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Encourages GI Health

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Whole food source of chlorophyll

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Historically used to support normal elimination and digestive health*

Learn more at standardprocess.com/ce-gi-adsorb

*These statements have not been evaluated by the Food and Drug Administration. These products are not intended to diagnose, treat, cure, or prevent any disease.
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CUSTOM CARE

From New-Tech clinical assessments to custom nutrition, supplements and the ever-increasing demand for immune health, patient custom care is providing a higher level of health and pain management for patients, and opportunities for doctors of chiropractic.

Also in this issue, venturing into text marketing and messaging while keeping it compliant, successfully navigating the first-time patient journey, more custom tech to consider for your office, walking the tightrope of debt collection, million-dollar branding and more.

As we wrap-up the last issue of 2021 the staff of Chiropractic Economics thanks you for your readership and we wish you a happy holiday season along with a healthy and healthy 2022.

New opioids ‘staggering increase’

As we went to press with this issue, the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) released data showing that the U.S. topped 100,000 people dying from drug overdoses in a 12-month period for the first time.

“It’s a staggering increase for one year,” said Bob Anderson, chief of the mortality statistics branch at the CDC’s National Center for Health Statistics, speaking to NBC.

While drug overdoses went down in Delaware, New Hampshire, New Jersey and South Dakota, five states showed increases of greater than 50%: Vermont (70%), West Virginia (62%), Kentucky (55%), Louisiana (52%) and Tennessee (50%).

Opioid deaths accounted for approximately 75% of the mortalities. The death toll, according to experts, has been super-charged by COVID-19 with patients feeling isolated, losing jobs and struggling with loved ones. The virus has claimed more than 765,000 lives in the U.S. as of November 2021 according to the New York Times.

“Two forces here are the negative economic impact of the pandemic as well as the emotional impact,” said Dr. Paul Christo, associate professor of anesthesiology and critical care at Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine, speaking to USA Today. “That led a lot of people to use drugs of abuse to cope.”

That overdose death toll is a 28% jump from 2020.

Chiropractic as the answer

Organizations such as the American Chiropractic Association and the Foundation for Chiropractic Progress promote chiropractic nationally and in legislative bodies as a first line of defense against chronic pain and opioid abuse, and provide chiropractors with resources and toolkits to attract patients who might otherwise opt for a drug prescription first.

“The ACA has long been a partner in the fight against opioid misuse by promoting and encouraging the utilization of safe, effective and proven non-drug approaches to pain management, such as chiropractic care,” writes Meghan O’Brien, the ACA’s associate director of federal government relations. “In 2016, the ACA House of Delegates adopted a formal policy statement that supports, among other solutions: Public health campaigns to raise awareness of drug-free approaches to pain management, increased access to non-drug therapies such as chiropractic for all Americans.”

Now, almost six years later, the ACA remains on the frontlines of non-drug chiropractic care as a first line of defense against chronic pain prior to the prescription of opioids. ACA legislative priorities such as H.R. 3654, the Chiropractic Medicare Coverage Modernization Act of 2019, continues to gain support and move health care toward non-drug pain management and patient-centered care as a first treatment.

What can you do as an individual chiropractor? Utilize resources such as F4CP’s Opioid Toolkit at F4CP.org/opioid-toolkits, and the ACA’s resources at acatoday.org.

To your practice’s success,

Richard Vach
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
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EXPERIENCE HILL QUALITY
Parker University recognized as one of 25 fastest-growing U.S. colleges
Parker University in Dallas, Texas, was recognized as one of the 25 Fastest-Growing Colleges in the U.S. this fall by Business Journal. This study featured an analysis of more than 1,500 primarily campus-based, four-year colleges and universities with at least 1,000 students. The study found that while the average total enrollment fell 5% between fall 2016 and 2020, roughly one-third of the schools reported enrollment growth during that time. The study noted that much of the growth may be attributed to wider recruiting efforts and new programs—especially online programs, particularly those in health care.

For information, visit parker.edu. ChiroEco.com/parker-top-25

Mild physical activity immediately improves memory
Researchers at the University of California, Irvine and Japan’s University of Tsukuba recently found that even light workouts can increase connectivity between parts of the brain responsible for memories. In their study of 36 healthy young adults, the researchers discovered that a single 10-minute period of mild exertion can yield cognitive benefits. Using high-resolution functional MRI, they examined subjects’ brains shortly after exercise and saw better connectivity between the hippocampal dentate gyrus and cortical areas linked to memory processing. “The hippocampus is critical for the creation of new memories,” said project co-leader Michael Yassa, PhD. ScienceDaily.com

Majority of Americans want health insurance to cover alternative medicine
As health and wellness evolve, many Americans have started to move toward more natural remedies to treat their illnesses. According to a survey by ValuePenguin, more than half of Americans use at least one alternative medicine method and others mix traditional and alternative methods. Other key findings include:

• 72% of consumers try to avoid medication when possible;
• 66% want to see complementary and alternative treatments covered by insurers; and
• 53% report using at least one form of alternative medicine. Of that number, 24% use herbal medicine, supplements or teas (24%), followed by essential oils (18%) and chiropractor visits (16%). ValuePenguin.com
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guerillaZen
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afamilychiro
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yamatochiropractic
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DON’T MISS
CONFERENCES AND WEBINARS

Council on Nutrition: Virtual Symposium
On Demand
Presented by the ACA, the annual Council on Nutrition symposium is an opportunity to get ahead of the latest innovations in nutrition research. It’s dedicated to the continuing education of the chiropractic physician as it relates to clinical nutrition. It also provides an opportunity for chiropractic students and practitioners alike to engage in dialogue with nationally-known speakers.

ACA Engage 2022
February 2-5, Washington, DC
ACA’s annual conference is part of ongoing efforts to position members for success by bringing them cutting-edge education, networking and leadership-development opportunities. ACA Engage includes a wide variety of education offerings (with CE credit available) and presentations from respected thought leaders.

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Learn more at chiroeco.com/events.

INDUSTRY NEWS

ACA applauds 100th co-sponsor of Chiropractic Medicare Modernization Act

In November, Reps. Gregory Streube (R-Fla.), Brian Mast (R-Fla.) and Drew Ferguson (R-Ga.) joined their colleagues in supporting H.R. 2654, the Chiropractic Medicare Coverage Modernization Act, bringing the total number of co-sponsors of the bill to 100. Introduced in April by Rep. Brian Higgins (D-N.Y.) with 16 original co-sponsors, the measure would allow beneficiary access to the full scope of current Medicare services allowed under a chiropractor’s state licensure.

“For nearly 50 years, beneficiaries have been denied full access to Medicare-covered services in a chiropractic clinic,” said American Chiropractic Association (ACA) President Michele Maiers, DC, MPH, PhD. “The current statute is antiquated and needs to be modernized. I thank Congressman Higgins and the 100 cosponsors who support Medicare patients and who have supported this legislation.”

The chiropractic benefit in Medicare dates to 1972 and only covers “manual manipulation of the spine to correct a subluxation.” H.R. 2654 would allow Medicare beneficiaries access to the chiropractic profession’s broad-based, non-drug approach to pain management, which includes manual manipulation of the spine and extremities, evaluation and management services, diagnostic imaging and utilization of other non-drug approaches that have become an important strategy in efforts to stem the epidemic of prescription opioid abuse.

H.R. 2654 was referred to two House committees: Ways and Means, and Energy and Commerce. A Senate companion bill has not yet been introduced; however, work is underway to secure introduction in that chamber.

For more information, go to HR2654.org.

INDUSTRY NEWS

Foot Levelers to celebrate 70th anniversary

Leading custom orthotics company Foot Levelers will reach its 70th anniversary in 2022.

In 1952, Monte H. Greenawalt, DC, DABCO, discovered a flaw in the way members of his community were being treated for pain. He figured out hard, rigid foot orthotics being prescribed by local health care providers were actually exacerbating the pain they were seeking comfort from. Out of this recognition Foot Levelers was founded. In 2022, Foot Levelers will be celebrating 70 years of helping people live healthier and happier lives.

In seven decades of handcrafting custom orthotics, Foot Levelers has served millions of patients and hundreds of thousands of health care professionals. As a way of saying “Thanks” for the support and dedication it has received for 70 years, Foot Levelers plans to give back to the chiropractic community in 2022 by releasing several new products and holding some special events, including for-credit webinars and for-credit seminars both live and virtual.

“This is an exciting time for us as a company,” Foot Levelers President and CEO Kent Greenawalt said. “Not only will we be celebrating 70 years in 2022, but providers and patients alike are going to see some exciting innovation.”

For more information, visit footlevelers.com.
SCHOOL NEWS

Logan University adds first-in-U.S. Master of Science in Integrative Pediatrics

LOGAN UNIVERSITY

Founded on more than 85 years of chiropractic education and as a leader in integrated health care, Logan University has become the first chiropractic university in the U.S. to offer a Master of Science degree in Integrative Pediatrics.

With an understanding that doctors of chiropractic (DC) can change the trajectory of children’s lives by improving their health, this degree program provides high-quality, clinically focused, specialized training for DCs who want to take their pediatric knowledge and expertise to a higher level and deliver safe, effective care modified for pediatric patients.

