goal when an employee's performance no longer fits

We all hope for the most wonderful of outcomes when it comes to letting an employee go.

your guidelines is to provide a chance to rise to the occasion, not talk about how he or she isn't performing like everyone else. Improve the person who can make the change you need.

Be proactive

Your longtime employees have likely learned how to work with you in more ways than you realize. They know your strengths. They know your weaknesses. They probably know your family and how to work the system.

They aren't manipulating you on purpose. But if they know you don't want to hurt their feelings, and that's why you won't let them go, there's a chance they may play this up to keep you from doing what must be done.

Address this in a proactive way.

For example: "It is my sincere hope that no matter what happens to our working relationship, we can still maintain a relationship and be friends. You know what our business needs and it appears, based on your actions, you no longer wish to fulfill that type of role. As your friend, would you prefer I free you up to pursue what you love, and we part ways with no hard feelings?"

If the answer is "No, I'd rather not leave," then proactively explain, before you're so frustrated you can't see straight, what needs to happen for that to be the outcome.

Be consistent

In most employment agreements, both

employee and employer have rights. You have the right to find a good fit for a needed role, and the new hire has an obligation to fulfill what that role demands, as well as the right to leave if he or she finds they can't.

But you must be consistent — as well as clear — about what the demands of the role are and how they are to be carried out. Whenever there is a deviation, point it out, talk it out, and write it down.

A consistent performance resolution plan usually has four steps: a verbal coaching conversation, a conversation around a written document, a written write-up the employee signs, and a termination conversation. Each critical issue plan follows these four steps, and if there are repeated documented violations of a key issue, then termination may be necessary. Be consistent in your application of this process, or letting someone go can be a long,

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Be kind

Breaking up is hard to do and so is letting go of a longtime friend and co-worker (who may even have seen you through some tough times). Circumstances change, and what you both needed then could easily be different from what you need now.

Express to the team member how much you value him or her as a person and show empathy in your conversation. If you've been clear, proactive, and consistent, this will be a conversation in which neither party is surprised by the outcome and, while it may not be easy, it won't result in years of pent-up frustration. The goal in letting go of an employee is not to cover every issue you've "stored up for the winter" like a squirrel who's gathered nuts, but to simply share what

isn't working (and what you believe is the best outcome).

Believe

So much has been written about believing that what you want is attainable and that you can attract all you desire. Take this information to heart.

When you "feel" as if something isn't right and know in your gut you need to do something in a relationship, that feeling is there for a reason. If acting on those feelings is the hardest part, try writing down what you would say and test it out. If you write out the script or write the person a letter (not to be sent), and find that you feel a weight lifted off your shoulders, then this is the right action to take.

Sometimes you have to go through a bit of difficulty to grow. This feeling will likely be true not only for you, but for the employee, too, and your

actions may be just what is needed to nudge the person into a new chapter of life.

We all hope for the most wonderful of outcomes when it comes to letting an employee go. The truth is that doesn't always happen, but if you follow these five guidelines and general rules and take action on what you know is best for your practice, chances are you'll experience less pain in the process than you imagine. Both you and the employee will be able to move forward. ☺



MONICA WOFFORD, CSP, is a leadership development expert. As a professional speaker and CEO of Contagious Companies, she shares with others how to develop their leadership skills. The author of *Contagious Leadership* and *Make Difficult People Disappear*, she can be contacted at 866-382-0121, at Monica@ContagiousCompanies.com or through contagiouscompanies.com.

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Redefining rewards

Why positive reinforcement brings out the best in your employees.

BY MICHELLE GELLER-VINO

HOW CAN YOU MOTIVATE YOUR EMPLOYEES TO PERFORM THEIR best? A bonus or some other incentive might do the trick, right? Wrong. Financial rewards and incentive programs can boost employee morale and may increase job satisfaction, but usually not job performance.

At first, money appears to motivate people. Eventually, however, cash rewards are no longer viewed as the result of a job well done because motivation comes from an internal desire to achieve something. Also, if given repeatedly, bonuses can become expected. (You may keep your staff on their toes with random bonuses to add excitement to your practice.)

It's possible to walk into your office

every day and be greeted by a motivated staff eager to go the extra mile. For some chiropractors, this is a reality. Unfortunately, it's not the norm in most practices.

Research shows that 60 percent of employees only put in enough effort to keep their jobs. More than 75 percent of employees are less motivated today than when they were first hired, and an estimated 80 percent of employees could perform significantly better if they so desired. These numbers show that most practices are not functioning at their optimal potential.

Dual roles

As the owner of a practice, you wear many hats, but your responsibilities as both doctor and manager stand out

above the rest. As a doctor, your primary function is to tend to the needs of your patients. As a manager, your job is to oversee the needs of your staff and practice. To do this effectively, learn how to motivate your employees while keeping them happy at the same time.

Get yourself motivated. Your employees aren't going to be motivated if you're not enthusiastic about your job. Lead by example. Ask yourself an important question: What motivates you? Is it being recognized for what you've done, learning and tackling new things, praise, success, health, or something else? List the things that motivate you the most.

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better motivate yourself, how your job supports your motivations, and what you can do to maintain your purpose. Write down these answers as well. In addition to learning something about yourself, this preparation can give you perspective on supporting the motivations of your staff. Believe it or not, your staff does reflect *you*.

Reward the behavior you want. Larry Markson, DC, encourages chiropractors to follow this sentiment, which is also called “positive reinforcement.” Most people feel unappreciated at their jobs, which is a major reason so many lose their motivation. When an employee is performing well, he or she should not have to wait to hear about it. Offer praise, recognition, and feedback not only at your weekly team meetings, but also randomly throughout the day when you see it.

When it comes to positive reinforcement, the rule is “the sooner, the better.” But if you need to wait, be specific when talking to your staff member. Simply saying “good job” is not as effective as saying, “I like the way you were able to get Sally Smith to schedule multiple appointments.” This shows your employees that you truly are paying attention, and that you are taking the time to tell them.

Discover what motivates your staff. How are you going to motivate your employees if you don’t know what drives them? At one of your staff meetings, repeat the same exercise mentioned above with each of your employees. Sit down with each one and create a list of five potential motivators. Ask him or her to start with the most important.

After each meeting, take notes so you don’t forget later. Jot down how you will adapt your style with staff members to make sure their motivational factors are being met. Continue working with each team member on an individual basis. One-on-one meetings or lunches are ideal because your employees are also motivated by how much they feel you care. They will take notice if you set aside a special time in your day for them.

Talk to your patients. It’s one thing if an employee wants to work hard for you; it’s even better if an employee feels motivated to work hard for your patients. Ask some of your patients for feedback about your staff — both positive and negative. You can share what you learn with them at a staff meeting without mentioning any names.

Also invite patients to write testimonials about your employees that you can include in your office newsletter. You can even ask patients to vote on a “team member of the month” who will earn a reward for a job well done. In addition to building employee motivation, it also serves as a message to patients that you spend time making the office a positive place to work.



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Keep them on their toes. Although verbal recognition is a good form of encouragement, it can be quickly forgotten. Written praise is a more permanent and powerful motivational tool. Send your staff thank-you cards or a bouquet of flowers to thank them for their hard work.

Use the element of surprise to your advantage. Plan an impromptu staff outing such horseback riding, a cooking class, or sports game to create a shared experience. This not only shows your employees that you care, but that you have thought and planned something special to do together. This will add pleasurable, gratifying, and fun memories and bring everyone together to create a solid team. These gestures should be done randomly, as should bonuses, to avoid becoming a staff expectation regardless of job performance.

Each member of your team has the

potential to be motivated. All you need to do is discover and use their natural talent. When you know your employees' personalities and work habits, it's easy to choose the tools that are best suited for them. Employee motivation is an ongoing process that should be applied every day.

Motivate yourself, find out what drives your staff, reward positive behavior when you see it, keep your employees on their toes, and involve your patients. When you strive to keep your staff motivated, your practice will be successful because everyone looks forward to coming to work. ☺



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Quick Tip

The free radical role in illness

A free radical is a cellular killer that wreaks havoc by damaging DNA, altering biochemical compounds, corroding cell membranes, and destroying cells outright. These are molecules that have lost one electron and are highly unbalanced. They seek to restore their balance by stealing vital electrons from other molecules.

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THINKSTOCK

Quality assurance

Essential tips to keep your top talent yours.

BY JACKIE PREY

HAVING TALENTED EMPLOYEES IN THE WORKPLACE IS IMPORTANT to the long-term success of any company. Yet, employee engagement is even more crucial to a business's productivity and profitability. Statistics show low employee engagement costs the U.S. economy \$370 billion per year.¹

When employees feel engaged, they have an emotional commitment to an organization and its goals. For a company, this translates to more positive employee morale and a subsequent effect on quality and production. Benefits of high employee engagement also include nearly 40 percent lower absenteeism and a 65 percent lower turnover rate.²

The key to retaining top employee talent is keeping your staff engaged in your practice's success right from the start or, in some cases, even before an

employee is hired. That means treating employees like family, making sure they have a voice, and always working on the employer-employee relationship. Employees are attracted to jobs for a variety of reasons, but without the right workplace culture, they soon will be looking for the next best offer.

The following tips show how to keep your employees engaged and motivated in your practice's success.

Engagement starts during recruitment.

As an employer, you need to put your best foot forward in the interview. Let your passion for your practice shine through. If you aren't excited to come to work, why should your employees be? Use meaningful language to describe your company and focus on what makes your workplace different from the business three blocks down the street.

When you bring employees on board, make sure your enthusiasm continues. On the first day, make them feel welcome and like members of the family by having their office or locker space ready. Introduce them with face-to-face introductions and know a little something about them and their background to share during introductions.

Assign new hires a mentor so they have a place to turn when they have questions, and take time to train employees effectively. Help them understand their role in the bigger picture so that they can say joining your practice was one of their best decisions.

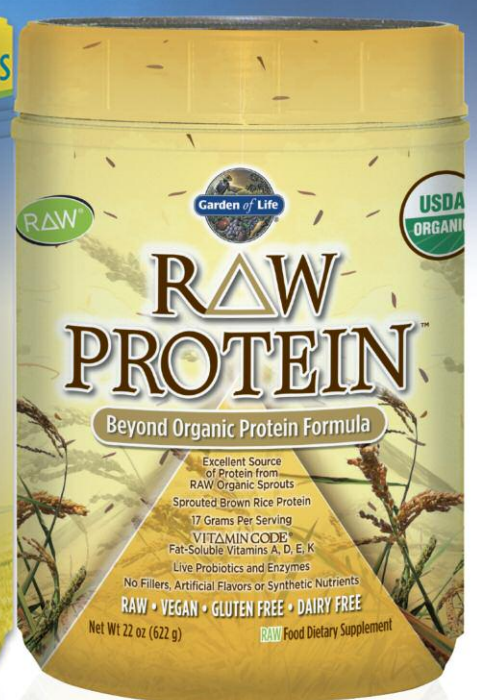
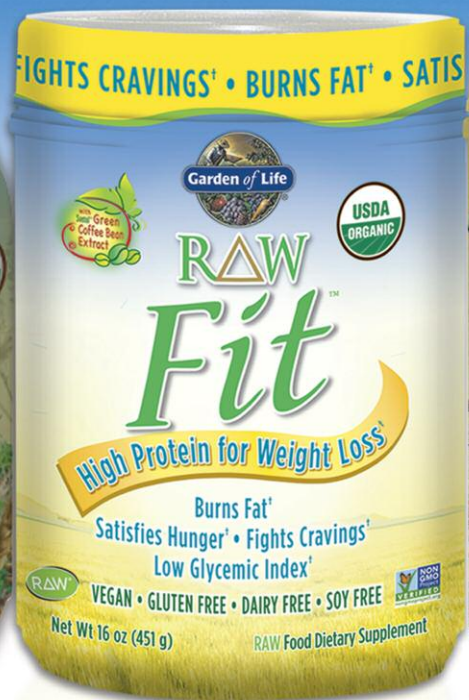
Know the fit goes both ways. Just as you are looking for the right fit, so is an employee. Look to hire people who are passionate about what you do, the



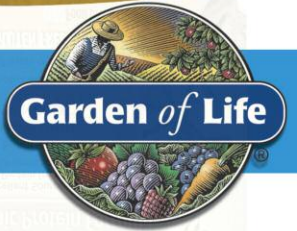
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services you provide, the work culture you've established, and the corporate values you share. By sharing a philosophy and common goals, employees become more engaged in the success of the business.

Like any relationship, expectations must be met on both sides. You want employees to meet productivity goals. They want the job and culture you talked about when you hired them.

Exceed expectations by enriching the physical, emotional, and cognitive parts of the job, and top talent will do all they can to help your business meet goals.

And make the connection personal; what is important to one person or group of employees may be unimportant to others. Have you given them opportunities to witness and live the practice's mission statement, philosophy, and values?

Walk the talk. While you might talk a good game when it comes to your philosophy and culture, it is more important that your actions back it up. If you tell your employees it's good to get away from their desks and get active, then it is important for everyone, including you, to do so.