“The Master of Science in Integrative Pediatrics blends passion, excellence and leadership and is spearheaded by one of the foremost authorities in the specialty of chiropractic pediatrics, Dr. Elise Hewitt,” said Clay McDonald, DC (‘82), MBA, JD, president of Logan University. “This new program is Logan’s latest endeavor in enhancing and progressing the chiropractic profession.”

Program Director Elise Hewitt, DC, DICCP, FICC, has spent more than 30 years advocating for the chiropractic care of children and served as president of the ACA Pediatrics Council for 10 years. In addition to treating children at her chiropractic practice in Portland, Ore., Hewitt is a member of the prestigious NCMIC Speakers Bureau, for which she teaches all aspects of pediatric practice. She was named 2019 Pediatric Chiropractor of the Year by the ACA Pediatrics Council.

“I’m honored to spearhead the nation’s first master’s degree in the field of pediatric chiropractic,” Hewitt said. “Everything I do professionally is focused on increasing access to quality chiropractic care for kids, and leading this program is an outstanding opportunity to make that happen.”

For more information, visit logan.edu.

CUSTOM CARE

BY THE NUMBERS

“The quickest way to ruin a customer experience in health care is to treat everyone the same.”

― Blake Morgan, writer, customer experience futurist

75%

U.S. consumers who wish their health care experiences were more personalized.

Source: Redpoint Global

7x

Value-based care models, which reimburse organizations based on the quality, not the quantity, of the care they provide, have increased seven-fold over the last five years.

Source: Healthcare Finance News

6 of 10

Americans who live with a chronic illness.

Source: Centers for Disease Control

71%

U.S. consumers who report facing “major frustrations” throughout the health care experience — including long wait times, impersonal visits, a confusing process and trouble when scheduling an appointment.

Source: Redpoint Global

24/7

For 2022, UnitedHealthcare is collaborating with Optum to roll out a “virtual-first health plan” with 24/7 access, 15% less premium cost, $0 for primary care visits, online scheduling and same-day appointments, and wearable-device incentives to earn more than $1,000 per year.

Source: Health Leaders Media
**HEALTH NEWS**

Can anxiety be treated with exercise?

Both moderate and strenuous exercise alleviate symptoms of anxiety, even when the disorder is chronic, a study led by researchers at the University of Gothenburg shows.

The study, now published in the Journal of Affective Disorders, is based on 286 patients with anxiety syndrome, recruited from primary care services in Gothenburg and the northern part of Halland County. Half of the patients had lived with anxiety for at least 10 years. Their average age was 39 years, and 70% were women.

Participants were randomly assigned to group exercise sessions, either moderate or strenuous, for 12 weeks. The results show that their anxiety symptoms were significantly alleviated even when the anxiety was a chronic condition, compared with a control group who received advice on physical activity according to public health recommendations.

Most individuals in the treatment groups went from a baseline level of moderate to high anxiety to a low anxiety level after the 12-week program. For those who exercised at relatively low intensity, the chance of improvement in terms of anxiety symptoms rose by a factor of 3.62. The corresponding factor for those who exercised at higher intensity was 4.88.

Participants had no knowledge of the physical training or counseling people outside their own group were receiving.

“There was a significant intensity trend for improvement — that is, the more intensely they exercised, the more their anxiety symptoms improved,” said the study’s first author Malin Henriksson, doctoral student at Sahlgrenska Academy at the University of Gothenburg.

Previous studies of exercise in depression have shown clear symptom improvements. However, a clear picture of how people with anxiety are affected by exercise has been lacking up to now. The present study is described as one of the largest to date.

**SOURCE:** ScienceDaily.com

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---

**PROFITABLE PRACTICE**

Dig deep into your patient-generated data for marketing

Marketing is what brings more patients to your practice — but it’s got to be the right marketing, and it can originate from your current patient-generated health data.

“The first metric that should always be tracked and managed when it comes to patient loyalty and retention is called “Course of Care Retention” or “Course of Care Completion Rate,” says Rafael E. Salazar II, MHS, OTR/L, principal owner of Rehab U Practice Solutions. “Basically, if the average plan of care for patients is 2x/week for 6 weeks, what percentage of patients are actually attending all 12 visits (or completing their plan of care)? That number provides great insight into patient engagement, satisfaction, and, of course, retention.”

In addition to this, says Salazar, when you’re looking at patient-generated health data, it’s important to also track:

1) average length of care (number of visits works); 2) average revenue per patient; 3) average cost per new evaluation;
4) source of new patient (example: MD referral, social media, Google ads, etc.), and; 5) payer mix (insurance vs. Medicare vs. private pay).

— Michele Wojciechowski
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– Dr. Terry M. Gibson D.C.
TheFatLossExpert.com, Chico, CA

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CUSTOM CARE TECH

The best chiropractic tech innovations on the market and how they’re being utilized

BY RUSSELL GREENSEID, DC

TIME TO READ: 7-9 MIN.

THE TAKEAWAY
Electrotherapy, shock wave, laser and full-body analysis, in addition to regular adjusting, are changing the quality of life for chiropractic patients.

IN THE WORLD OF MODERN HEALTH CARE, any trained professional will tell you that the right diagnosis is a crucial step in healing. After all, how can you prescribe an effective prognosis without getting to the heart of the issue? Or, in the case of chiropractic tech, the back of the issue.

All chiropractic jokes aside, any person with back issues will tell you that it’s no laughing matter. A startling two million back injuries occur a year in the U.S. Experts say that 80% of adults are estimated to experience a back injury in their lifetime. In the U.S., back injuries make up the No. 1 cause of job-related disability. In fact, back injuries and back pain account for 38.5% of days away from work.
Add remote working injuries
It’s fair to say that back health is a front-and-center topic for many. Back injuries, degenerative diseases, aches, pains and nerve issues are just some of the conditions people suffer from daily.

And in a world where many are working remotely with less-than-suitable home office setups, we’re seeing more and more of people’s back ailments surfacing from too much time seated at a desk. Sitting has been touted as the new smoking, due to the toxic repercussions it causes for many.

Chiropractic tech tools
Resolving patients’ back injuries and helping them stay mobile so they can feel their best is achieved with the help of the many chiropractic tech innovations coming forth within our industry:

Electromyography — With new diagnostic tools such as electromyography, we now have the ability to take a look inside our patient’s body and see where the problem is occurring. This also offers a lot more information about our patient’s muscular patterns. With more detailed information from diagnostic tools like this, we’re able to treat our patients more specifically and provide better relief as well.

MRI — MRI results are utilized to aid in creating individual treatment plans. Gone are the days of sending patients off to 12 sessions of physical therapy before taking a closer look at the issue through an MRI. By getting an MRI earlier in the patient’s process, we can determine the proper customized approach and decide if further intervention is necessary. Whatever the decision may be, a proper MRI helps get the best, most accurate care for the patient.

Disc Decompression Machines — These machines offer maximal benefit to our patients. The disc decompression machine stretches and relaxes the spinal column, made possible through computerized technology which confirms the proper amount of stress is placed on the spine in a very specific location. The patient is relieved of muscle contractions and pressure within the spine and will feel substantial relief.

Extracorporeal Shock Wave Therapy — This device relies on the technology of therapeutic high-energy sound waves to treat different conditions. The best cases for using such a device are for muscle strains or other muscular-related injuries. The device works by generating large shock waves to help heal the injury. Many years of study have confirmed that the root causes of pain can be eliminated systematically with this therapeutic approach.

Full Body Analysis — These large chiropractic workstations assess the patient by performing a body analysis. The machine then determines a treatment for the patient according to the results. Renowned as a sophisticated system, this chiropractic tech can pinpoint where the spinal abnormalities are in a patient and if they are causing issues. Once the machine has determined what the issue is, it can optimize the patient’s experience by moving into a treatment mode, where it will work in a painless way.

High-Power Laser Therapy — This innovative device has been around for a while and has been used in other medical fields, but it has become a great chiropractic tech tool as well. This laser is activated by using the infrared and red-light technologies to repair damaged tissues and stimulate cells in the affected area. This is a supportive therapy and can be used in combination with regular chiropractic care to help with the following conditions:
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**CLINICAL STUDIES**

Type: FDA, IRB Approved (NCT03811093),
Double Blind Timeline: 3 weeks, 9 treatments per patient
Sample Size: 800
Diet and Exercise: None
Outcome Measures: 95% Confidence Interval
Body Fat % Lost: 1.24% to 2.82% (1.75% avg.)
Pounds of Body Fat Lost: 2.33 to 6.60 lbs. (4.53 lbs. avg.)
Fat Energy Metabolized per Treatment: 1,761.66 calories avg.
Inches Lost: 8.13 to 12.20 inches (10.16 inches avg.)
Adverse Reactions: 0
Success Rate: 100%
P-Value: 0.01%

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Gone are the days of sending patients off to 12 sessions of physical therapy before taking a closer look at the issue through an MRI.