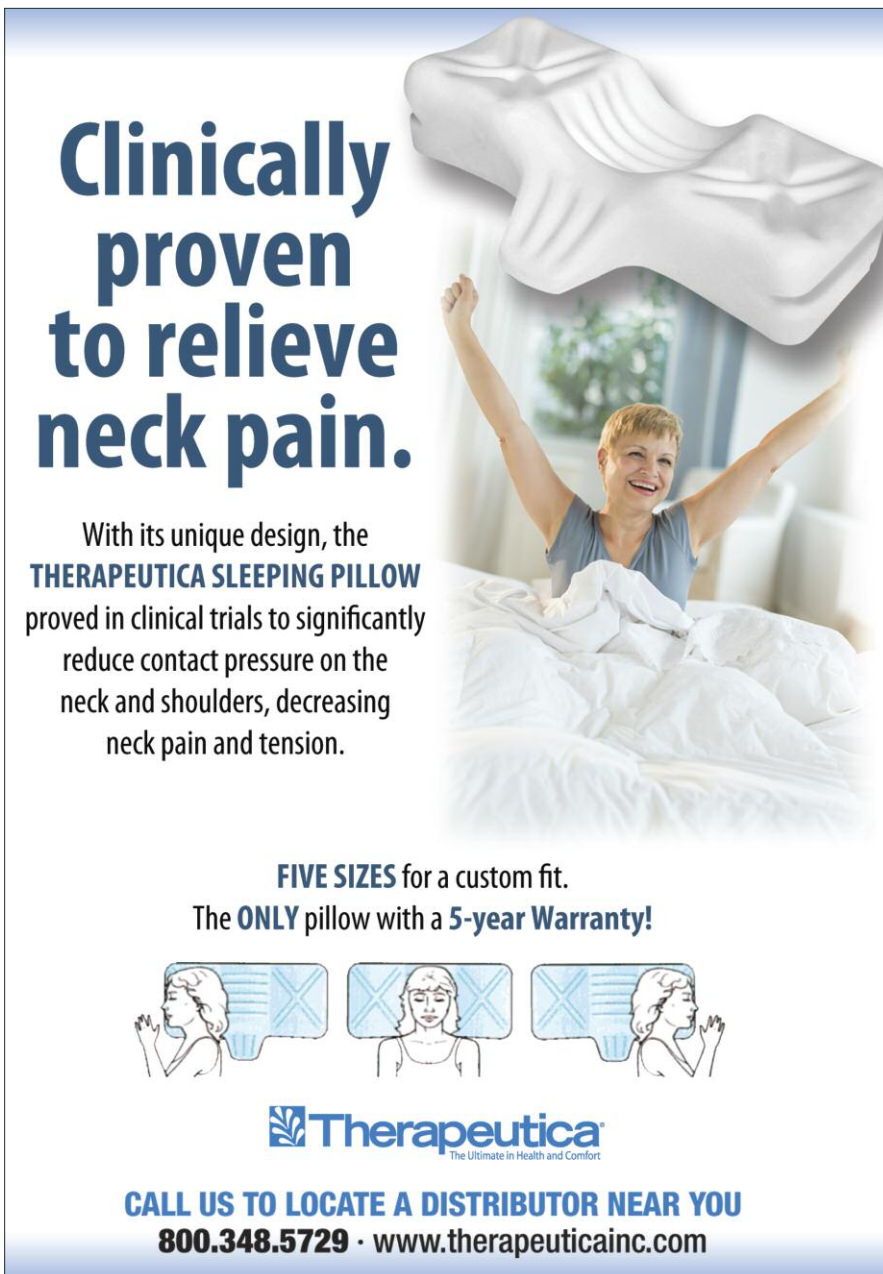
Give your employees an extra 15 minute break each day to get outside and walk. If your office space doesn't have enough room for an on-site fitness center, partner with the gym down the street and offer a discount on gym membership or in-home fitness equipment to your employees. (You might even consider a reciprocal offer to discount your services to the gym owner and gym patrons.)

If your practice is large, it is crucial your leadership team walks the talk. Their involvement sets the tone and establishes the culture. Employees become more engaged in a practice when they feel that everyone is on board with the company's philosophy and values, and the workplace environment culture supports them.

With the products and services you recommend, make sure your employees are given a chance to try them out. Obtain their honest feedback. Their experience with the products will allow them to provide patients or potential customers with firsthand testimonials. This can make all the difference to a patient or customer who is on the fence about trying something new.

Communicate, communicate, communicate. Keeping employees "in the know" is critical to motivating and engaging them. By knowing and understanding your practice strategies, employees will feel valued and involved. Share on a regular basis how things are going, what you're planning to do next, and where the employees fit into the equation.

Communicate these messages in a variety of ways, multiple times. Where and how often depends on the size of



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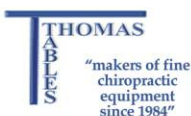
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your practice. Try telling them in person or in a group meeting, and then send an email reiterating what you said. Put up flyers with the same message in the break room, and if it is especially important, write a letter and mail it directly to your employees' homes.

Equally important in communication is listening. Listen to your employees' ideas, feedback, and concerns. Strive together to make improvements and realize dreams. Acknowledge and celebrate successes of each employee and the practice.

Invest in them. When finances are tight, education and career development programs usually get cut first. Don't sacrifice knowledge and personal development. Your employees' knowledge and skill sets are important to your practice.

Encourage employees to attend workshops and seminars to expand their chiropractic knowledge base, develop technology skills, and gain certifications and degrees. Assist with the cost of these classes because it shows your top talent you are invested in *their* education and career growth. Consider creating opportunities both inside and outside your practice that continue to empower and develop them.

Providing top-quality employee benefits can be particularly meaningful to your employees. The more they feel you are invested in them, the more secure they will feel in the workplace. As you are in the business of health, invest in quality health insurance options. Healthy employees are typically more productive and contribute to a stronger bottom line.

Engaging and retaining top talent starts with a hiring process that finds people who share the values and passion of your company. Along the way, show your employees that you can walk the talk and communicate effectively. Most importantly, demonstrate that you are invested in their employment and support them as a part of your workplace family. ☺



JACKIE PREY is the human resources manager for Standard Process. In this role, she is responsible for the company's day-to-day human resources operations at the company's headquarters in Palmyra, Wisconsin. Prey develops quality employee programs and benefits, and oversees recruitment and employment processes, compensation structure, and legal compliance issues. She can be contacted through standardprocess.com.

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When seeing is believing

How patient education through instrument adjusting increases trust, compliance, and revenue.

BY CAROLINE FEENEY

EVEN AS THE DOCTOR'S HEALING HANDS REMAIN THE quintessential image of chiropractic, time and technology continue to push the boundaries of the profession. Instrument adjusting is one area that has seen enormous growth over the past decade. Most DCs incorporate the technology in their practices to serve all or a portion of their patients.

Still, a cloud of hesitation remains surrounding its initial expense. But as patients increasingly want more information about their health, instrument adjusting can provide the feedback they desire. As such, an understanding of the current financial realities and potential benefits of the technology can help you make an informed decision.

Perhaps you envision supplementing manual techniques, replacing them

entirely, or you're on the fence about adding more machines. Maybe you don't see the value in paying for a service that your hands provide for free. Wherever you stand, consider instrument adjusting's evolving fiscal landscape and the opportunities it presents for expanding your practice.

A scientific method

For some doctors, instrument adjusting becomes necessary due to personal injury or general wear on the body. This was the case for Rob Cadwallader, DC, who began practicing in 1997 and currently is CEO and clinic director of Pro Health Chiropractic, LLC, in Sun Prairie, Wisconsin. Cadwallader had run a practice with his wife in Tennessee for about eight years when he suffered from three herniated discs in 2005. As

he started searching for a new job, he stumbled across an instrument adjusting advertisement. Shortly after, he bought a machine. "Soon we used it on our patients, and we realized that they just loved it," Cadwallader says.

The pique in patient interest is multifaceted. For one, the technology brings in people who previously feared going to the chiropractor, as the gentle tapping method eliminates the air and gas release (popping and cracking sound) from the joints.

When Cadwallader began introducing patients to instrument adjusting, they were also impressed by its level of precision. Doctors can rescan patients to verify that the problem was resolved and educate them about the process. With patients ever more curious about their healthcare, this is a huge advantage.

Timothy Vyrostek, DC, CCSP, has noticed similar patient reactions in his 17 years of practice. He currently owns Lakeside Chiropractic in his hometown of Conneaut Lake, Pennsylvania, where he uses instrument adjusting. "A great misconception is that you, the doctor, are 'not doing anything with that little force,'" he says. "But when you can actually show the patient real-time scientific data on their system, compliance to care is significantly increased and the financial aspect that goes along with that also increases." When looking for the right machine for your practice, Cadwallader and Vyrostek recommend one that allows you to show patients the results of their adjustment and features variation for a diverse client base.

The number crunch

Your return on investment depends on the size of your practice. The transition to technology may take time in a community, Vyrostek says, so being new in town could be advantageous in setting yourself apart as the "high-tech" doc. Based in a rural area, it took Vyrostek five years to pay off his first


machine. “Once established, I now have three machines, and the payoff is much quicker,” he says.

When Cadwallader first incorporated instrument adjusting, the technology cost about \$35,000 per machine. Now, they’re about half that price, he says. Even with the heftier cost in 2005, he paid off the investment as his multi-disciplinary practice grew about 30 percent. “I’ve seen doctors almost ready to shut their doors with 20 to 30 patients, and then the instrument adjusting will bump them up to 100 per week,” he says.

After 12 years of successful business in Tennessee, the Cadwalladers sold their practice to a doctor looking for a less physically taxing operation. The transition was fairly seamless because the concern for patient attrition was eliminated by the consistency of instrument adjusting. The Cadwalladers started fresh in Wisconsin, where they were the first in town to introduce the technology and within three years became the dominant practice in the market.

The ripple effect

If a few patients react warmly to instrument adjusting, they can do most of your marketing. “People would be sitting out in the reception area, hear the machine, and say, ‘What’s that? I want to do it.’” Cadwallader says.

Vyrostek’s practice most heavily relied on word of mouth as well. “When a client can feel results, that is one thing,” Vyrostek says. “When a client can also see results, that greatly increases compliance and revenue. Having instrument adjusting ups my level of certainty. The patients can feel that, and their trust increases. I can allay any fear they may have and give them the care they need.” 



Caroline Feeney is the associate editor of Chiropractic Economics. She can be reached at cfeeney@chiroeco.com, 904-567-1559, or through ChiroEco.com.

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Down to the wire

Time is running out to take advantage of EHR meaningful use incentive payments.

BY DANIEL SOSNOSKI

Starting in 2010, this publication has continually reported on the Health Information Technology for Economic and Clinical Health (HITECH) Act, which was enacted the previous year.

Since that time, doctors of chiropractic have been eligible for up to \$44,000 in incentive payments provided they demonstrate meaningful use of certified electronic healthcare record (EHR) software. If you haven't been participating in this program, your opportunity will end soon.

Before we look at where DCs stand with respect to EHR systems, know that you aren't alone. Medical doctors, podiatrists, dentists, and optometrists are also grappling with the transition to EHR.

A recent Medscape survey found that nearly 85 percent of MDs are now using EHR software, meaning those who don't are a shrinking minority. Moreover, some 65 percent of adopters find that EHRs improve documentation and a plurality note an improvement in collections.

Equivalent numbers for chiropractors are harder to come by, but most chiropractic EHR software vendors report sales in the hundreds to thousands, and it's estimated that the slightly more than 10,000 DCs eligible

for incentive payments have collected more than \$100 million to date.¹ The American Chiropractic Association confirms this and estimates approximately 15 to 20 percent of DCs have migrated to certified EHR systems.

The HITECH Act was deployed as a "carrot-and-stick" measure — it should not be thought of as a reimbursement plan. Rather, it offers rewards to participating doctors' practices, rewards that decrease over time until the end of the incentive program. Then the mode shifts toward penalties for those who are not participating with a compliant system.

Are you affected by this?

Whether and to what extent this may involve your practice depends on your engagement with the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). If you see few or no Medicare patients, you probably aren't directly eligible for incentives or penalties. If you run a cash-based practice, you're largely out of the spotlight.

On the other hand, most major insurance companies take cues from CMS, and it's highly likely that eventually the major third-party payers will create their own incentives and penalties to encourage healthcare providers to use EHR. Also, the aforementioned practice benefits, plus

increased HIPAA compliance security, might compel you to make the move regardless of your level of exposure to CMS.

Last call

If you started implementing an ONC-ATCB certified EHR as late as 2012, you'll have been eligible for the maximum payments totaling \$44,000 by the end of the program in 2016. But it's not too late to get a piece of the action.

"The absolute deadline is October 3, 2014, to begin attesting for meaningful use for those DCs who have not yet registered to enter the EHR incentive program," says Steven J. Kraus, DC, founder and CEO of Future Health. "If you do not begin the meaningful use program by October 3, 2014, you will forever lose your opportunity to get free incentive monies up to \$24,000 over the next 27 months."

Roger Gooden, president of ChiroWrite, explains how this would work: "The maximum reimbursement available for Medicare-eligible professionals starting the program in 2014 is \$23,520. The breakdown is as follows: \$11,760 for 2014, \$7,840 for 2015, and \$3,920 for 2016. It used to be \$24,000, but the 3 percent sequester from last year's

government shutdown changed that.”

There’s a slight reduction in your total expectation if you didn’t attest for meaningful use by July 1, 2014, but you’ll still be eligible for close to \$24,000 provided you demonstrate you’ve used a certified EHR for the period of October 3 through December 31, 2014.

Fringe benefits

As mentioned above, there’s more to EHR than incentive payments (or penalties). Software that meets the government’s standards almost forces the user to comply with today’s stricter guidelines for documentation and

compliance. The Office of Inspector General is specifically targeting chiropractic in 2014 in the areas of billing, coding, documentation, and HIPAA.

According to Dean G. Rottinghaus, DC, founder of Medicfusion EHR, “There will be more stringent accounting of protected health information. Also, the final omnibus rule, which was released last year and became law in September 2013, greatly enhances a patient’s privacy protections, provides individuals new rights to their health information, and strengthens the government’s ability to enforce the law.” This should be of concern to chiropractors, especially those with small offices who may not have trained staff in place to achieve full compliance with HIPAA.

“Violation penalties can range from \$25,000

to \$1.5 million per occurrence,” Rottinghaus says.

And, as Gooden points out, “This is the No. 1 thing meaningful use auditors look for to get back money CMS has paid out.”

Know your options

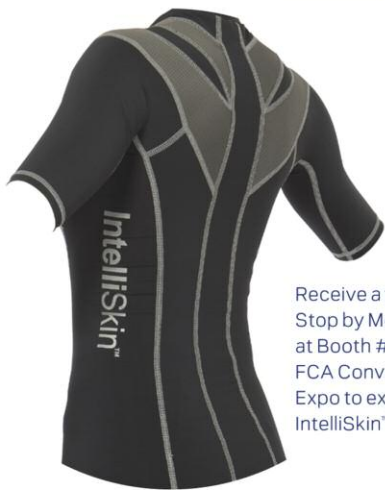
Not all EHR software is created equal. But one thing’s for sure: If you want to qualify for incentive payments, your system must be certified by one of the Office of the National Coordinator (ONC) for Health Information Technology Authorized Testing and Certification Bodies (ATCB). Software vendors who have achieved such certification will proudly display the “ONC-ATCB Certified” logo on their websites.

Furthermore, regulations and standards are constantly evolving as



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various problems and solutions come to the fore. Interoperability — the capacity for the records of one software package to seamlessly integrate with those of another — remain a work in progress. Look for software that is well-supported and preferably supplied by a vendor with a proven track record.

“Be sure your EHR provider is keeping up with technology and documentation expectations for things like outcome assessment tools and care plan documentation and the upcoming ICD-10 changes in 2015,” Kraus says. At the moment, certified EHR is not required to be ICD-10 compliant, but your vendor will need to bring your software into compliance prior to October 1, 2015.

The ONC and CMS have stated that all eligible providers must have 2014 edition certified EHR technology (CEHRT) in place in their offices by Jan. 1, 2015. “It is clear,” Rottinghaus says, “that any eligible provider attesting for the first time (if 2014 is their first year to attest) or the second time (if 2014 is their second year to attest) will be able to attest using 2011 CEHRT, 2014 CEHRT, or a combination of 2011 and 2014 CEHRT.”

Learn the lingo

If you’re unfamiliar with the term “meaningful use,” it refers to the extent that you can demonstrate that you

have CEHRT and are using it to a significant degree. The EHR incentive program was designed to roll out in three phases — Stage 1, Stage 2, and Stage 3. Each step has increasingly greater requirements for compliance.

At the outset of the program in 2011, you only needed to meet Stage 1 requirements for a 90-day period in your first year of meaningful use, and then a full year in your second year of meaningful use. Following that, users are required to meet Stage 2 guidelines for two calendar years. But for 2014, due to delays in the publication of EHR vendors’ system upgrade regulations, providers need only demonstrate meaningful use for a 90-day reporting period.

Regarding the term “attesting,” this refers to your notifying CMS that you own and are using CEHRT correctly and to a significant degree. There’s an interactive calculator tool you can access online to determine if you qualify.² Then you file an attestation to CMS via their website.³

Attest no later than October 1, 2014, to avoid being penalized in 2015. If you began reporting after July 3, 2014, you are still eligible for EHR incentive payments totaling \$24,000, but you will also receive the 2015 program adjustment — a 1 percent decrease in Medicare reimbursements for claims submitted in 2015.

Note: If you do not start by Oct. 3, 2014, you will receive zero incentive

Medicare incentive payments

	Program-to-Date Providers Paid	Program-to-Date Payment Amount
Total Eligible Professionals	427,562	\$ 5,964,050,336
MD or DO	384,068	\$ 5,390,245,282
Optometrists	17,950	\$ 233,840,368
Podiatrists	14,948	\$ 212,508,255
Chiropractors	10,253	\$ 123,059,868
Dentists	343	\$ 4,396,563

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If you elect to proceed toward EHR, or if you choose to decline adoption, be clear on the pros and cons and understand your options.

payments. What's more, Medicare-eligible professionals who do not successfully demonstrate meaningful use will have a negative payment adjustment starting in 2015. It begins at 1 percent and increases each year

that they do not demonstrate meaningful use, to a maximum of 5 percent.

All hands on deck

If you're going to implement EHR, attest for meaningful use, and demon-

strate meaningful use for the final quarter of 2014, you won't be able to do it alone. You'll need your staff fully onboard and everyone pulling together to make it happen. Time is short, but it is still possible if you go all out.

When it comes to learning to use EHR, Gooden recommends that staff go through the same training as doctors to grasp meaningful use: "Because 90 percent of meaningful use is done by the office staff. Having the doctor train them is begging for disaster."

In general, good EHR will have useful training available to help you succeed. Live training, online videos, DVDs, workbooks, and telephone support are supplied by most. In his experience, Kraus finds that about eight hours of training is sufficient to get a staff member productive with EHR.

"It is important to have staff understand meaningful use measures and how they are scored. After that understanding is solid, then they need to know how to perform the measures in your software. Most clinics have had their staff perform 90 percent of the work for the successful completion of meaningful use," Kraus says.

Realistic expectations

Not all DCs will want to transition to EHR. Cash-based practices may sense no urgency, practices who see few or no Medicare patients may see little benefit, and doctors winding down their careers may have no incentive. And to get the maximum reimbursement on the table, you'll need to be billing CMS a fair amount during the reporting periods.

All medical professionals who interact with EHR — not just DCs — report it being a mixed bag. Some things are easier to accomplish, but

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2015
Level I - \$899
Parker Campus • March 28/29
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Calgary • May 16/17
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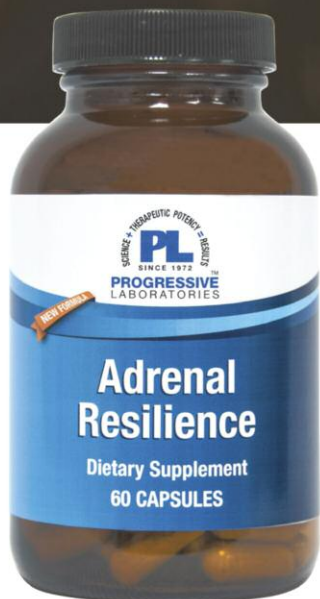
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Incentive payment schedule

For doctors who submit claims to Medicare, payments can be expected according to the schedule below.

To receive payments, however, you must register with the EHR Incentive Program website and be enrolled in the Medicare Fee-For-Service (FFS) or Medicare Advantage programs. You must have a National Provider Identifier (NPI) for your registration and be using a certified EHR technology to demonstrate meaningful use of the software.

Cal. Year	First CY in which the EP Receives an Incentive Payment				
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015+
2011	\$18,000	-----	-----	-----	-----
2012	\$12,000	\$18,000	-----	-----	-----
2013	\$8,000	\$12,000	\$15,000	-----	-----
2014	\$4,000	\$8,000	\$12,000	\$12,000	-----
2015	\$2,000	\$4,000	\$8,000	\$8,000	\$0
2016	-----	\$2,000	\$4,000	\$4,000	\$0
TOTAL	\$44,000	\$44,000	\$39,000	\$24,000	\$0

others are harder, or take more time.

Rottinghaus has found that, typically, doctors are reluctant to move to EHR because they fear change. But after transitioning they find a lot to like: “There is little to no paper involved when a doctor utilizes EHR. This significantly cuts down on errors within the office as there is no filing, no paper charts or travel cards, no EOBs, etc.”

From his perspective, Gooden notes that the meaningful use benchmarks aren't popular with most clients. “Meaningful use usually requires DCs to do things they were not doing. For example, many doctors do not do height, weight, or blood pressure. Additionally, many were not capturing medications and medication allergies.”

Still, your dentist and optometrist operate under the same requirements. And this ultimately fulfills some of the goals of the Affordable Care Act and is part of the healthcare framework known as the Patient-Centered Medical Home model of care.

If you elect to proceed toward EHR, or if you choose to decline adoption, be clear on the pros and cons and understand your options. It will be a big decision either way, and one you'll have to live with. Should you go forward, be optimistic, have a can-do, positive attitude, and reap the rewards of a cutting-edge practice. **CE**



DANIEL SOSNOSKI is the editor of *Chiropractic Economics*. He can be reached at 904-567-1539, dsosnoski@chiroeco.com, or through ChiroEco.com.

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- ¹ EHR Incentive Program. (April 2014). “Medicare Incentive Payments.” www.cms.gov/Regulations-and-Guidance/Legislation/EHRIncentivePrograms/Downloads/April2014_MedicareEHRIncentivePayments.pdf.
- ² CMS EHR Incentive Program Meaningful Use Calculator: www.cms.gov/apps/stage-1-meaningful-use-attestation-calculator.
- ³ CMS EHR Incentive Program Registration and Attestation System: <https://ehrincentives.cms.gov/hitech/login.action>.

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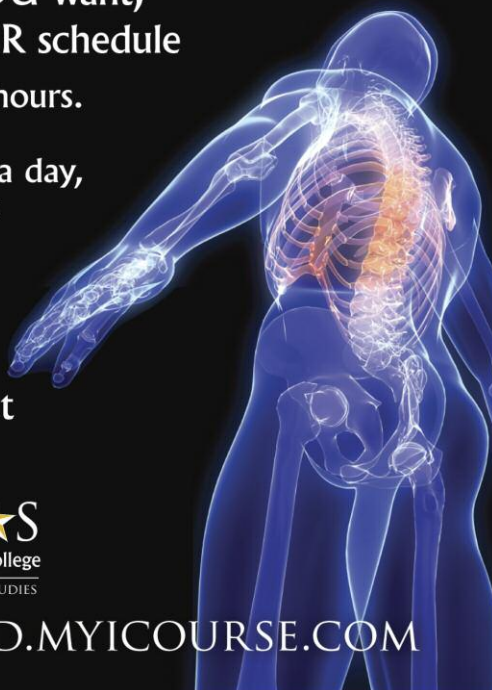
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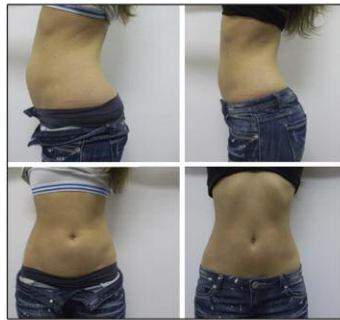


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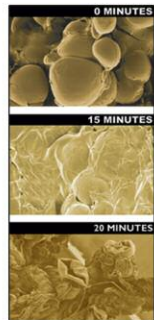
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AS TECHNOLOGY IMPROVES AND HEALTHCARE PROCESSES modernize, so too does the software practitioners of all types implement in their practices. Software can be used for many important daily tasks and can accomplish a number of different goals. But choosing the right product often depends on an individual chiropractor's taste and needs.

Just as no two doctors practice exactly the same way, no two pieces of software are identical. As such, *Chiropractic Economics* asked the industry's leading software companies to submit or update their latest products for our annual software roundup. This is a guide to help you make the most well-informed, educated decision about which software suits you and your practice style.

While we could not highlight every product in this issue, a complete product listing can be found by visiting ChiroEco.com and clicking on the "products" tab.

Remember, all information has been provided by the manufacturers, and *Chiropractic Economics* does not test nor endorse any of the products listed.

MyChartsOnline.com

MyChartsOnline.com is a fully certified EHR system designed for chiropractors. The system is Web-based, allowing doctors' accessibility to their patients' information from anywhere at any time using an iPad, desktop, or laptop computer. It's safe and secure and has been certified by the Drummond Group Inc. It serves as a quick and easy way to capture SOAP notes without paper and doesn't require management of software installation, servers, or upgrades. MyCharts is "pay-as-you-go" with a low-cost monthly subscription and no startup fees or hardware to purchase. It is also compatible with Dragon and has scanning capabilities. By switching from handwritten notes to MyChartsOnline, you may experience a huge advance in speed, convenience, and accuracy.

Call 888-277-7710 or visit mychartsonline.com.

WritePad EHR

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and compliant with evolving healthcare industry regulations. WritePad also provides modules for chiropractic, rehab, PT, pain management, primary care, and more, and is compatible with desktops, laptops, pen tablets, scanning, and voice recognition software.

Call 800-496-2001 or visit writepad.com.

ChiroWrite

ChiroWrite is a certified EHR/SOAP notes system that allows doctors to document patient encounters quickly and easily while still maintaining a high level of detail. Originally created to assist doctors with documentation, ChiroWrite now supports the growing trend of doctors who are cash-based or outsourcing their billing. With the additions of the Scheduler module and Patient Check-In, ChiroWrite provides a full suite of products to run the entire office.