Neurological scanning — While chiropractic care has mostly to do with the spine, the rest of the body can offer a lot of helpful information in diagnosing the underlying issue. With this type of scanning, the technology uses neurological scans to assess a person’s entire nervous system in just a few short minutes. The benefit offered is that it allows a deeper look into a person’s spinal nerve connection to observe how those connections impact the spine as well as different parts of the body. This technology allows doctors to see a patient’s condition in more detail and make the correct diagnosis, ensuring the proper treatment plan is created.

With the help of these chiropractic tech cutting-edge tools, diagnosis and treatment of various conditions with innovative technological breakthroughs are possible. With the support of these devices, a lot of guesswork is taken out of diagnosing, delivering a deeper understanding of our patient’s body as a whole.

**Chiropractor Tech and Modalities**

Our 2021 Chiropractic Economics Salary & Expense Survey gave insight into some of the latest technology and the different modalities that chiropractors are employing in their practices:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Technique</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Instrument adjusting</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electrotherapy</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exercise programs</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nutrition</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kinesiology taping</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical therapy/rehab</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disc decompression</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laser therapy</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Massage</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acupuncture</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>IASTM</td>
<td>19%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Weight loss programs</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homeopathy</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical services</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Keeping up with technological advances**

Multidisciplinary physicians value staying current in the latest treatments and technologies. While medical or health care conventions are not very popular in today’s pandemic world, the publications, webinars, continuing education, seminars and our network of professional peers both help obtain and share some of the breakthrough products available — part of this amazing community of chiropractors who create the best quality of life for our patients together.

RUSSELL GREENSEID, DC, is a chiropractor, major shareholder and chief of staff at Metro Healthcare Partners in Brooklyn, N.Y. He is a trusted advocate and respected voice in the chiropractic field with a doctor of chiropractic degree from New York Chiropractic College in Seneca Falls, N.Y. He resides in Short Hills, N.J., with his wife and two sons. Visit metrohealthnyc.com for more information on Greenseid and his multidisciplinary team of professionals.

References can be found online at chiroeco.com
The chiropractic office and the latest testing for modern concussion treatment

BY JORDAN KNOWLTON-KEY, DC, MS, EMT, CCSP, ICSC
TIME TO READ: 5-7 MIN.

THE TAKEAWAY
Testing is never a substitute for a thorough clinical examination, and these tests combined with a doctor’s exam are replacing outdated methods for determining concussion treatments.

THE EXAMINATION AND MANAGEMENT OF CONCUSSIONS and related conditions is constantly improving. If a health care provider doesn’t continue to track the changes or hasn’t taken an updated continuing education course that summarizes recent research, they will likely be operating by old standards.
Research in the past few years has challenged this treatment model, and experts agree this is no longer the proper method.

A prime example of this is how often patients with concussions are told to wait in a dark room without stimulation until their signs and symptoms recede. Research in the past few years has challenged this treatment model, and experts agree that this is no longer the proper method for treating these conditions, and may cause future complications when returning individuals to academics, sports, work or recreational activities. With significant discrepancies in patients’ signs, symptoms, recovery rates and the activities they need to return to, every patient needs an individualized treatment plan.

The gold standard in managing these cases is to have a standardized, performance-based test that can be used to help determine when an individual has recovered fully and is ready to return to their respective activities.

Various testing methods exist, including the Sport Concussion Assessment Tool 5 (SCAT 5), ImPACT Version 4 neurocognitive testing, and the vestibular-ocular motor screening (VOMS). Testing, while providing an objective data point regarding the patient’s performance, is never a substitute for a thorough clinical examination. These tests are often a key part in the decision process for returning individuals to their activities, but should not be used alone for decision-making.

Concussion in Sport Group is responsible for creating the SCAT examinations, with the SCAT 5 and the Child SCAT5 being the most recent renditions of their suggested examination released after their 2016 conference. These tests take approximately 10-20 minutes to complete and are composed of patient demographics, a symptom severity scale, brief neuropsychological test batteries assessing attention and short-/long-term memory, neurological screening and balance testing.

The test is available as a free-to-use PDF that can be transcribed into EHRs or an electronic system for ease of use. Since there are no normative values for these tests, a baseline should be obtained to use this test properly in the Return-to-Learn/Activity protocol. However, in the absence of a baseline SCAT test, you may still use portions of the examination (such as the symptom severity score, which has high clinical utility and can be implemented into any head injury examination) to help monitor and guide clinical treatment and Return-to-Learn/Activity protocols. The SCAT 5 test is one of the most common assessments used by sideline providers immediately after injury.

ImPACT

ImPACT Version 4 is an FDA-cleared, computerized neurocognitive test composed of demographics, symptom scale, and six neurocognitive test modules (Word Memory, Design Memory, X’s and O’s, Symbol Match, Color Match, and Three Letters) that generate four composite scores (Memory, Visual Motor Speed, Reaction Time and Impulse Control). There is also an option to use a Two-Factor (Speed and Memory) scoring approach. Upon completion of the test, results are all summarized in an automated clinical report which can be used to compare an individual’s post-injury test to their baseline test or normative data. While several computerized neurocognitive tests are on the market, ImPACT Version 4 is supported by over 600 peer-reviewed articles, systematic reviews and book chapters since 2000. Contrary to SCAT5, ImPACT does have a normative database that allows you to compare results even if you don’t have an individual’s baseline test. The most recent version of the test has over 72,000 cases in the normative database and there have been over 21,000,000 administrations of the test.

Similar to the SCAT, ImPACT has utility as part of the post-injury assessment and in the Return-to-Learn/Activity protocol. One real advantage of utilizing ImPACT Version 4 is that, in a world affected by COVID-19, the ability to have patients take ImPACT from a quiet home environment is beneficial. ImPACT can be administered in approximately 20 minutes. In addition, a shortened version called ImPACT Quick Test, which takes 5-7 minutes to administer, can be used on the sidelines as part of an accelerated examination and a decision on removing the athlete from competition. You do need to have an appropriate electronic device on the sideline to administer the test.
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VOMS
The VOMS is an examination cluster that includes accommodation, smooth pursuits, horizontal and vertical saccades, horizontal and vertical vestibular-ocular reflexes, and vestibular-motor sensitivity, and is utilized to examine a variety of vestibular-ocular symptoms.

Research demonstrates the importance of examining head injury/concussion patients who are experiencing common conditions such as headaches, dizziness, gait instability, neck pain, etc., for vestibular-ocular conditions. VOMS has been utilized by many providers for its high reliability, low false positive, and high internal consistency at baseline compared to post-injury. However, patients may have abnormal findings according to the tests that are considered their normative value.

Including VOMS in a patient’s baseline testing helps find these abnormal findings, treat them if necessary, and record these findings as a comparison to post-injury reports resulting in higher specificity and fewer false positives. 

JORDAN KNOWLTON-KEY, DC, MS, EMT, CCSP, ICSC, completed a two-year chiropractic sports fellowship at Northwestern Health Sciences University following graduation and is currently the integrative sports care coordinator for the Human Performance Center. His position provides the unique opportunity to see concussions in a variety of situations, from managing the initial head injury, completing the follow-up clinical examination, to assisting with return-to-learn/activity protocol. He instructs the Concussion Baseline and Management course on campus, and has presented numerous times on the topic at professional conferences. To learn more, go to nwhealth.edu/clinics/human-performance-center.
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Finding your USP (unique selling proposition) requires getting in your patients’ heads and finding the irresistible benefits of your service and care.

UNLESS YOU ARE THE ONLY CHIROPRACTOR IN YOUR TOWN, you will need to differentiate yourself from your competition through your unique selling proposition, or USP. Even if you are the only chiropractor, you will still need to differentiate your practice from all the other options patients have.

These options include seeing another chiropractor or seeing other health care providers such as medical doctors, physical therapists, massage therapists and acupuncturists. It also includes patients’ most-commonly-chosen alternative — to do nothing at all.

A strong, instantly recognizable USP is a central component of your overall marketing strategy. It can make or break practices operating in competitive markets. It is essential for you to leverage your USP, especially when marketing a not-so-easily-differentiated service like chiropractic care. Until you can articulate what your USP is and learn how to capitalize on it, your practice will be just another voice clamoring to be heard.
The Foundation for Chiropractic Progress

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- Ohio State Chiropractic Association
- South Dakota Chiropractors Association
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- Texas Chiropractic Association
- Unified Virginia Chiropractic Association

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- Atlantic Standard Process Nutritional Resources
- Cash Practice
- Colorado Chiropractic Association
- Connecticut Chiropractic Association
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Level 6 - Over $10k Continued
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- Indiana State Chiropractic Association
- Idaho Association of Chiropractic Physicians
- International Chiropractors Association
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- Texas Chiropractic College
- Therapeutic Nutritional Services
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- Chiropractic Society of Rhode Island
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Foundation for Chiropractic Progress
The unique selling proposition

Simply put, your unique selling proposition is what makes your practice different from everyone else in your market.

A strong, unique selling proposition can help you attract new patients, retain those you currently care for, and reduce patient dropout. For some chiropractors, identifying your practice’s USP will be easier than for others. If your practice is the only provider of a niche product or service, such as “the only provider of non-surgical spinal decompression therapy in the tri-state area,” this will be your USP.