Call 800-642-6082 or visit softworxsolutions.com.

SmartCloud & SmartServer Certified Practice Management Software/EHR

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Call 888-919-9919 or visit futurehealthsoftware.com.

SOFTWARE ROUNDUP

RAPID EHR and Practice Management Software

RAPID EHR and Practice Management Software from ACOM Health is built especially for chiropractors. It features interactive, 2014-certified EHR clinical notes and documentation, practice management for workflow automation, patient management and scheduling, financial management, billing, and detailed reporting. ACOM Health's Claim Management service team is an alternative to self-managing the costs and hassles of billing and collecting from insurance payers. ACOM Health's solutions help you meet medical necessity, address compliance requirements, and accelerate the reimbursement process. ACOM Health is a division of ACOM Solutions, a 31-year-old corporation with over 4,000 customers worldwide.

Call 866-286-5315 or visit acomhealth.com.

SOAPe Platinum Plus

SOAPe Platinum Plus from SOAPe Inc. is a full-scale practice management suite that offers patient scheduling with automated reminders, point-and-click reporting, and electronic claims. Its paperless office capabilities virtually eliminate the need for paper files or storage cabinets. Furthermore, all documents can be sent electronically, reducing postage and print costs. It is marketed as HIPAA

compliant with user-defined security levels, which means that you determine who has access to what features. Visit the SOAPe Inc. website to download your free copy. Support is available 24/7, 365 days a year.

Call 877-447-6273 or visit soapsoftware.com.

Atlas Chiropractic System

Atlas Chiropractic System is a complete EHR solution. Atlas serves chiropractors with every type of practice style and philosophy. The system includes a sign-in monitor, touch-screen notes, X-ray analysis, scheduling, electronic billing and reconciliation, marketing analysis, patient education videos, articles, care plans, merchant services, and more. It also features ChiroVmail HD videos, 3-D neurosimulator videos, articles and doctor talk reminders, customizable SOAP notes, text and email reminders, customizable intake and re-exam form, as well as PowerPay, which processes credit cards and schedules post-dated payments.

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EHR Total Practice Management Software

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ECLIPSE was certified as a complete EHR as of July 2011 in accordance with ONC-ATCB 2011-2012 guidelines, is seeking Stage 2 certification in 2014, and is used by over 7,000 chiropractic practices across the U.S. Practices range from single practitioner to multidisciplinary, multisite practices with dozens of providers and 200-plus networked computers that bill millions in revenue monthly. In 2012 and 2013, ECLIPSE once again topped independent surveys by multiple state associations. The company created the “zero-in” user interface, invented case management, first integrated SOAP and billing, introduced the first Windows software for healthcare providers, and introduced real-time dataflow to eliminate competition for a patient’s chart in your office. Call 800-966-1462 or visit eclipsesoftware.net.

E-Z BIS Office

E-Z BIS Office is a complete practice management and electronic health records system, with features for patient accounting and billing, appointment scheduling and reminders, electronic health records, patient check-in, credit card processing, inventory control, and more. The software is available in modules to provide the exact set of features you desire. The latest version, 10.2, is ONC-certified for the 2014 Edition of the EHR Meaningful Use Incentive Program for doctors in either Stage 1 or Stage 2. The newest features in E-Z BIS Office include capabilities for billing using ICD-10 codes and the recently revised CMS-1500 paper claim form. Call 800-445-7816 or visit ezbis.com.

Herfert Software

Herfert Software is an EHR that is said to meet the specific needs of the chiropractic community. A growing number of chiropractors are turning to EHR solutions to enhance their practice and meet deadlines for implementing electronic medical records. This feature-rich, paperless system with advanced billing is manufactured to save you time, cut costs, and increase efficiency. In partnership with Medicfusion EHR, Herfert now provides a HITECH Certified total solution, meaning your practice may be eligible for up to

The advertisement features a large background image of a woman lying on a table with a black traction device around her neck. In the top left, the text 'Re-Pose' is written in a large, green, outlined font, with 'Traction & Stretch Aid' below it in white. In the top right, the 'IK' logo is shown in green, with the website 'www.kinian.net' underneath. A circular badge in the bottom left corner contains the text '\$70 Special Offer'. On the right side, there are two smaller inset images: the top one shows a person's leg being stretched with the device, with the text 'More comfort.' below it; the bottom one shows a person's back being stretched, with the text 'Less invasive.' below it.

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Chart Talk

Chart Talk from Mighty Oak Technology is a fully HITECH Certified Ambulatory, complete EHR software. Chart Talk has been integrated with Dragon Medical to help provide a seamless voice interface. The program is fully navigable using voice commands and is designed to create fast, accurate notes. Voice-activated macros also help speed up the SOAP process. The meaningful use dashboard prompts users to obtain meaningful use statistics easily and accurately. Your own forms are also easy to customize in the program. Chart Talk is versatile enough to be incorporated into any workflow.

Call 952-374-5550 or visit charttalk.net.

NexySoft-DC

NexySoft-DC from Nexyka Inc. is marketed as a state-of-the-art paperless clinic management software. It uses the most innovative technology, can be entirely customized to your needs, and has been designed for touch-screen computers. It is also Windows Standard, which means that the menus at the top allow the user to browse through the system like any other Windows program such as Word or Excel. NexySoft-DC is designed to increase the efficiency and profitability of your clinic and save you time for what matters the most — your patients.

Call 877-891-3657 or visit nexysoft.com.

CoAction Chiropractic Practice Management Software

CoAction Chiropractic Practice Management Software is marketed as the most compliant, efficient, customizable chiropractic practice management software. It is tablet and touch-screen compatible and features free Google calendar sync. Key features include a digital appointment book, note taking, insurance/cash billing, and scrubbing. Spend just 10 to 30 seconds on data entry during the point of encounter and five minute billing at the end of the day. CoAction Software is said to be the default software for Life Chiropractic College West Advanced Health Center, three franchises, and two coaching groups.

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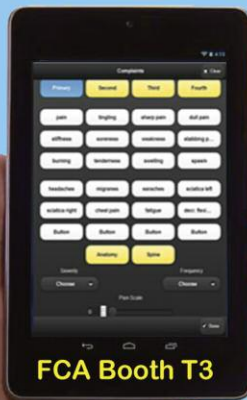
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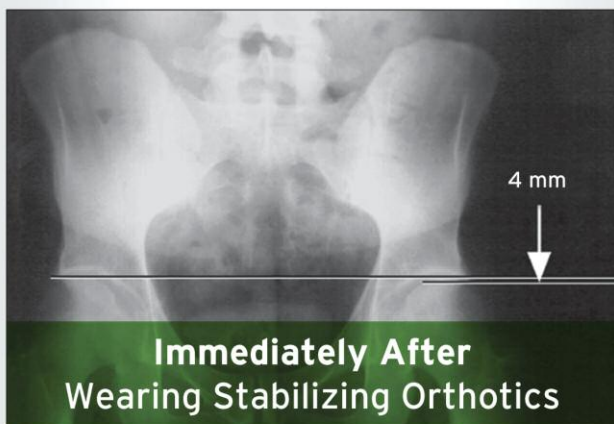
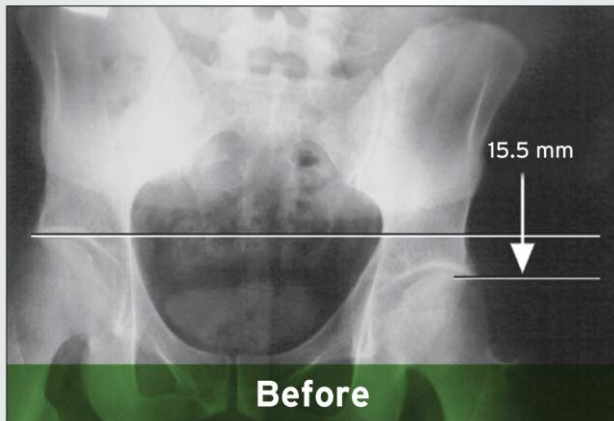


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Beneath the surface

Functional medicine addresses the underlying causes of disease.

BY ANNETTE SCHIPPEL, DC

THINKSTOCK

FUNCTIONAL MEDICINE IS HERE TO STAY, AND CHIROPRACTORS NEED to embrace it or be left behind.

Moreover, the chiropractic profession is in the best position to practice true functional medicine (FM) and do it better than anyone. It can change your practice and the lives of your patients for the better.

To clarify, FM is about changing diet and how a person moves and aims to naturally support the body through vitamins, minerals, and botanicals. It embraces what chiropractic was meant to do at its inception: provide whole-body care.

It's impossible to ignore the reality of the current health crisis in the U.S. The chronic illnesses that are taking away peoples' quality of life are also increasing dependency on prescription

medications, which often do no more than reduce symptoms (at best). This is not a wellness paradigm.

FM is about the whole person, discovering the root cause of illness, and correcting the imbalances that led to their dis-ease. It's now a matter of effectively communicating to our patients what FM actually means and making it the only logical choice.

The subject of FM was presented at the 2014 International Health Management Forum conference in Beijing, China with discussions surrounding how FM approaches conditions that are preventable and even reversible.

Chronic illnesses are predicted to generate costs in the trillions of dollars globally soon. China is being progressive in bringing FM to the forefront of their

healthcare system. When they embrace and fully adopt an FM model, they will be leading the world in the fight against chronic metabolic diseases.

Here in the U.S., in just 100 years Americans have come to experience something never before witnessed. Up until about 1915, heart disease was nearly unheard of and only documented in a few rare cases. Diabetes afflicted about 1 percent of the population, and autoimmune diseases were also extremely rare. These are the diseases of a modern era.

Our species has survived for millennia with little incidence of the chronic diseases that are today afflicting peoples' health and vitality and are a threat to future generations, too.

At the turn of the century, there was little concern for air pollution. The

Chiropractors are the natural choice for embracing the FM model for treating patients.

water supply was unadulterated; there was no electromagnetic frequency exposure, and certainly a minimum amount of chemicals in the food supply and household goods. People's roles as individuals were clearly defined and,

with little exception, what work people did and how they would live out their lives was fairly predictable.

Stress as we know it today was uncommon, as in earlier times stress generally had more clearly defined

beginning and ending points. There wasn't the *excessive* and *prolonged* stress that is experienced today.

People are no longer dying from the infectious diseases that plagued us in the past. Today's surgeons can fix all sorts of acute medical emergencies. So why are preventable chronic illnesses the leading cause of death in this country?

One reason is that symptom chasers look for symptom relief. People less commonly search for the root cause behind an illness. This is where FM is a game changer. The system ferrets out the cause behind a person's list of complaints.

First, you need to listen to the patient's symptoms because the body trying to tell you something is wrong. Finding the root cause and restoring health demonstrates your true power as a healthcare provider.

Chiropractors are the natural choice for embracing the FM model for treating patients. Most of your patients already look to you for the answers their allopathic physicians aren't providing. You have the power to create momentum in this field and position yourself as the "whole-person" physician.

You may find that when working with patients with chronic illnesses, the adjustment alone isn't enough to resolve all their health complaints. In a time of uncertain healthcare reimbursement and changing political climate, expanding a nutrition practice that embraces an FM model is not only smart, it is a necessity for continued success. ^{CE}



ANNETTE SCHAPPEL, DC, is a functional medicine practitioner and a trainer and co-founder of Functional Wellness Systems. She has traveled the world teaching

thousands of practitioners about functional endocrinology and its application for the patient. In addition to her own practice, she supervises training and consultation to practitioners wanting a greater understanding. She can be contacted through schappelchiropractic.com.



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Total return on Investment in 12-month period	X 0-4x	✓ 50 x or more
Live One-on-One Coaching of your medical staff with our medical staff	X NO	✓ YES
One-on-One Implementation specialist with unlimited coaching calls	X NO	✓ YES
Full program available online	X NO	✓ YES
Time to phase out of practice if desired	X 1 year to never	✓ 6 mos
Use of harmful drugs, medications for pain management that is off purpose	✓ YES	X NEVER

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The silent killer

Inflammation is the culprit in a wide range of chronic illnesses.

BY JACK TIPS, PHD, CCN

EMERGING RESEARCH POINTS TO A NEW FOUNDATIONAL FOCUS germane to doctors of chiropractic. Understanding it provides an opportunity for deeper, more lasting patient health benefits. At the forefront is the bidirectional relationship between the intestinal microbiome (all the microbes inhabiting the intestinal tract) and the neural/immune system network. This constitutes the gut-brain axis, which means bacteria have an enormous influence over what we think, do, and feel.

Given that these microbes can affect mood and volition, they play an important role in human health. Humans have harnessed microbe power for life energy — mitochondrial

adenosine triphosphate (ATP). Furthermore, microbes can help the body choose life partners, decide when an infant should be weaned, and determine when puberty occurs. It's fair to say that microscopic life is a vastly significant part of the human experience.

After reviewing the science behind the microbiome, consider applications that open new doors to a simple yet advanced holistic model for natural health practices.

Bidirectional hotline communication

Microbes in the intestines talk directly with the brain, and the brain monitors and communicates directly with the intestinal microbial colonies. More

than just casual conversation, the gut microbiome helps determine the entire body's inflammation *set-point*, which, when elevated, leads to chronic-degenerative and autoimmune disease as well as anxiety and depression. The enteric nervous system connects to the vagus nerve and mediates anxiety and depression, both of which have a pronounced basis in intestinal inflammation.