For most chiropractic practices, identifying a unique selling proposition is not as easy. Fortunately, there are several ways you can differentiate your practice, even if you provide similar services or products.

Get inside your ideal patient’s head

Before you start thinking about which qualities set your practice apart from other practices, you need to know everything about your “ideal patient.” In marketing terms, this is referred to as your “customer avatar.” Consider the following:

• What does your ideal patient really want?
• How can your services or products solve their problem(s)?
• What factors motivate their buying decisions?
• Why do your existing patients choose your practice over your competitors?

Be exact. Remember — it is not enough to merely target a rough demographic. You need to know exactly who you want to attract and why.

Once you know this, you can get to work on the next step in the unique selling proposition process, which is to explain how your practice uniquely solves your ideal patients’ problems. Your patients do not want to spend their hard-earned income on chiropractic care — they want to spend their money to have you solve their problems. This could be as simple as getting out of pain, but it can and frequently is much more complex.

Patient avatars: what to include

Create an ideal patient avatar as though you were documenting the personal profile of a living person.

It can be helpful to meet with your practice team members to create a list of your favorite patients. Who do you absolutely love to see show up at your front desk? Who are your practice ambassadors who rave about your practice to their family, co-workers and community? Determining what they have in common is a great place to start. Once you have identified these individuals, consider convening a small focus group comprising them to collect even greater insight into their motivations.

There are several key components to the ideal patient avatar. Begin with demographic information like age, gender and location. This will give your persona a look and feel. Name your avatar and search internet images for a representative photo.

Next, make note of the goals and values that are relevant to the products and services you offer:

• What motivates her?
• Is it more time, more energy, less stress?
• What are your avatar’s challenges and pain points?
• Is she concerned about being there for her family, not squandering the family budget, or finding a health care provider who really listens?

Once you have established your avatar, you can market your practice in such a way that shows how it meets her needs and solves her problems.
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Make your practice irresistible

Now that you know who your ideal patient is and the problems she faces, it is time to tell her precisely why she should choose your practice over your competitors.

Just as advertisements have mere seconds to capture consumers’ attention, your USP should be almost immediately obvious. Let us see how this works using a unique selling proposition template. Note that everything in brackets can be changed to suit the specifics of your practice.

**Unique selling proposition template and example**

For [your ideal patients] who [need/want the problem you uniquely solve], [your practice] is the premier provider of [your product or service].

We provide [your unique solution/approach].

Unlike [other product or service providers], our practice is the place in [your market] that focuses on [your ideal patients with your unique solution].

Unique selling proposition example:

“For busy moms who cannot let back pain get in the way of balancing work and home life, Sanna Chiropractic Center is the premier provider of drug-free, non-surgical chiropractic care. We provide you with the cost-effective care you need in a family-friendly setting that respects your busy schedule. Unlike other health care providers you may have seen in the past, our doctors really listen to your needs and search for the underlying cause of your problem. Our practice is the only place in the tri-state area that focuses on the needs of busy moms and their families.”

Be unique!

It is essential that your USP is highlighted in your ad copy, website and landing pages. Preferably, it should be in the headline, or first line of your ad.

Make sure you emphasize the benefits of using your product or service. By emphasizing the benefits of your service, you are placing greater value on the emotional payoff and appealing to your prospective patients’ desire to solve their problems. What’s your practice’s USP? Did you know what it was right away, or did you figure it out as you went through this exercise? Share your USP with your practice team and patients to gain even more insight into your uniqueness. Practice makes perfect.

MARK SANNA, DC, ACRB LEVEL II, FICC, is a member of the Chiropractic Summit and a board member of the Foundation for Chiropractic Progress. He is the CEO of Breakthrough Coaching and can be reached at mybreakthrough.com or 800-723-8423.
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CHIROPRACTIC DEBT COLLECTIONS
How to choose a reliable and authentic agency

BY LYLE SOLOMON, JD
TIME TO READ: 5-7 MIN.

THE TAKEAWAY
Debt collections can back up in a practice, but there are a number of considerations before hiring the right agency to make your collections properly and professionally.

A PATIENT COMES TO YOU AND YOU PROVIDE HEALTH CARE.
The patient receives treatment, but you don’t receive your payment. In most cases, chiropractors run their offices on their own. This makes it difficult for you to get everything done all by yourself. It’s impossible to track your patients down for money. However, you need the payments to keep your practice running.

Payments can get piled up when you don’t receive them on time. This is the time when you may need to contact a chiropractic debt collection agency to help recover the unpaid amount(s).

What to look for when choosing a debt collector
Here are the things you need to look for when choosing a chiropractic debt collection agency.

An experienced debt collector — Research and look for someone who has experience in chiropractic debt collection. Experienced collection agencies maintain goodwill between you and your client or patient.

Has proper data security measures — A reputable chiropractic debt collection agency will usually have emergency backup systems. You can rely on them for having privacy measures to keep your data safe and secure. The agency should also make sure they use the data for business purposes only.

Certified professionals — The collectors should have the required certificates. For example, an authentic certification from ACA International-The Association for Credit and Collection Professionals. When you need help, you can be assured that high-quality collectors will help you out.
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Has required legal knowledge — Make sure the collection agency is aware of the legal implications of health care bill collecting. They should comply with TCPA, HIPAA, FDCPA and other regulations. The agency should not commit any unlawful practices to recover the outstanding bill amount.

Has proper license to operate — The debt collector should have a license to operate in your state and where your patients live.

Round-the-clock access — Since you’re busy, find a collection agency that offers flexibility. If the organization provides 24/7 online access and support, you can access your files anytime you want.

Clear fee structure — The organization should be transparent with the exact cost of professional help, hiding nothing.

Along with the above, a debt collection agency needs to match your needs.

Do you have a satisfied clientele? — It will help if they have a satisfied clientele, and it’s ideal if the debt collection agency has previously worked with a chiropractor. The agency needs to understand that your business model might be different from other independent practitioners. Make sure the organization has a satisfied clientele — that means they should address their clients’ issues and be able to solve them.

Do they practice skip tracing? — Skip tracing is a practice that traces debtors if they have unintentionally moved out or avoided financial obligations. It helps instead of sending letters to the patients to their listed addresses. The debt collectors locate the debtors by tracing their cell phone usage, credit history, employer location, etc., to track and pursue them to clear the outstanding payments.

What are the professional fees? — Many collection agencies charge a percentage of the recovered amount, while others charge a higher fee based on the debt amount. Therefore, talk to them clearly and choose an option, or a collection agency, you’re comfortable with.

How will I know about my account statuses? — The debt collection agency you’re hiring should provide you with at least a monthly report of the progress of all the accounts.

How will you approach the debtors to collect the debt? — The way the collector approaches your clients (patients) reflects your character to some extent. After all, you have hired them to collect the unpaid amount on your behalf. It could affect your practice, too. The debt collector should know how to approach your clients in a way that complies with your business model.

Do you report to all major credit bureaus? — If the collectors report to all the major credit bureaus, then the patients might feel the urge to pay back the outstanding amount. So, it is better if your debt collector reports to all the major credit bureaus.

What is unique about your agency? — The debt collection agencies mainly offer similar services. However, one thing that makes them unique is if they have an attorney to make the

Skip tracing is a practice that traces debtors if they have unintentionally moved out or avoided financial obligations.
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Many collection agencies charge a percentage of the recovered amount, while others charge a higher fee based on the debt amount.

collection efforts. Another thing is if they provide genuine 24/7 support. They may say that they provide such support but may not have the infrastructure.

Consider all these factors as you make your decision on the best collection agency for you. Also, check online reviews regarding whether or not they have a satisfied clientele. There may be an issue with a client, but they should address it and solve it as soon as possible.

LYLE SOLOMON, JD, has considerable litigation experience as well as substantial hands-on knowledge and expertise in legal analysis and writing. Since 2003, he has been a member of the State Bar of California. In 1998, he graduated from the University of the Pacific’s McGeorge School of Law in Sacramento, Calif., and now serves as a principal attorney for the Oak View Law Group in California.

28%

PEOPLE IN THE U.S. WITH A CREDIT FILE THAT HAD SOME DEBT BEING COLLECTED BY A THIRD-PARTY SERVICE (SOURCE: DEBT.COM)

Chiropractic Economics Survey Results: Integrated and Multidisciplinary clinics earn more than DC-only practices.

- Billings 61% higher
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WHERE REGENERATIVE MEDICINE FITS IN CHIROPRACTIC

Treating various conditions without surgical or pharmacological intervention

BY ANTHONY CRIFASE, DC, CNS, DACBN, LDN
TIME TO READ: 9-11 MIN.

THE TAKEAWAY

Treating patients while also setting up a referral network for injured tissue conditions requires collaborative work with MRIs and patient history for optimal results.

TREATMENT PROVIDERS KNOW THAT SOME INJURIES AND ILLNESSES REMAIN UNRESOLVED even after multiple forms of mitigation are attempted. Much to the patients’ dismay, they simply may be unable to find relief through chiropractic care, physical therapy, electrical stimulation, nutrition balance and many other forms of treatment.