Origins of microbiome mutation

Causes of intestinal inflammation are the subject of research, and current findings point to multiple potential causes. Antibiotics as remedial drugs or imbedded in commercial meat products encourage mutation of

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microbial biofilms toward more virulent forms. Other potential causes include genetically modified foods (85 to 90 percent of commercial corn and soy products contain unlabeled, genetically-modified chromosomes) and impart the inflammatory glyphosate pesticide now being found in breast milk and infants' bodies.

Additionally, glyphosate is being investigated for mutating intestinal microbes to manufacture pesticides *in vivo*. Wheat, a massively hybridized grain, has become highly inflammatory because of the additional chromosomes that increase gluten and regulate growth size for the threshers. Refined carbohydrates and sugars (high fructose corn sweetener) as well as synthetic sweeteners (aspartame) are clearly linked to increasing inflammatory activity in the intestines and throughout the body. Processed foods and the lack of dietary fibers are likewise linked to inflammation via alteration of the intestinal microbiome.

Dangerous results

Chronic, subclinical inflammation due to an altered intestinal microbiome can be a cause of leaky gut syndrome, which

forces a constant immunological response to the molecules that errantly pass into the bloodstream. Noting the multitude of causes of an altered gut-microbiome, it's no longer a question of *if* a person has leaky gut — it's a matter of *how much* his or her intestinal endothelium is damaged and how many tight junctions are leaking. Leaky gut means more inflammation and less nutritional uptake — a double whammy for human health.

Increased inflammation is supported by the gut-brain nerve communication as well as physiological food particles, bacterial wastes, microbial DNA, and messenger molecules. In February 2004, a cover story in *Time Magazine* about the dangers of inflammation brought the inflammatory basis of diabetes, cardiovascular disease, Alzheimer's, and cancer to the forefront of public awareness.

Immune responses often inflame cytoplasmic, mitochondrial, and nuclear membranes. When this happens, the cells become dysfunctional because their hormone receptors don't work well. So membrane inflammation is the real cause behind hormonal imbalances, including insulin (thus the inflam-

matory basis for diabetes) and estrogen/progesterone/testosterone (thus the basis for premenstrual syndrome and troublesome menopause/andropause).

Fixing the root of the problem

The intestinal microbiome imprints the body's immunological and physiological systems shortly after birth, and it continues to influence inflammation and cellular metabolism throughout life. The presence of pathogens and pathogenic biofilms in the intestines activate brainstem nuclei and can become the cause of anxiety, depression, and chronic inflammatory conditions. Intestinal microbiome health is imperative for improving overall health.

Available to clinicians is a \$4, in-office or at-home urine test that measures cellular inflammation via the molecule lipid peroxidase. It's handy for showing patients their level of cellular membrane inflammation. Another inexpensive in-office or at-home test is the \$35 dysbiosis test that measures pathogen metabolites in the urine, thus revealing the basis of inflammation and the dire need for intestinal microbiome rejuvenation.



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Research also demonstrates that improving the intestinal microbiome with probiotic therapy helps patients with irritable bowel syndrome. Crohn's disease is now regarded as a "disruption in the immunological accommodation of the intestinal microbiome," and studies reveal differences in the microbiome DNA profiles between patients with bowel disease and controls who have none.

This research elevates the importance of the intestinal microbiome's influence in baseline human health, particularly neurological health, and therefore is critically important to helping patients with neurological symptoms — not just for brain concerns, but for joint inflammation, pain, disc, and spinal issues.

Correction of an altered microbiome is more than tossing some probiotics down the hatch or eating pasteurized commercial yogurt. It involves a


strategy that accomplishes three things: 1) reduction of pathogenic species and their biofilms, 2) re-colonization of beneficial species, and 3) reinforcement of beneficial species and their biofilms with prebiotic fibers and probiotic species.

A holistic philosophy

Here we find validation and strengthening of the natural health holistic model, which views the compartmentalization of symptoms as a limited approach. The premise that one part of the body affects the whole person becomes obvious, and the intestinal microbiome, on par with the liver and brain, is no exception.

For example: Reciprocity is seen when the body releases stress hormones, followed by the microbiome changing and becoming more inflammatory. This further strengthens the body-mind connection and

becomes the body-microbiome-mind connection.

Natural health is about correcting the causes of illness. Microbiome rejuvenation may more aptly get at the root cause than anti-inflammatory or antioxidant supplements. Lowering the inflammatory set-point, opening neural pathways (via the chiropractic adjustment), and freeing the body's innate vitality to correct symptoms form the epitome of natural health practice. 



JACK TIPS, PhD, known as the WellnessWiz, is a clinician with 30 years' experience, a researcher, author, and developer of clinical programs that address the challenges of life in the 21st century. His seminar, *Microbiome — New Discoveries In The Micro Universe*, shares his Probiotic Advanced Colonization Technique and teaches clinical implementation. He can be contacted at 512-328-3996, apple-a-day@austin.rr.com, or through wellnesswiz.com.

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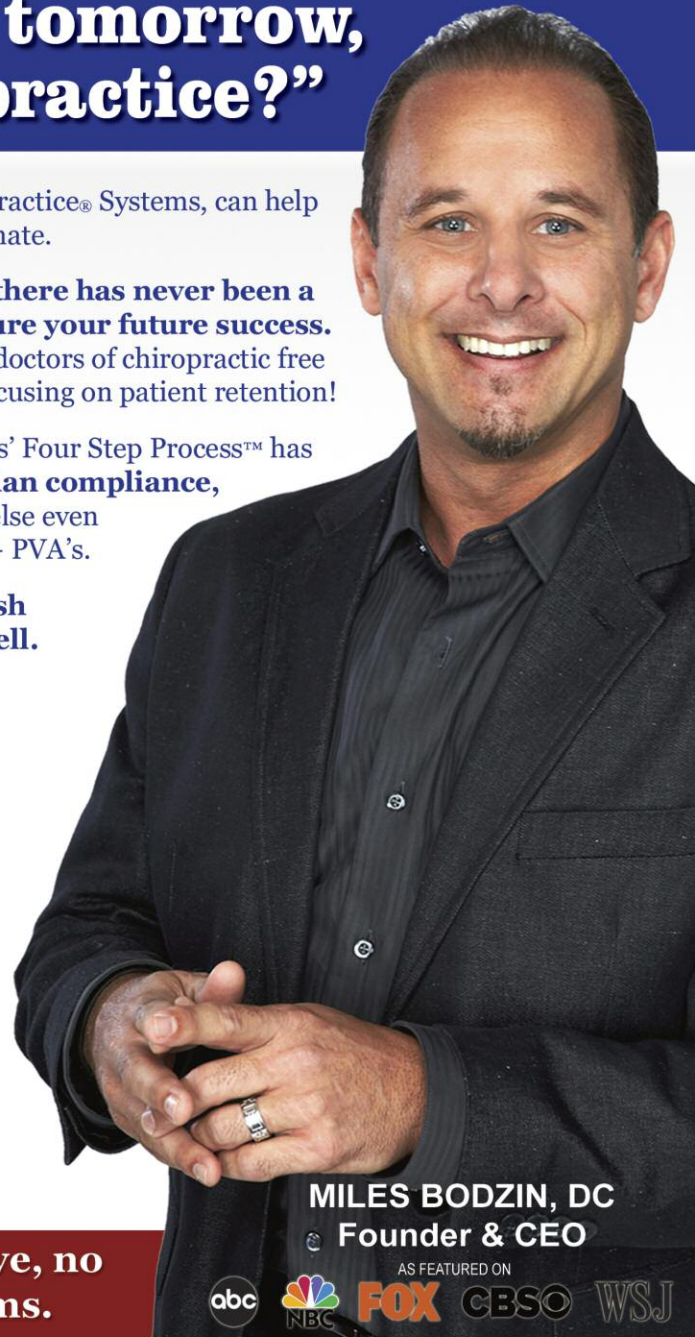
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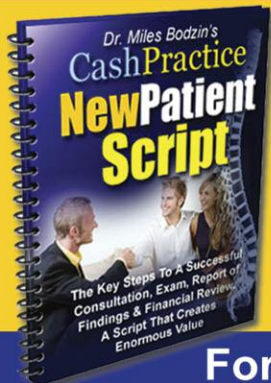


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The bigger vision

A 7-step program for practice transformation.

BY DANIEL T. DRUBIN, DC

THINKSTOCK



THIS ARTICLE IS FOR BOLD-THINKING, ACTION-ORIENTED, and entrepreneurially spirited chiropractors — those who aspire to make a greater difference in the world by serving more people and, as a result, positively influence their own lives and those they love.

Success, both personal and professional, begins with the question, “What’s possible?” So how big are you willing to think, and how boldly are you prepared to explore?

Greatness requires that you think and act beyond the obvious. The obvious is the practice that you currently have. Beyond your present place lies a world of limitless possibilities — if you are up to the task of seizing them.

Your practice, reinvented

The bigger vision begins with the big transition. The big transition requires

that you think on a totally different level. This three-step process calls for a major shift in both mental and physical behavior. Your practice must first become a system-driven business, at which point it can become a thriving organization. For those who are interested in creating an organization that provides multiple streams of passive revenue as well as a life filled with more personal and professional freedom, consider the following goals.

► Design and create a multi-doctor, million-dollar-plus practice with at least one associate practitioner who possesses the traits and characteristics necessary to become a partner. While this may sound difficult to achieve, know that it is completely doable for the committed practitioner. Consider the 40/40/50 formula: 40 new patients a month, at a patient retention of 40 visits, with \$50 collected per visit.

That’s all it takes. And almost every field doctor usually has one or two of those statistics achieved already. For anyone willing to pay the price of change, the million-dollar practice is well within reach.

► Your office needs to be a training ground and launching pad for the practitioners you want to expand with in the future. Successful organizations are based on consistency. Your office must function on mutually agreed upon protocols and procedures that will become the foundation upon which you build. As the adage says, “Consistency is king; variation is the enemy.” This means every system in every department of your practice has to be steeped in methods that can be replicated and implemented by the members of your team, especially in the areas of patient education and communication.

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PERSONAL GROWTH

► Kill the commodity. In business, you are always either one of two things: different or dying. Unless you can easily distinguish your organization from those around you, you will be considered a commodity. And once you are thought of as commodity, you will never be able to achieve marketplace domination. Every strategy and tactic you employ must aim at making you the first choice people think of when looking for a chiropractor. Sameness kills. So everything — including your colors, logo, brand, and staff — must dominate your market.

Your next 7 moves

Step one. Begin each day with an affirmation. This positive message reinforces your virtues and strengthens your resolve to achieve greatness in your life and practice. When it comes to personal and professional growth, there is no substitute for a positive attitude.

A simple but effective statement is, “Something wonderful is going to happen to me today.” With this in mind, spend your day looking forward to great things.

Step two. A clear vision is the genius of all creation. Your practice will be built in your mind long before it is ever built in your office. Your ability to achieve clarity about what you want is key to realizing your dreams.

Step three. Create a list of priorities. “The things that matter most shall never be at the mercy of the things that matter least.” You may have many priorities, but not everything can be the most important. And while your life priorities will constantly shift over time, knowing precisely what you want *right now* is an essential part of achievement.

Step four. Sell your vision to your team. Never underestimate the power of

synergy when it comes to making an idea a reality. Your entire team must buy into the vision and work with you to bring it forth. It only takes one skeptic to undo your efforts and drain your group’s energy. And, as the greatness of your practice depends on your teams’ actions, they must know how they will benefit when you succeed.

Step five. See your obstacles as opportunities because you will surely be tested along the way. The obstacles you encounter can either be excuses for quitting and failing or the perfect motivation to drive you forward. No one ever said that achieving greatness and creating miraculous growth was easy.

Step six. Choose wisely. Your decisions ultimately determine your outcomes. Ensure that each decision you make and the resulting action is consistent with your vision. If you want a better business, practice, and life, make better decisions.

Step seven. Work your plan. Once you have your business model in place, proceed confidently in the direction of your dreams. Although you may be challenged and at times tempted to stray from your chosen path, press on with determination and passion. Often in life and in business, it’s less what you want than how much you really want it. With clarity of focus, purity of passion, courage steeped in commitment, and a killer work ethic, you will succeed.

For those who are ready, willing, and able to embrace a bigger, bolder vision, opportunity is knocking. ☞



DANIEL T. DRUBIN, DC, is president of 4th Dimension Management. He is also an internationally recognized business builder and author of several highly acclaimed books, including *Letting Go of Your Bananas*, and his latest release, *Shake It Up*. He can be contacted at 520-575-0207 or change@xmission.com.

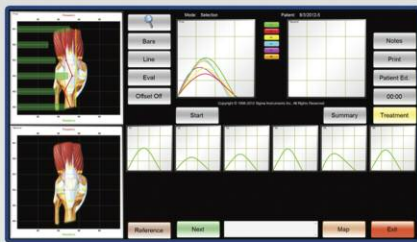
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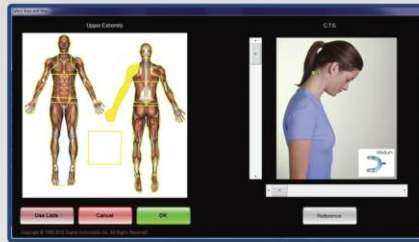
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Match made in heaven

When it comes to your chiropractic table, don't settle.