The effects of car accidents, for example, can cause a lifetime’s worth of neck and back numbness, tingling and headaches. At this point, it is time to pose the option of regenerative medicine to alleviate symptoms and help the body heal from within.¹

Injection of orthobiologics

Regenerative interventional orthopedics is an emerging field, which includes the injections of orthobiologics (such as bone-marrow concentrate and platelet-rich plasma). Commonly, it is used to enhance strength, improve mobility, treat injuries and mitigate chronic conditions.

Often, when people think of regenerative medicine, stem cells come to mind. However, many forms of this treatment pre-date stem cell research. Previously-introduced methods have become more commonplace over the years.
Delivering beyond your expectations is one of the things you’ve come to expect from us, and it is one of the driving forces here at ChiroHealthUSA. Over the past year, when so many had an excuse to slow down, our profession stepped up.

We all pushed forward, and will continue to do so, shoulder to shoulder.

Today, ChiroHealthUSA is more committed than ever before to our doctors, their teams and their patients.

Here’s to a better tomorrow... the one we’ll build together.
Here are several types available today, some of which are commonplace in a musculoskeletal-based regenerative medicine practice:

- One of the early forms of cell therapy includes blood transfusions. They are a frequently-used treatment that occurs when donated blood is introduced into a recipient’s body after large quantities of blood are lost due to surgery or as a result of trauma.
- Bone marrow transplants are another form of regenerative medicine wherein patients with radiation damage or certain cancers, for example, use donor bone marrow cells to help generate new, healthy blood cells.²
- In 1954, the first organ transplant was performed. Since then, the process has been refined and the practice has become so common that in 2001, the number of living donors exceeded the number of organs received from those who recently passed.
- Platelet-rich plasma (PRP) is a form of regenerative medicine wherein the patient’s blood is extracted, placed into a centrifuge to separate the blood’s plasma, and then reinjected into the area that requires treatment. This practice is commonly used for musculoskeletal issues and enables the body to heal itself naturally.²
- Stem cells are a well-known component of regenerative medicine and one that carries significant controversy because it has typically been derived from umbilical cord cells. Stem cells have the extraordinary ability to regenerate cell growth, are anti-inflammatory, and change the immune system’s response (immunomodulatory). Stem cells adapt to the body’s makeup and can potentially recreate any cell in the body including skin, lung and brain cells.

Benefits of regenerative medicine
As evident, there are many different types of regenerative medicine, and the applications are vast in regard to its benefits and ways in which chiropractors can integrate with this form of treatment. Furthermore, regenerative therapy and research show no signs of slowing. The benefits can mean the difference between a life of pain and one of recovery.

Some benefits of regenerative medicine that have been shown in the literature include:³

- Potential avoidance of invasive treatment methods such as surgery
- Decreases the risk of dependence formed from the use of narcotic pain killers
- Helps patients avoid chronic diseases such as diabetes, nerve conditions and heart disease
- Faster recovery time than surgery
- Increased functionality and improved range of motion
- Decreased inflammation
- Tissues that were once thought beyond repair (i.e., nervous tissue) show signs of healing

These are all tremendous benefits that extend beyond palliative care and are viable options for a chiropractor to consider working with or referring out for.

Requirements for performing procedures
While the requirements to administer regenerative medicine treatment are typically beyond the training and scope of practice of most chiropractors, there is a perfect relationship between regenerative medicine and chiropractic care. Chiropractors have the ability to refer out to a medical provider who performs regenerative medicine as well as employ providers depending on the state in which they are located and licensed.

It is important to remember and confirm with the state board in which a chiropractor is licensed regarding the scope of practice in that state and any laws or statutes regarding administering, referring, managing or hiring a provider who performs regenerative medicine. Limiting the risk of injury to patients by adhering to the laws and statutes is an important part of the patient experience and will keep your practice legal and compliant.

Regenerative medicine has great potential to treat several health conditions outside the scope of treatment for a chiropractor but well-suited for a referral.
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Additionally, clinics that often provide regenerative medicine use MRIs, ultrasounds and fluoroscopy before delivering any injections, which is another step in the process to consider when arranging any regenerative medicine services in your clinic.

Health care cooperation
In addition to continually defining emerging standards, it is important that chiropractors cooperate with different health professionals when treating a variety of musculoskeletal conditions. When chiropractors partner with regenerative medicine doctors, they are able to provide a number of additional patient benefits, including enhanced medical opinions regarding diagnosis and treatment as well as providing more services for the patient. This is incredibly helpful as each provider has a similar goal in mind.

Regenerative medicine parallels chiropractic medicine because both aim to treat root causes of a patient’s conditions. Regenerative medicine does this by replacing lost cells or organs, whereas chiropractic does so via manipulation and alignment of the body.

While some chiropractors work solo or with other chiropractors, they are increasingly integrating with other health professionals to offer a more comprehensive treatment for pain and other musculoskeletal conditions. This integration can be achieved by working together in a multi-specialty or multidisciplinary spine clinic.

Regenerative medicine’s chiropractic fit
The goal and scope of regenerative medicine physicians and chiropractors are complementary. Both fields aim to change the way things are done in a non-pharmacological and non-surgical manner by:

- Helping patients and clients prevent unnecessary surgeries
- Limiting the use of steroids that have potentially long-term damaging effects on the human body
- Limiting the regular use of narcotics
- Limiting the use of non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs)

Regenerative medicines are used to replenish, strengthen and heal tissues, muscles and tendons. They also help treat injured, weakened and compromised joints. The chiropractic profession has intentionally sought to promote the use of non-narcotic and non-surgical care in favor of a system that improves the body’s ability to heal itself. This makes sense given chiropractors’ focus on anatomy and the self-healing capabilities of the body.

Furthermore, regenerative medicine has great potential to treat several health conditions outside the scope of treatment for a chiropractor but well-suited for a referral such as diabetes, heart diseases and emphysema.

Supporting regenerative providers and vice versa
The aims of chiropractors and regenerative medicine physicians are similar. Both aim to treat conditions without surgical or pharmacological intervention.

Here is an example of how a chiropractor and regenerative medicine professional can work together: Say, for instance, a patient has a neck injury that has caused a measurable degree of instability in the cervical or lumbar spine. Intervention will be used to re-establish the patient’s comfort and range of motion. However, knowing that the tissues in the neck are damaged, the chiropractor and regenerative medicine specialist decide to take a collaborative approach by creating a plan that includes information from the MRI, examination and patient history.

The chiropractor will conduct the manipulation of the spine and the regenerative medicine specialist will direct injections to the small ligaments and tissues that are generally damaged in injured spines. These processes complement each other and increase the patient’s long-term outcomes.

As patient care continues to evolve and patients seek additional treatment options, there are numerous ways for regenerative medicine to begin integrating with chiropractic offices. Begin your search by meeting with your local regenerative medicine or pain management practitioners and discussing a collaboration, as the integrative model of care is on the rise.

ANTHONY CRIFASE, DC, CNS, DACBN, LDN, is the director of professional relations of DocShop Pro. He is double board-certified in clinical nutrition and maintains an active chiropractic practice in Denver, Colo. With experience in multiple different industries and as a seasoned chiropractor who understands the ins and outs of practice management, he is on a mission to help other practitioners maximize their time, revenue and systems. Learn more at docshoppro.com.
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PATIENT SATISFACTION
Crucial methods for keeping patients happy and returning for exceptional care

BY DREW STEVENS, PHD
TIME TO READ: 11-13 MIN.

THE TAKEAWAY
Providing exceptional patient service and being patient-savvy is just good practice, so start looking at patients in a different light.

I DISCOVERED A QUOTE THAT PERSONIFIES THE ACHIEVEMENT OF EVERY PRACTICE. Peter Drucker stated, “Every practice is in practice for one reason — the patient.” All activities and internal functions rely on acquiring and retaining patients. This imperative concept is needed to ensure that chiropractors focus on acquiring patients.

Doctors therefore need to be confident about their achievements. And, they must continually maintain confidence with staff even during volatile times. This also includes operating the practice using prudent risk. Removal from the comfort zone is always difficult for habitual practice owners.

Don’t be lacking
It is fairly ironic that, in many conversations, practices typically have a similar excuse for not being attentive to patient service: 1) lack of time; 2) lack of focus; and 3) a lack of knowledge. However, dismissing the issue only brings about revenue concerns.

The reason that patient service is so vital to every practice includes the following:

• **Less Cost** — As patient word-of-mouth spreads about your products and services, you become a marketing leader through buzz marketing. Costs decrease due to a lack of need for advertising.

• **Increased Productivity** — A cooperative culture leads to higher staff productivity. When people get along, they service patients better.

• **Less Labor** — The increased use of social media and the internet enable (satisfied) patients to quickly connect with others who might be interested in your services. Patients do the work for your practice.
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What do patients seek?

Patients today are much smarter than many think. Patients today are most specifically concerned about value and trust. With many chiropractors to choose from and access to websites, it is hard to distinguish one from another. The key differentiator today is patient service.

Patients want to ensure they are treated right from the moment they are serviced. This requires that practices develop a patient culture. This includes everyone from the front desk to the treatment room. In fact, what patients really expect is that they are treated as the purpose of the practice and not an interruption of it.