BY GARY HUDDLESTON, DC

OVER THE LAST 30 YEARS, CHIROPRACTORS HAVE SEEN growth in how and where they practice, personal satisfaction and income, and worldwide acceptance. The new treatments chiropractors can provide for weight loss and neuropathies have helped thousands of patients, and have certainly contributed to these developments, but one healing modality still reigns supreme: the chiropractic adjustment.

With that in mind, two factors define the chiropractic profession and make it unique. The first is the knowledge acquired not only from formal chiropractic education but also years of treating the patients who come through your doors. The second tool in your arsenal is your hands. For most chiropractors, this is how you deliver the healing force responsible for the betterment and health of the people you see.

However, a third tool also comes into play as a game changer, and that is the chiropractic table. The chiropractic table has grown from the seed of a simple bench to elaborate Hi Los, electric flexion tables, drop tables, tables with elevation, and even computer-controlled spinal decompression tables. There seems to be a style and flavor for every practice, every doctor, and every technique. Many excellent and reputable table manufacturers can supply the right table at a fair price for you and your practice.

If the price is right

In today's turbulent and volatile healthcare environment, all doctors need to get the maximum table for the best price. An affordable chiropractic table doesn't mean one that is poorly



built or won't serve the purpose. The old adage, "You get what you pay for," doesn't always ring true here. While some higher-priced tables may offer more functions, they may also represent a higher build and labor cost to the seller, thus making the device more

expensive.

On the other hand, don't pay a bargain basement price for a table on eBay and expect it to do everything you want. Shop around to find a company that will bend over backward to ensure you get a quality table for a fair price,

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TECHTALK

of which there are many to choose.

Some doctors try to practice with the absolute cheapest adjusting table they can find, which appears to be a recent trend. Being frugal or saving money is a perfectly legitimate thing to do. However, would you want your cardiologist to operate on you with the cheapest instruments available? The chiropractic table is just as important to your profession as the scalpel is to a surgeon's.

In addition, patients are getting smarter. Virtually every patient will expect — and demand — a well-kept, clean practice, a competent doctor and staff, and up-to-date equipment. These factors also attract and retain patients.

Some doctors argue that it's not the table, but the hands behind it. That sentiment is true to a point, but why not start at an advantage and save your own body in the process? One doctor opened his practice with tables he made from six-foot-long card tables purchased at a big-box store for \$30 each. Sure, he saved money at first, but in six months he was out of business. This may be an extreme scenario, but it offers an important lesson.

Finding the table for you

Some doctors are comfortable adjusting on a flat bench or something similar, while others may prefer a Hi Lo or do motion adjusting on an electric flexion table. Use the table that works for you and the benefit of your patients. Doctors who run a higher volume practice often need tables that can accommodate the large number of patients that come through on a daily basis.

One of the best ways to increase patient numbers and income is to introduce a new treatment method that not only works but sets you apart from other chiropractors in your area. Many doctors have found that spinal decompression produces noteworthy results as well as a substantial gain in income.

One of the most popular treatment methods is flexion-distraction either on a motorized or manual flexion table. This technique allows you to treat large numbers of patients, address many issues such as the fixation-sluxation complex or disc injury, and yet is not an expensive table to add to your practice. The right tools will help you accomplish your goals.

Ask critical questions

What should you look for in an adjusting table? First, ensure the table you buy fits you and the way you practice. *For example:* Buying a drop table doesn't do much good if you don't know how to cock the handles. Second, are you going to buy from a reputable table manufacturer? Just because a company is small or new doesn't mean it makes bad tables. On the other hand, you want to make sure the company can give you any needed support and customer service promptly upon demand.

A good company or dealer won't give you a song and dance or try to show you that its table will do everything but make coffee. Avoid any salesperson whose only pitch for the product is putting down other companies' tables. You don't need negativity. What you need is honest information, a fair price, and reliable customer support.

Like all business decisions, you should properly research the kind of table you need. When that decision is made, you will be rewarded with a table that delivers years of service to you and your patients alike. **CE**



GARY HUDDLESTON, DC, is the owner of Accuflex Tables. He is a 33-year practicing chiropractor and supplies equipment to many MLB and NFL teams. He treats patients from the film and music industry as well as professional athletes. He can be reached at 417-667-7770 or drg4000@att.net.

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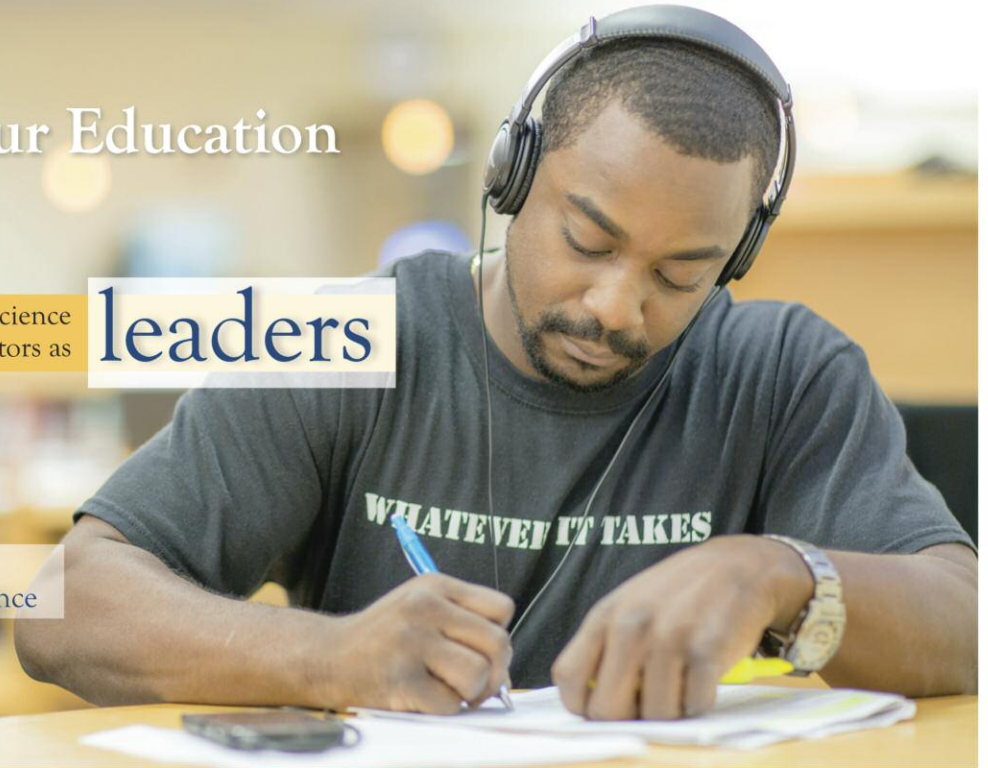
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DEBORAH TUKUA composes "Meet your Chiropractor Professional Profiles" for those in the chiropractic field. She is the author of *Marketing Strategies for*

Chiropractic Success, 77 *Chiropractic Social Media Wellness Posts*, a freelance writer for *Chiropractic Economics* magazine, and the editor of *Journey to Natural Living*. She can be reached at debtukua@journeytonatliv.com or through journeytonatliv.com.



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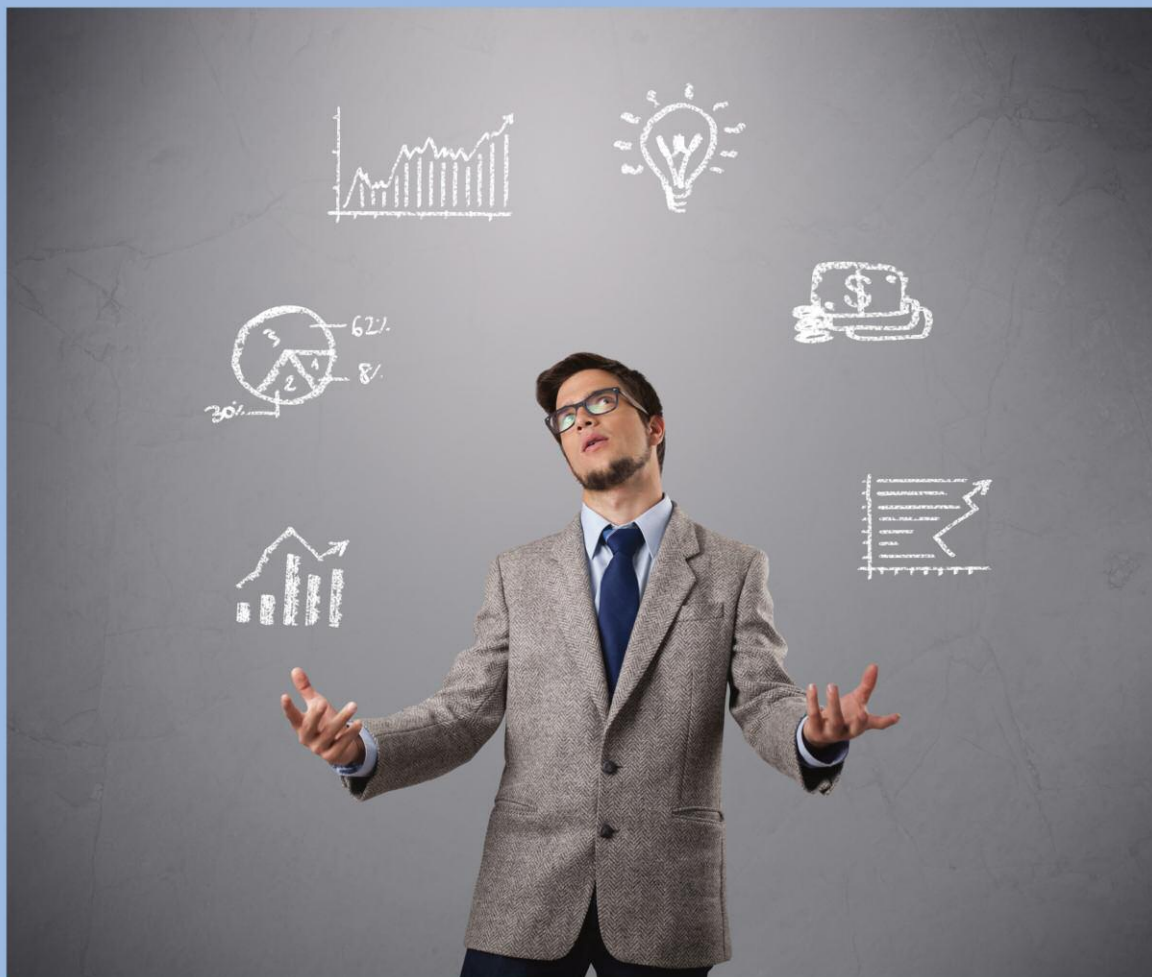
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THINKSTOCK

Cash rules

Restore and maintain money flow with a proactive financial regimen.

BY RAY FOXWORTH, DC

THE SENTIMENT THAT “CASH IS KING” HAS BECOME POPULAR once again as an alternative to running a third-party-payer based practice. The shift is driven by changes in reimbursements and the under-insured patients with limits on visits or dollar amounts, and extremely high deductibles or co-payments. Increasingly, people are self-insuring, which makes them more like cash-paying patients.

This trend is expected to strengthen, and you should be prepared by having a wide range of payment options to keep care affordable. Today’s patients are healthcare consumers, and they may insist on knowing what their out-of-pocket expenses will be even before

they visit your practice — so you’d better have an answer.

Ditch the financial dance

In chiropractic, financial consistency has always been a challenge due to the complex business realities of our practices. Different fees are designated for personal injury or workers’ compensation, insurance, and cash payments. A front-desk team may learn to dance around the subject of expenses because fees vary depending on who is paying the bill. This not only creates confusion in your office, but public perception is even worse.

Can you imagine going into a steakhouse and asking, “How much is a 10-ounce filet?” and the server replying,

“Well, it depends. How hungry are you?” So imagine what patients think about your fee system. Consequently, you should have a one-fee schedule and stick with it.

In addition to varying fees, financial and collection policies are also an area of concern. Your financial policies must be compliant with layers of regulation, and one of the greatest tools for the financial success of your practice is how you determine your fees. You are more likely to face financial problems from audits, fines, and penalties than you are from malpractice claims. One of the top complaints filed with boards of examiners is not clinical care, but financial policies.

To avoid this, collection policies

should be compliant, consistent, and considerate: compliant with the rules of your provider agreements and other regulations, consistently applied to every patient, and considerate of the financial challenges people may face. Many provider agreements make it clear that you should not collect in advance for services that are covered by the plan. This means pre-pays can get you in trouble if you are unsure

whether they are allowed in your state and by certain health plans. Check with your state board or legal counsel before assuming pre-pays are legal.

Consistent means that whatever your policy is in pursuing payment, it should be applied equally to all patients, regardless of the payer source. Most every provider agreement makes it clear that you must collect deductibles and co-payments.

For cash-flow purposes, you should attempt to collect these fees at the time of service. But if you carry these charges on the books, make sure you are following clearly defined steps in collecting them. Years ago, many doctors would bill the deductible and co-payment to the patient and never pursue collection, basically running a No Out-of-Pocket Expense (NOOPE) practice. This type of activity will land you in hot water. The courts have held, e.g., (*Kennedy v. Cigna*), that if you don't expect the patient to pay, the insurance company may be relieved of its obligation as well.