When working with patients, there are four very specific things to be considered to help your practice become more patient service savvy. The first starts with people. The people you hire must be completely passionate about servicing the patient. This means smiling upon entry and even engaging the patient with great questions that illustrate a peer relationship. Getting to know them and becoming genuinely interested is very opportunistic for the patient service practice.

The second issue patients are concerned with is support. When they call to get service, patients expect a real person to answer the phone. They don't expect to be placed on indefinite hold or in a circulating maze of voice-operated options. Patients become angered by the number of prompts they must provide in order to get the assistance needed. How many times do you call some companies and get press 1 for English, 2 for Spanish, then press 1 for sales, 2 for service, now enter in your account number, then hit 3 if you know your child's first name, etc.

The third issue is the patient wants to know how you can help them as a trusted advisor. Patients are seeking solutions to problems and there is expectancy based on your experience that you could offer help.

When you make your patients a part of the practice and create partnerships, there is a better relationship and more trust. As the trust builds, they tell others of your honesty, which helps create more business for you and less attrition in the patient ranks. Patients want to stay with you; you just need to show them a bit more love! Discover what patient service excellence really means — to you and your patients.

When was the last time you were ‘wowed’?

When we talk about the patient service experience, we really mean a consistent and relentless pursuit of ongoing patient service. Consumers know they can count on certain restaurants, hotels or department stores to have staff who are always welcoming, friendly and cannot wait to help.

Every single contact your practice has with its patients either cultivates or corrodes your relationship. That includes every letter you send, every ad you run and every phone call you make. This includes contact from the first person to the senior officer.

If you think about it, your practice is only as good as your worst staff member. When you think of how you treat your staff, this actually becomes a domino effect to your overall asset — your patients. This is sobering, simply because patient service is as much an internal function as it is externally.

Imagine entering a store and hearing the screaming or sarcasm amongst two or more employees, or you hear staff speak poorly about a former patient. Would you return?

Do you treat your patients similar to the way the Ritz-Carlton does its guests? At the Ritz, you can count on ladies and gentlemen to service ladies and gentlemen.

The idea here is that patient service excellence is really about servicing individuals as ladies and gentlemen. This means looking at situations through the eyes of your patient. Have you really walked through your own patient service strategy? What does it look like at the other end? Can you see yourself as your own patient?

One of the best methods for doing this is to develop a mystery-shopping program. If you are not familiar with this, all one needs is to arrange for a “stranger” to shop your establishment the way a patient would. Have them call in or visit and take notes on all they experience.

Staff empowerment

Another aspect of patient service excellence is to allow staff to feel empowered in their positions. Simply put, one of the goals of patient service training must allow staff to feel as much a part of the practice as you.

Encourage your staff to see situations from an owner’s
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What patients really expect is that they are treated as the purpose of the practice and not an interruption of it.

point of view. This might require servicing practices not only better but doing so with keenness that looks at return on investment for the practice. When staff can make certain good quick decisions to make patients happy without your involvement and without going through layers, there is less aggravation for the patient.

There is not enough money in advertising and promotion to supplement these stories. Research proves it is 81% more effective to keep a happy, satisfied patient then acquire a new one. Do all you can to see the practice from your patients’ eyes so you can lessen barriers that lead to patient aggravation.

An example of excellence
The Marriott hotel company revolutionized the way staff, from desk clerks to chief financial officers, are evaluated based on guest satisfaction scores. The result is a culture where uncommon acts of concern — such as a bellhop lending his shoes to a guest — become not so uncommon.

The founders of the companies that make up Marriott’s 19 brands really believed that if you take great care of your employees, they’d take great care of your customers.

Keys to getting closer to patients
Doing business on a first-name basis — The sweetest sound anyone will ever hear is their first name. Anytime you visit with Dr. Paul, you are being greeted by his first name. Becoming more intimate on a first-name basis allows for more power and trustworthiness.

Connectivity — There is a need to constantly connect to patients. Phone calls, gratuity cards and other devices are helpful in remaining in constant contact. You might use newsletters, conduct blogs, send out handwritten notes or use services for such. No matter what you use, just remaining top of mind makes good sense.

Delight — Remember when you were a kid and you ate Cracker Jacks? The prize surprised us all, but today, patients desire more sizzle. We all know the surprise is coming, but now we want more. So today we must provide more zing for all patients. Patients today want to be “blown away.” I was visiting Starbucks recently and I frequently visit one particular shop. As I approached the counter, there was a Venti coffee at the register. My barista saw me coming from the parking lot and as I entered we exchanged hellos. He told me my coffee was waiting. And there was no charge. Now, that is blown-away service. My own chiropractor’s staff takes me to lunch and from time to time calls to just ask how I am doing. This too is blown-away service.

Discovering other ways to delight and help
Patient service and the patient experience are not always about transactions. Sometimes it is about becoming a valued advisor. Practices desire a trusting relationship and want to return to socially-conscious people. Visit Nordstrom’s and ask for a specific tie, shoes or cuff links. If unavailable, the sales representative will indicate not only the closest store but also a competitor. Sometimes service means just being a helpful advisor.

For example, you might refer the patient to another medical practitioner,
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**Addressing issues immediately** — We cannot always be right. We like to be, but no one person or company is perfect. The entire mission of patient service is servicing patients. When things go wrong, address them quickly and do not be so quick to place any blame. Merely move on and do all you can to keep the patient and the relationship whole.

**Return messages quickly** — Patients do not want to wait. They want answers as quickly as possible. Even Radio Shack uses the mantra, “You’ve got questions? We’ve got answers.” Return all calls or emails within 24 hours. I myself have a policy of 90 minutes. One day, the author and entrepreneur Guy Kawasaki was sent an email by a potential patient at 10 p.m. and he returned it 10 minutes later. I know doctors who give out their personal home numbers. Do all that is necessary to be responsive.

**Keep it pleasant** — Perry Wright, a former broadcaster, is known as the On Hold Guy. During hold times, he records one-liners, entertaining stories and facts that simply keep individuals returning. This is important, since 70% of most patient service issues require wait times that include a telephone hold. Believe it or not, 60% hang up.

It costs 8-10 times more to gain a new patient than to keep one. Providing exceptional patient service is what practices want and what they come to expect. Because of the close and personal contact available, those practices that remain close do much better than those that don’t. Being patient-savvy and patient exceptional is simply just good practice.

**The patient is the reason**
The patient is the reason for the practice. Patients are not an interruption; they are its purpose. Nothing happens unless a patient is satisfied. Customer service is as good as your best and worst employee.

Remember to always win friends and influence patients.

DREW STEVENS, PHD, is the author of “Practice Acceleration” and more than 700 articles on chiropractic practice strategy. For additional information, visit his website at drew-stevens.com. © 2021. Drew J. Stevens, all rights reserved.
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姿势的流行病
对于患者来说，过度使用技术（如使用电脑、平板电脑和智能手机，尤其是坐着!）已经创造了姿势流行病。特别是在脊柱的纠正方面，它们破坏了基本的功能，如平衡和呼吸。

一个常见的导致不良姿势的原因是脚的双侧不对称内翻模式，这会导致慢性骨盆倾斜和前额前垂等其他问题。除了脊柱调整外，通过数字扫描恢复健康姿势开始于脚部已成为新标准的护理。人们已经认识到内翻如何影响整个身体，那么你是如何处理它的？

历史上，这些承受重量的足部模式已经被理疗师用泡沫铸造工具捕获。今天，随着我们的检查和X光片，数字扫描也可以获得更多的功能来支持护理。技术可以改善这个过程，为医生提供更多的价值。

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Being able to review detailed images and balance data in the report of findings with patients is a critical step that helps support behavioral change. It enhances the education process — patients can look at the readings and photos and see the difference. The colorful videos and images they see right at the time of their foot function assessment help them make the connection. They look forward to tracking their improvement.

Digital scanning empowers the patient by allowing them to input their own answers to prompts, making them active participants in their care. This can help increase compliance and build a feeling of partnership with their doctor in proactive health.

Helping patients understand the role of foot stabilization
Casting kits and digital scanners can both be used for designing the same customized functional orthotics. It’s the process through scanning that not only streamlines orthotic production, but also the patient education opportunities and value added to the report of findings.

When we have patients perform a visual analysis of their foot scans, they can learn to see the imbalances themselves and be empowered to improve. Through education you meet them at their level, and we know it’s more valuable to teach than to tell.

Establish yourself as the ‘go-to’ expert on foot stabilization in your community
Advanced scanners give doctors and patients access to exclusive three-arch technology that better complements the specificity that goes into chiropractic adjustments of the spine and extremities, resulting in two deviations above the average standard of foot care.

Today’s patient demands empowerment and transparency of health care information that the technology and scanner report automate.

Enhancing patient communication and saving time
The spine-centric chiropractic perspective has been considered at every stage of the scanning process, allowing doctors to seamlessly integrate and trust it as a powerful patient education tool. Going to digital scanning has made the learning process better, as this tool puts patients first and stimulates conversation that was not occurring prior.

Innovation should streamline a standard process, then add to its established value. The information from casting kits used to be weeks away, but scanning is now at the fingertips of both doctors and patients in real time, creating a new standard of service. The analysis is built right in, so I can interpret it to my patient right away, enhancing their care experience.

This technology is faster than any other diagnostics, even my own exams. Scanning also means that by their second or third visit, my patient’s orthotics have arrived and can be put to use. Sometimes nothing can compare to a patient feeling the difference in how they walk in, compared to what it’s like to walk out adjusted and supported.

The value of digital scanning to doctors
The core principles and language of chiropractors are built into the system and designed to enhance patient communication. The messaging and imagery is already in alignment with chiropractic. That’s part of why it’s already been so widely used within the chiropractic community.

As chiropractors, we know gravity and balance are the foundation of our care. As innovators in health, we constantly

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Today’s patient demands empowerment and transparency of health care information that the technology and scanner report automate.

ask ourselves if we’re taking the standards of care higher. By helping prevent spine-related issues which cause low-back pain that originate with unhealthy foot function, we are elevating our treatment. Technology is the key to practicing at a different level.

The scanning technology streamlines an essential function of the chiropractor — optimizing balance. Asymmetry may be common, but what’s not predictable is the degree of pronation from left to right. I use the technology in my evidence-based care to show foundational differences that affect balance and stability. Technology and evaluation tools need to shift into monitoring function — day in, day out. Patients need more regular screening and monitoring as part of routine care and the scanner instantly becomes a leader in it.

It is essential to offer patients a custom, specific product in your orthotics vs. what may be the easiest thing, which is not personalized for that patient’s needs (off-the-shelf insoles). When technology can help you capture essential functions of the body in the same way that the brain prioritizes them, health care focus is kept in check and patient accountability and compliance are improved.

When properly educated, patients understand the strength of custom stabilization and are empowered to invest further in their care. Here, innovation in technology energizes your business in multiple ways while staying true to your clinical principles.

ANISH BAJAJ, DC, is a 2000 graduate of Life University in Atlanta, Ga. He is the owner of Bajaj Chiropractic in New York City. He serves on the executive board of the New York Chiropractic Council and is the chair of their Neuroscience and Research Committee. As a member of the Foot Levelers Speakers Bureau, he travels extensively, sharing his chiropractic knowledge and expertise with audiences around the country. He can be reached at anish@bajajchiropractic.com.
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THE FUTURE OF MUSCULOSKELETAL CARE
Telehealth is opening new areas of opportunity for chiropractic

BY STEPHEN OFFENBURGER, DC
TIME TO READ: 9-11 MIN.

THE TAKEAWAY
This powerful tool is giving chiropractors in an increasingly digital environment the ability to reach more patients and provide extended care.

THE ONGOING PANDEMIC has forced many non-tech-savvy Americans to change their habits and adopt technology in all aspects of their lives — from grocery shopping to health care.

And as we approach post-pandemic life, it’s clear telehealth is here to stay. Members of the U.S. House Committee on Energy and Commerce’s Health subcommittee have expressed bipartisan support for making the pandemic’s Medicare reimbursement for telehealth permanent, citing advancements and potential for health care technology.

Telehealth in medicine vs. chiropractic
While 76% of U.S. hospitals connect with patients and consulting practitioners at a distance through the use of video and other technology, telehealth adoption in the chiropractic field has been slower than in traditional medicine.

Part of the reason is that online clinical practice is especially challenging for those professionals who routinely use their hands as a part of their assessment and treatment for managing patients. However, telehealth has the potential to broaden the capability of chiropractors — beyond performing adjustments or spine manipulation — and allows us to educate and empower patients more than we ever have before.

Evidence points to the validity of the telehealth examination for musculoskeletal concerns, and with approximately 1.71 billion people worldwide suffering from musculoskeletal conditions such as low-back pain, neck pain and joint pain, chiropractors would be remiss if they didn’t find a way to adapt and evolve to fit telehealth into their practices.

By adopting telehealth, practitioners of musculoskeletal care have the opportunity to expand their geographical reach, maintain and deepen contact with patients, and ultimately, help more people overcome pain and get back to doing what they love.
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Telehealth trends in chiropractic
The pandemic has provided an opportunity to broaden what it means to be a chiropractor with the injection of telehealth into the profession. The chiropractic field has always had a diverse array of doctors with various areas of focus — initial intensive care, rehab care, and maintenance or wellness care.

As telehealth and other technologies such as motion capture and virtual reality continue to push the envelope of what an “in-person appointment” means, many of us find ourselves breaking down silos to not only integrate new tools into our practices, but also employing new techniques from outside of our comfort zones to ensure the best delivery and outcomes for our patients.

In-person health care of any type won’t ever completely go away, but these new access pathways may become the convention and the strategy upon which other points of care are built. This could open an opportunity for chiropractors and other musculoskeletal experts to provide triage for musculoskeletal problems via telehealth and direct patients to the right care at the right time.

Getting started in telehealth
Telerehabilitation appears to be effective and comparable to conventional methods of health care delivery for the improvement of physical function and pain in a variety of musculoskeletal conditions. Chiropractors wanting to make the jump to telehealth should take implementation in three general phases: legal, technical and practical.

1. Legal — Make sure you are following the guidelines in your state and make sure you are covered legally in the virtual space. Key legal considerations include licenses required to practice telehealth in other states, stipulations on which platforms you and your staff can use to communicate with patients, reimbursement rates and HIPAA compliance.

2. Technical — What technology do you want to use to deliver virtual chiropractic care? You will have to decide what works best for you and the type of service you want to provide in the virtual space. Live video conferencing, mobile health apps, “store and forward” electronic transmission, and remote patient monitoring are examples of technologies used in telehealth.

3. Practical — Understand that the approach to a telehealth visit versus an in-person assessment is going to be different. You are going to need to break your own habits, and your communication skills will be put to the test. Small things like looking into the camera, being extra personable and animated with your patient so as to not come off as robotic, and being more descriptive when speaking, all play into the user experience for the virtual patient. It is also extremely important to define clear goals for each patient to help provide them with proper education and an effective treatment plan.

Adjustment-only providers who would like to adopt a digital model may consider using telehealth for follow-up visits and checkups or partnering with a technology that adds value to what they currently do in-clinic. Partnership offerings may include guided rehab sessions, nutritional advice or mental health support — anything educational that adds value to the patient’s life.

Adjusting to chiropractic telehealth
While the evaluation and diagnosis for a virtual patient are ultimately the same as with an in-person patient, telehealth takes more time. The communication is different, and you must spend more time educating the patient.

As the practitioner, you have to make sure your patient is comfortable doing the exercises or treatments on their
own. This may mean speaking slowly, using analogies, or finding your own personal way to connect. It is important to remember you cannot use body language, so great verbal communication is key to make sure your patient understands what you’re talking about. Virtual patients must also be assured privacy and confidentiality are maintained and respected throughout the consultation.

Another aspect to consider is how particular and thoughtful you have to be in the rehab you are choosing to give patients to do. Since you cannot physically put your hands on the patient, it can be difficult for you as a provider, but if approached with the right mindset it makes you sharpen your skill set. Simpler but more effective techniques with more emphasis on rehab are where you will find the most success. Telehealth makes providers think.

Not every condition nor every patient is treatable via telehealth. Some issues are more severe and need a hands-on approach, such as trauma or a condition with dangerous comorbidities. Doctors should provide guidance on the appropriate next step, such as going in-person for further diagnosis or seeking the opinion of another specialist. Beyond the condition, sometimes it is the patient. There is a psychological element involved, where the patient needs hands-on guidance and the adherence to the routine that an in-clinic visit provides.

In today’s increasingly digital environment, chiropractors and other musculoskeletal care providers should seriously consider offering virtual appointments. Telehealth is a powerful tool that can enable providers to help as many people as possible. If you are amazing at what you do, joining the virtual world can further your reach, boost your revenue and expand convenience for patients.

STEPHEN OFFENBURGER, DC, is director of teleservices and digital solutions for Airosti and a telehealth provider with Airosti Remote Recovery. Before joining Airosti in 2009 he earned his Doctor of Chiropractic degree from Texas Chiropractic College in Pasadena, Texas. He earned his undergraduate degree from San Jacinto College in his hometown of Houston, Texas.

References can be found online at chiroeco.com
YOU ONLY GET ONE CHANCE

A patient’s first visit experience is critical in every practice

BY NAOTA HASHIMOTO, DC

THE TAKEAWAY

The beginning, first visit, post-first visit and patient education are key parts of making a new patient’s experience memorable and keeping them coming back.

THE ENTIRE PATIENT JOURNEY, which starts from the moment the patient becomes aware of their complaint (pain in most cases), to then becoming a long-term maintenance care patient who is happily referring their friends, has a number of critical points for a chiropractor. Improving the patient’s experience along their journey doesn’t cost a penny, but the patient journey is one of the most profitable business-building activities you can implement in your practice.

Think about great experiences you have had — maybe with Disney or a high-end resort or a local business where you keep happily returning and telling others about it. Did you know you could systematically engineer an excellent experience for almost all of your patients? Of course, it’s not 100% perfect, but even when there are hiccups, those are opportunities to shine when you resolve the issue and make your patients happy.