With regard to being considerate, work with patients to make care affordable and keep in mind that some, even though insured, could qualify for a financial hardship agreement. A financial hardship must be determined on a case-by-case basis.

Be proactive, stay organized

A number of best practices can help you create a system to maintain and foster proper cash flow as a chiropractor:

Evaluate the front desk. If you are having cash-flow issues, start by looking at the front desk and evaluate your policy for collecting fees on the first visit. If you don't know exactly what a patient's deductible or co-pay is, collect something toward these amounts. It makes it clear in patients' minds that they have some financial responsibility.

Know your schedule. Print your schedule first thing in the morning. Have the front-desk staff put a check mark by each patient who should pay that day. Exclude personal injury or workers' compensation cases, and make a note if they have arrangements to pay at the end of the week, etc. Strike through the names as they come in and pay. You will be able to tell at a glance how well the front desk is collecting patient balances. Review this at the end of the




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MONEY MANAGEMENT

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If you get to the end of the month and determine you had a bad collection period, you can't do anything about it. So monitor it daily. That way, the worst thing that happens is you have a bad day, instead of a bad week or month.

Suggest automatic payments. Finally, one of the best ways to avoid cash flow and collection issues is to have patients set up an automatic debit system to pay weekly, bimonthly, or monthly with a draft against their checking account or credit card on file. This system is by far one of the simplest and most compliant ways to solve your cash management and collection problems.

At the same time, be proactive to prevent cash flow and collection problems from occurring in the first place. Most collection disputes arise out of the practice's failure to clearly and openly discuss its fees and payment policies upfront. This is one of the easiest things to fix with a written financial policy, a financial report of findings, or an estimate of care that clearly outlines what your patients' responsibilities are on a visit-by-visit basis. Couple this financial strategy with an array of ways to make care affordable and payments that won't break budgets, and you can eliminate many of the common problems you have with your practice's cash flow and collections. **CE**



RAY FOXWORTH, DC, is president of ChiroHealthUSA and a certified medical compliance specialist. He maintains his practice on NewSouth

Professional Campus, which is home to a large multidisciplinary spine center, offering services ranging from chiropractic to neurosurgery. He is in the trenches on a daily basis facing the same challenges with billing, coding, and compliance issues as any DC does. He can be reached at info@chirohealthusa.com or through chirohealthusa.com.

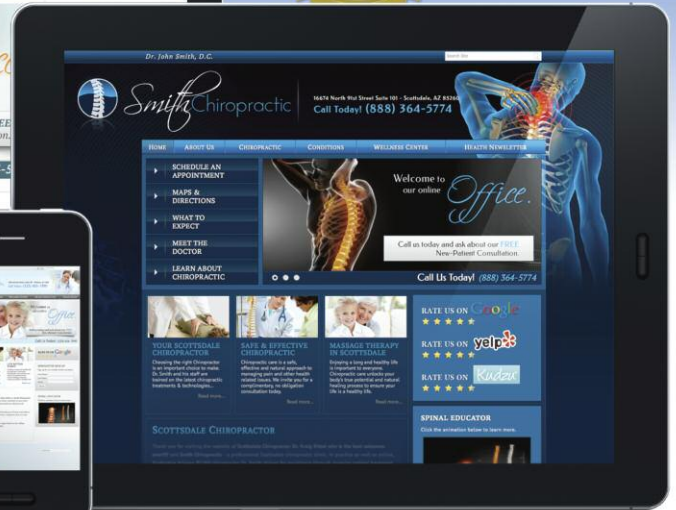
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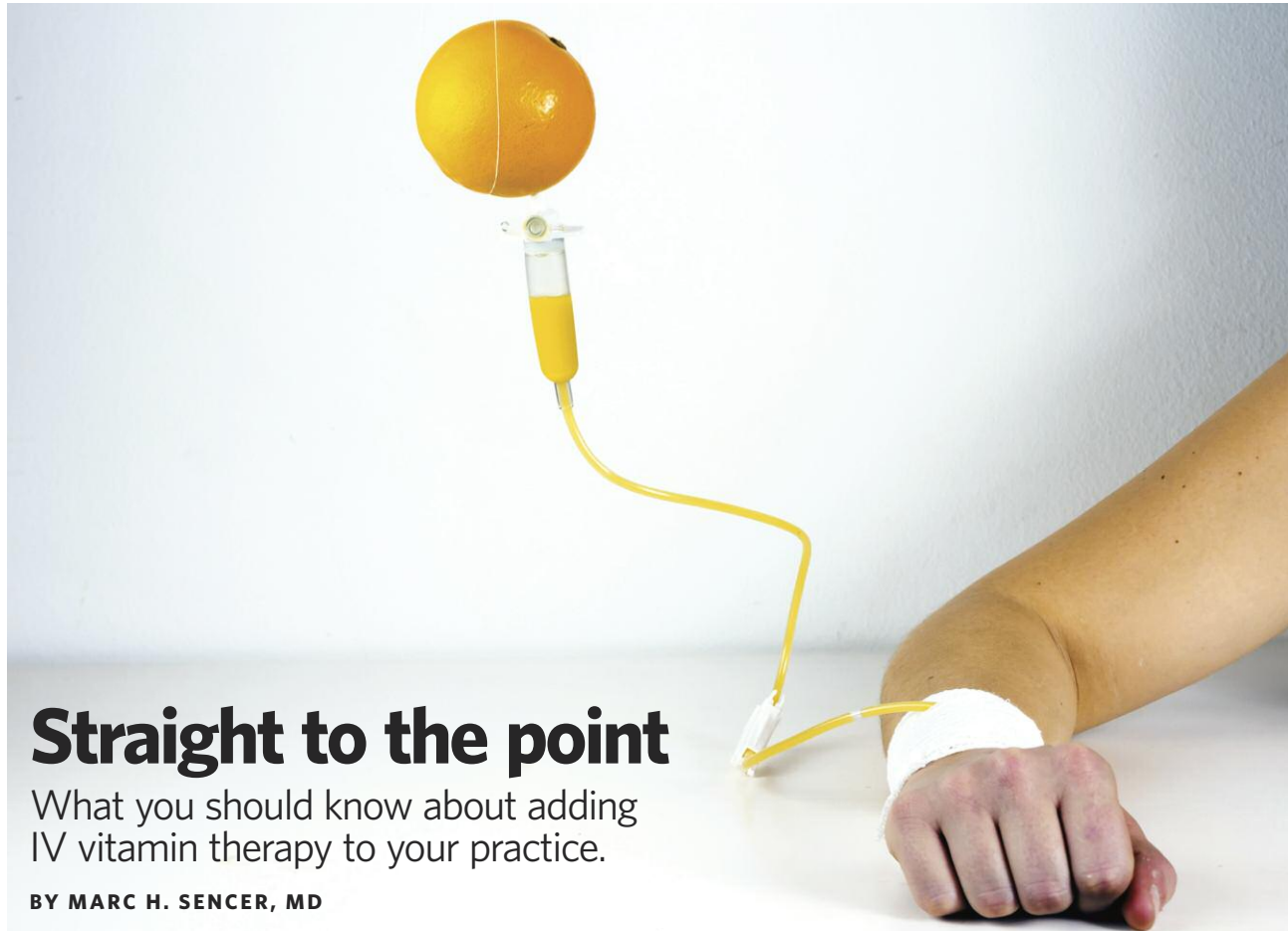
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Straight to the point

What you should know about adding IV vitamin therapy to your practice.

BY MARC H. SENCER, MD

THINKSTOCK

DO YOU CURRENTLY HAVE AN INTEGRATED PRACTICE AND ARE looking to add more cash-based services? Do you offer wellness or alternative medical services but want to include more? Or are you thinking about expanding your practice to include cash-based alternative medicine services? If you fit into any of these categories, you can consider adding IV vitamin therapy to your practice.

The drawbacks of administering oral vitamins, minerals, nutritional supplements, and many medications are well-known. When ingested, a good portion of the therapeutic material is not completely absorbed. Also, attaining complete absorption and reaching therapeutic levels can take a long time.

Local gastrointestinal factors such as the presence of other medications, celiac

disease, or alterations in the gastric mucosa can further interfere with the absorption and metabolism of therapeutic supplements. Furthermore, many patients experience gastrointestinal irritation and distress from large doses of oral vitamins and minerals.

Giving supplements intravenously eliminates all of these obstacles and allows rapid absorption and metabolism of therapeutic substances. By bypassing the gastrointestinal tract, you also eliminate the problem of gastric irritation and can give much higher doses than would be tolerated orally.

Several patient indications may lead you to consider IV vitamin therapy. Vitamin deficiency and patient intolerance of oral administration are definite indications. However, practitioners of alternative medicine find the therapy helpful for a variety of different conditions. For one thing, patients

report increased energy after treatment, and this type of therapy has been used to treat general fatigue as well as chronic fatigue syndrome.

Benefits of IV vitamins have also been claimed for the treatment of cancer, arthritis, multiple sclerosis, and other autoimmune diseases, but these treatments are still controversial. What's known is that these patients subjectively feel better with treatment. Many doctors and patients report that IV treatment can abort a cold if started early.

Many mixtures can be put in the IV solution, the most common being the Myers' cocktail, named after its inventor. The Myers' formula may be used for a variety of conditions, including hangovers. If you are just starting IV therapy, you can begin with this cocktail and then add more specialized solutions.

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IV vitamin therapy can open up a whole new and exciting treatment modality for your existing patients, as well as bring in new patients.

packaged or for mixing from compounding pharmacies. Bear in mind that, depending on state law, the pre-mixed IV can be started by a variety of personnel such as phlebotomists, LPNs, or medical assistants, but only an RN or higher-level provider can make up the IV in most states. It's recommended that you start with the pre-mixed solutions.

You will need to make a space for IV therapy. In a typical setup, you may put recliners or massage chairs along the walls. Many offices add flourishes such as TVs with wireless headsets or soothing music. You can designate several rooms or one large space, based on your office layout. The typical treatment time is 30 minutes, with treatments one to five times per week depending on the condition.


The cost of treatment to the patient varies from \$90 to more than \$200. The average fee is \$100. Many doctors sell discounted packages for multiple visits.

In addition to the treatment charges, you will have an initial evaluation that may include lab tests such as vitamin levels or a nutritional panel. IV therapy can be part of a comprehensive wellness program that includes allergy as well as hormonal treatment with bioidentical hormones. For this reason, your patient questionnaire for the first visit should screen for candidates who may benefit from these other therapies.

IV therapy is a safe option. Other than the rare allergy to something in the IV solution, collapsed veins, or skin disease, there are no special contraindications. IV vitamin therapy is not approved by the FDA for the treatment of any disease.

You should include appropriate disclaimers in your informed consent

and be careful not to make exaggerated claims in your conversations with patients or in your marketing materials. When in doubt, consult your healthcare attorney.

IV vitamin therapy can open up a whole new and exciting treatment modality for your existing patients, as well as bring in new patients with a variety of different conditions. In addition, it can be profitable, and you don't have the hassles of dealing with insurance. For many practices, it is a perfect fit. 



MARC H. SENCER, MD, is the president of MDs for DCs, which provides intensive one-on-one training, medical staffing, and ongoing practice management support to chiropractic integrated practices. He can be reached at 800-916-1462 or through mdsfordcs.com.

Test yourself

Test your knowledge about IV vitamin therapy with this true and false quiz.

1. IV vitamin therapy is FDA approved for fatigue, but not for cancer.
2. Because the treatment does not involve medication, you don't need an informed consent.
3. Many patients report increased energy after an IV treatment.
4. IV therapy can be part of a comprehensive wellness program.

Answers: Nos. 3 and 4 are true.

Nos. 1 and 2 are false. IV vitamins do not have FDA approval for fatigue or cancer. You do need informed consent, and you should include a disclaimer that the treatment is not FDA approved.

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The online resource for future doctors of chiropractic.

Debt-free faster than you imagined

BY DREW STEVENS, PHD

WHETHER IN THE FIRST OR LAST TRIMESTER OF YOUR chiropractic career, you will always be focused carefully on the kind of practice you want to build. But one of the first concerns all students should have before graduation is the amount of debt they will be carrying and how fast they can pay it off.

Whether you decide to go solo or invest with someone else, there will always be numerous expenses. Therefore, you have to develop a plan and devise the tactics necessary to quickly pay down debt while also paying yourself.

It's frightening to realize that the typical student is now leaving school with about \$225,000 in debt. This does not include the cost of relocating and starting a practice if that's what the new DC desires. Take Helen B. for example. She recently graduated, has a fiancé just completing a chiropractic program, and they both want to begin a practice together and buy a home. But Helen is already close to \$500,000 in debt and has not yet made a penny. Caution is advised here.

One of the first things to consider is how quickly you can find employment to begin the process of reducing debt. Becoming an associate is the easier way to go because you will have a stable income from a salary. But what you do with that salary is important.

It is easy to spend money on material items on the "want" list. The better financial move, however, is to

figure out how much of your income you can have automatically deducted to repay debt. Whether it is a few dollars or a few hundred, the amount should be automatically drawn from your net pay so you never have a chance to spend it on something else.

As you continue to establish yourself in your new office, your pay should increase along the way. It's worthwhile to take a percentage of any increase and apply it toward your debt. Although it may seem that you are just repaying loans, you are also building your credit rating while reducing your financial burden. Establishing credit will be useful later should you decide to open a solo practice.

If you choose to operate as an independent contractor, one of the first things to consider is what your split with the principal will be and how much of that can be allocated toward your debt. Whether it's 1 or 20 percent, it is vital to allocate something, otherwise your loans will hang over your head.

Let your owner know that you are working for two reasons: 1) to help make him or her (and you) successful, and 2) to pay off your debt in seven years or less.


In the years following graduation, your income should grow as you gain new patients and opportunities. However, everyone has a different expense threshold.

Income won't help you if your expenses outweigh your gains. And life sometimes gets in the way. For these

reasons, consider conducting an annual financial review.

Using an accountant, a balance sheet, or a profit and loss statement, find areas where you can save more money to put toward debt repayment. In the worst case, if your income falls, you might need to readjust your debt payment schedule to help meet expenses.

Debt is only good for the financial institution you're repaying. Yet without debt, most may never get the opportunity to learn the art and science of chiropractic. Good things can arise from debt, but accept the responsibility of discharging it. The process is daunting, but so is gaining a diploma.

The same exuberance you feel at graduation you'll feel the day you are free from your repayment obligation. It will take time, but the sooner you finish, the sooner you'll be working for yourself — not the bank. 



DREW STEVENS, PhD, is a practice management expert with more than 30 years of experience. His most recent book is *Practice Acceleration*, published by

Greenbranch Publishing. He can be contacted at 877-391-6821 or through stevensconsultinggroup.com.

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DATE	EVENT	WHERE	SPONSOR	PHONE
Sept. 12	Holistic Health Practitioner Two-Part Training	Online	California College of Natural Medicine	800-421-5027
Sept. 13	Kerry Bone: The Top 10 Health Challenges	Santa Ana, CA	Standard Process of North Texas	817-845-8325
Sept. 13	KT4: Specialty Sports Orthopedic Concepts	Chicago	Kinesio Taping Association	888-320-8273
Sept. 13	Rhino Weekend Training with Fred Schofield, DC & Susan Schofield, CN	Costa Mesa, CA	Schofield Chiropractic Training	800-554-3260
Sept. 13	Real-World, Experience-Based Seminars	Chicago	Breakthrough Coaching	800-723-8423
Sept. 13	Introduction to SIGMA Computer Instrument Adjusting	Buffalo, NY	Sigma Instruments	724-776-9500
Sept. 13-14	KT1 & KT2: Kinesio Taping Fundamentals & Advanced	Petersburg, Virginia	Kinesio Taping Association	888-320-8273
Sept. 13-14	Graston Technique M1 Basic Training	Tampa, FL	Graston Technique LLC	888-926-2727
Sept. 13-14	Graston Technique M2 Advanced Training	Seattle	Graston Technique LLC	888-926-2727
Sept. 13-14	KT1 Course	Syracuse, NY	Kinesio Taping Association	888-320-8273
Sept. 13-14	KT1 & KT2: Fundamentals & Advanced	Lee's Summit, MO	Kinesio Taping Association	888-320-8273
Sept. 13-14	Functional Capacity Evaluation Certification	Oakland, CA	Back School of Atlanta	800-783-7536
Sept. 14	KT4: Specialty Pediatric Concepts	Chicago	Kinesio Taping Association	888-320-8273
Sept. 17	New Insights for Healthy Circulation	Plymouth, MI	Standard Process of North Texas	817-845-8325
Sept. 18-20	Parker Seminars Charleston	Charleston, SC	Parker University	800-438-6932
Sept. 19	Naturopathic Practitioner Training and Residential Lab Education	Online	California College of Natural Medicine	800-421-5027
Sept. 19-20	Ergonomics Assessment Certification Workshop	St. Louis	Back School of Atlanta	800-783-7536
Sept. 19-20	SIGMA Instrument Methods Basic Certification	Salt Lake City	Sigma Instruments	724-776-9500
Sept. 20	Kerry Bone: The Top 10 Health Challenges	Westerville, OH	Standard Process of North Texas	817-845-8325
Sept. 20	CE Event: Posture Rehab Exercise, Assessment, and Therapy	New York	BodyZone LLC	770-922-0700
Sept. 20	KT3: Kinesio Taping Clinical Concepts	Omaha, NE	Kinesio Taping Association	888-320-8273
Sept. 20	KT4: Specialty Sports/Orthopedic Concepts	Jackson, MS	Kinesio Taping Association	888-320-8273
Sept. 20	Real-World, Experience-Based Seminars	Orlando, FL	Breakthrough Coaching	800-723-8423
Sept. 20-21	KT1 & KT2: Fundamentals & Advanced	Columbia, CT	Kinesio Taping Association	888-320-8273
Sept. 20-21	Graston Technique M2 Advanced Training	Chicago	Graston Technique LLC	888-926-2727
Sept. 20-21	Graston Technique M1 Basic Training	Las Vegas	Graston Technique LLC	888-926-2727
Sept. 20-21	Graston Technique M1 Basic Training	Dallas	Graston Technique LLC	888-926-2727
Sept. 20-21	Graston Technique M1 Basic Training	Chicago	Graston Technique LLC	888-926-2727
Sept. 20-21	Graston Technique M1 Basic Training	Boston	Graston Technique LLC	888-926-2727

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Sept. 20-21	Two Days of Hands-on Training Taught by Peter J. Levy, DC	Bergamo, Italy	Neuromuscular Reeducation Seminars	805-637-8033
Sept. 20-21	Meridian Therapy 100 Session 8	Overland Park, KS	Cleveland Chiropractic College	800-969-2701
Sept. 20-21	Chiropractic Pediatrics #12 of 13	Bloomington, MN	Northwestern Health Sciences University	952-885-5446
Sept. 21	KT4: Kinesio Taping Specialty Sports Orthopedic Concepts	Omaha, NE	Kinesio Taping Association	888-320-8273
Sept. 23	New Insights for Health Circulation	Dallas	Standard Process of North Texas	817-845-8325
Sept. 21	KT4: Specialty Neurological Concepts of the Kinesio Taping Method	Jackson, MS	Kinesio Taping Association	888-320-8273
Sept. 25	New Insights for Healthy Circulation	Austin, TX	Standard Process of North Texas	817-845-8325
Sept. 26	Master Herbalist (MH) Entry Level 12-Month Program	Online	California College of Natural Medicine	800-421-5027
Sept. 26-27	CEAS I: Ergonomics Assessment Certification	San Francisco	Back School of Atlanta	800-783-7536
Sept. 26-27	TLC's Annual Strategic Planning Seminar	Princeton, NJ	TLC 4 Superteams	215-657-1701
Sept. 26-28	3rd Annual Lifestyle Medicine Summit	Nashville, TN	Metagenics	800-692-9400
Sept. 27	KT3: Kinesio Taping Clinical Concepts	Rockville, MD	Kinesio Taping Association	888-320-8273
Sept. 27	KT3: Kinesio Taping Clinical Concepts	Denison, TX	Kinesio Taping Association	888-320-8273
Sept. 27	Kerry Bone: The Top 10 Health Challenges	Alameda, CA	Standard Process of North Texas	817-845-8325
Sept. 27	Healthcare Ergonomics	Houston	Back School of Atlanta	800-783-7536
Sept. 27-28	Graston Technique M1 Basic Training	Portland, OR	Graston Technique LLC	888-926-2727
Sept. 27-28	Advanced Extremity Adjusting: Deliberate Practice Protocols	Toronto, Canada	Foot Levelers	800-553-4860
Sept. 27-28	CE Event: Posture Rehab Exercise, Assessment and Therapy	Portland, OR	BodyZone LLC	770-922-0700
Sept. 27-28	Graston Technique M1 Basic Training	Stamford, CT	Graston Technique LLC	888-926-2727
Sept. 27-28	KT1 Course	Stamford, CT	Kinesio Taping Association	888-320-8273
Sept. 27-28	Two Days of Hands-on Training Taught by Peter J. Levy, DC	Rome, Italy	Neuromuscular Reeducation Seminars	805-637-8033
Sept. 27-28	Graston Technique M1 Basic Training	Indianapolis	Graston Technique LLC	888-926-2727
Sept. 27-28	ICPA 200-Hour Certification Program	Overland Park, KS	Cleveland Chiropractic College	800-969-2701
Sept. 28	KT4: Specialty Neurological Concepts	Rockville, MD	Kinesio Taping Association	888-320-8273
Sept. 28	KT4: Kinesio Taping Specialty Hand Therapy	Chicago	Kinesio Taping Association	888-320-8273
Sept. 28	KT4: Specialty Sports Orthopedic Concepts	Denison, TX	Kinesio Taping Association	888-320-8273
Oct. 1	Clinical Nutritionist (CN) Online and Lab Curriculum	Online	California College of Natural Medicine	800-421-5027
Oct. 4-5	Kinetic Chain and Low Back Stabilization with Manuel Duarte, DC	Denver	Foot Levelers	800-553-4860
Oct. 4-5	From the Ground Up with Dar Griffith, DC	Davenport, IA	Foot Levelers	800-553-4860

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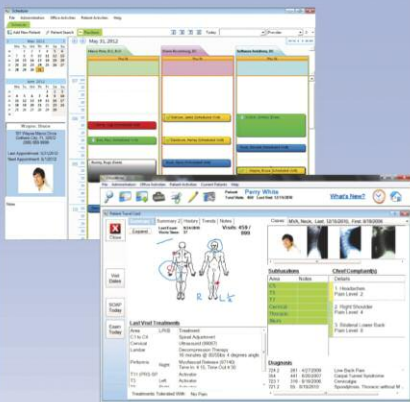
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Maryland Chiropractic Association - www.marylandchiro.com

Professional Football Chiropractic Society - www.profootballchiros.com

Iowa Chiropractic Society - www.iowadcs.org

New York Chiropractic Council - www.nycouncil.com

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Oregon Chiropractic Association - www.oregonchiroassoc.com

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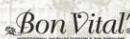
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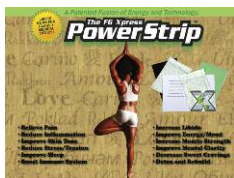
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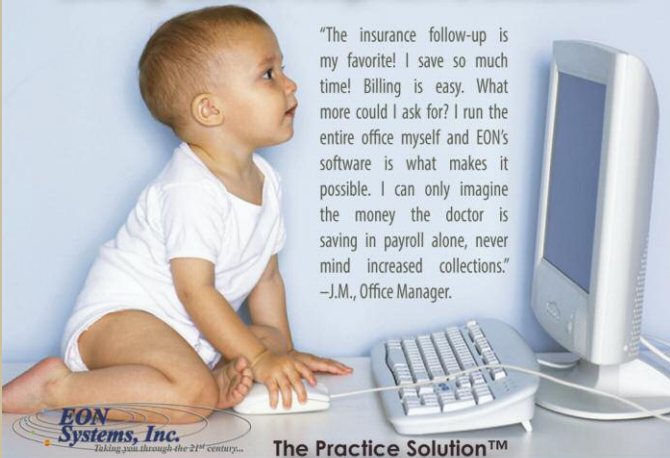
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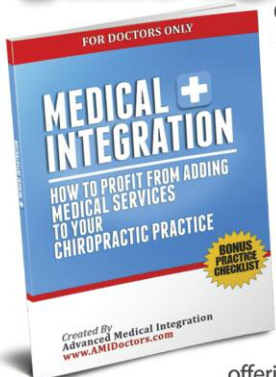


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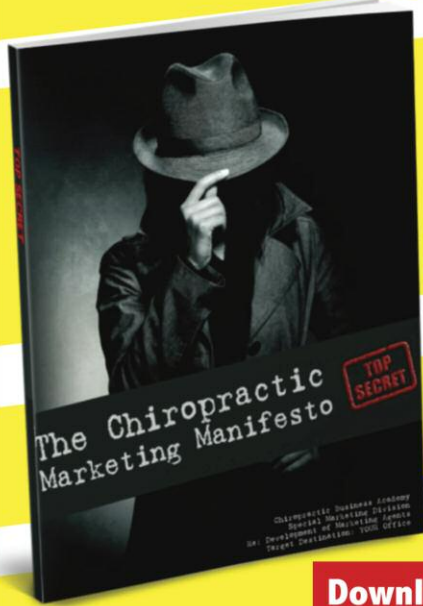
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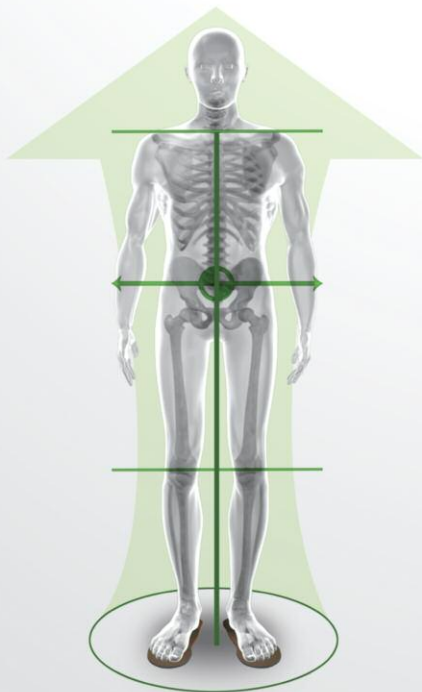
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
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