To start the process, you must start mapping out all the touchpoints a patient may have with your practice, from when they first heard about you, to every touchpoint from your office staff.
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The patient journey
Where does this journey begin for the patient?

Awareness of a problem — Before seeking help, your potential patient goes through a triggering event that could be back pain after a golf swing that doesn’t resolve like it usually does, and now this person is aware they may need a different solution than normal. Any mention of back-pain treatment from an advertisement or from a friend before this triggering event would be useless because they were unaware they had a problem. Once this triggering event happens, free or paid media offering a solution to their problem works well. It could be to provide some DIY exercises or could be a special offer for a first visit. A patient referral program also works great at this stage. However, I do not recommend advertising until you fix the other steps that don’t cost you a penny.

Consideration and decision — Once the person has become aware that their back is troubling them and is now considering chiropractic, they search for their new doctor. This search could be by asking friends, their family doctor, or by an online search. The trust in the referral source will start to shape their opinion of you before they even arrive. Think about a referral you received from a good friend who always gives thoughtful recommendations that are good for you. You have had good experiences in the past, so you have a high level of trust before you try their recommendation. If they search for you online, they will look at online reviews, your website, and possibly any content you have online while considering their options. Most look within a specific geographic region, read reviews and look at websites before making a decision.

Pre-visit — Once they decide to make an appointment, you have an opportunity to continue improving this patient experience. Do you make it easy for them? Do you answer the phone? How friendly and efficient was the process? If they are scheduling online, is the process easy? Did you minimize the amount of effort for the patient to pick a date and time and schedule an

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Did you know you could systematically engineer an excellent experience for almost all of your patients?
appointment? If they called on the phone, did the person have a good phone voice? Did they sound happy or annoyed that you called, and did they efficiently schedule the appointment and give clear instructions on what will happen next?

How is the intake paperwork? I see many offices asking far too many questions, making the process long and cumbersome. Worse, I see many offices giving patients an offline option as their only option and requiring them to show up early for their appointment to fill out several pages of paperwork that the doctor barely glances over. I recommend collecting only the information you need. If the data doesn’t help you diagnose or form a treatment plan, you should consider leaving it out. For example, knowledge about how many live births and miscarriages is helpful to some family chiropractic practices but almost useless to others.

In our office we use software that automatically sends patients our online forms, a map with directions to the office, and a short video tour of the office starting in the parking lot, showing them where to park and what they can expect on their first visit.

We automatically send them a Google Maps link with directions to the office before their appointment to help them avoid getting lost. A stressed-out patient in pain isn’t as easy to win over as one who isn’t stressed out.

The first visit
Your next and biggest opportunity to make an impact is the first visit, which is critical in the patient’s experience journey. When they arrived, how were they greeted? We greet them by name, take a photo and explain forms like HIPAA and Medicare in person because it’s quick, and we eliminated some pages from our intake form with this step. Most patients expect to wait once they check in, but we immediately bring them back to an exam room, collect their vitals and then have them watch a short video that explains what will happen on their visit. This

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The post-first visit is another opportunity where you can improve a patient’s journey. How you respond makes a difference, just like when you get an overcooked steak at a restaurant; how they handle it either improves your satisfaction or decreases it.

**Patient workshops**
Patient workshops aren’t just a way to bring in more patients, they are a way to educate your patients. I also send out a personal newsletter once a month that talks about my family, which I tie into the month’s theme. It discusses health tips and has a shareable handout they can give to a friend.

I know this can be overwhelming at first, and you may not know where to start. I usually begin with easily repeatable steps first, which is why I leverage automated messages. Wait times can be fixed with better scheduling. Plan a pre-shift huddle before your shift to look for potential bottlenecks and solve them before the shift. When things don’t go right, briefly discuss what went wrong and what could have been done differently to improve it without pointing blame on others.

Next time you have a great experience at another business, take notes and see how you could apply that in your own practice. CE

**NAOTA HASHIMOTO, DC** is the co-founder of TrackStat, activity-based software that gives real-time feedback of where your patients are so you can identify positive or negative trends in your practice. This tracking boosts your stats and features automated emails, texts, reviews and scheduling to solve all of the chiropractor’s needs. Visit trackstat.org for a free tracking spreadsheet for your practice.
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STUDIES SHOW LAUGHTER IS INDEED THE BEST MEDICINE

A growing body of evidence demonstrates mirthful laughter is good for doctor and patient

BY ALAN COOK, DC

TIME TO READ: 5-7 MIN.

THE TAKEAWAY

For the brain, pain, and even impacting immunity, inflammation and blood pressure, among other benefits, research is showing that laughter changes our physiology and well-being.

"Always laugh when you can; it is cheap medicine."
— Lord Byron

IF WE WERE TO DESIGN A “BEST” THERAPY, it would have multiple benefits, carry a low risk of unintended side effects, be easily implemented and complied with, and be low-cost.

Mirthful laughter fulfills all of these traits. While it may be ironic to apply the unemotional objectivity of the scientific method to study laughter, there are real data to support the assertion that “laughter is the best medicine.”

The power of laughter

Intuitively, most would agree that laughter is enjoyable, sought after and socially contagious. Laughter research was described well by Mark Twain, who said, “Studying humor is like dissecting a frog — you may know a lot but you end up with a dead frog.”

Laughter has been partially dissected. A growing body of evidence demonstrates the positive effects of mirthful laughter on the brain, immune system, inflammatory markers, blood pressure, stress hormones, pain levels, relaxation and mood:

Brain — Memory, recall and cognitive processing were all enhanced with laughter. EEG measurements of the gamma wave band frequency (31-40 Hz) were increased by mirthful laughter, a wavelength that accompanies brain health.¹³

Immunity — Laughter has an especially profound effect on several areas of immunity. These include increased salivary IgA,⁴ increased immunoglobulin A,⁵ increased lymphocyte formation,⁶ increased natural killer cell activity,⁷ and a general decrease in the immune-compromising chemistry of stress.⁹

Inflammation — The use of laughter was demonstrated to reduce the important marker of inflammation, C-reactive protein (CRP).¹⁰
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If we’ve learned anything this milestone year, it’s that 75 years is just the tip of the iceberg. We look forward to serving you and helping to further the profession for many years to come.
Blood pressure — Mirthful laughter decreases both systolic and diastolic blood pressure.11

Stress hormones — Hormone levels will predictably change with distress vs. eustress (positive stresses). The distress levels trend all health indicators in a negative direction. In contrast, mirthful laughter induces hormonal changes typically associated with greater health and longevity.

With laughter, the following is seen:
• Decreased serum cortisol6,12-14
• Decreased growth hormone12
• Decreased serum dopac12
• Increased beta-endorphins15

Pain levels
A pioneer experiment involving laughter was conducted by Norman Cousins, who contracted ankylosing spondylitis, as described in Anatomy of an Illness.

“Ten minutes of genuine belly laughter had an anesthetic effect and could give me at least two hours of pain-free sleep.”16

Laughter raises the discomfort thresholds17 and the ability to tolerate pain is improved after exposure to a humorous movie.18 In another study, analgesic use after surgery was reduced by 61% in patients using laughter as compared with no laughter.19

Other benefits include:

Relaxation — Mirthful laughter-induced muscle tone relaxation often lasting up to 45 minutes.20

Mood — Laughter decreases anxiety.21 This was found to be profound for gravely sick patients22 or patients with depression.23

Happy Workplace — Laughter introduced to the workplace improves creativity, productivity, motivation, morale and overall psychological well-being.

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- Farley Brown, DC

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The physiology of laughter
Our first laughs usually occur during infancy during weeks 5–9. Our facial muscles contract, raising the upper lip, drawing the mouth corners outward and upward, and creasing the skin to form “laugh lines.”

Eyes brighten and sometimes tear. We make sounds ranging from silence to “ha ha ha” to howls. We contract our arms, sway our heads, heave at the chest, and bend forward while holding the abdomen. Some of us weaken, fall down or can become incontinent.

Laughter has an especially profound effect on several areas of immunity.

Mirth is a full-body experience; brain, psyche, muscles, cardiovascular, immune and endocrine systems. Laughter is a low-cost, non-invasive therapy with few, if any, contraindications or negative side effects. Research has demonstrated potent favorable effects, both subjective and objective, for longevity, enhanced immune response and short-term analgesia.

Compliance is easily imagined and no significant patient training is required. Laughter is compatible with all other therapies and could be included in every treatment plan. Laughter is such a potent item that if the Food and Drug Administration ever finds out about this, they may make it by prescription only.

ALAN COOK, DC, has been in practice since 1989. He ran the Osteoporosis Diagnostic Center (1996-2019), participated in four clinical trials and lectured nationally. He is currently working with the Open Door Clinic system in a multi-disciplinary setting and is providing video-based continuing education with EasyWebCE.com, where he can be contacted.

References can be found online at chiroeco.com
CHIROPRACTIC PRACTICES THRIVE ON PATIENT ENGAGEMENT, and perhaps the best way to engage patients today, or at least the best way to get their attention, is to text them. Approximately 99% of texts are read, and that’s great news for your practice.

From experience, I’m certain that strategic texting campaigns lead to more successful chiropractic practices — I’ve seen it over and over again. But, when texting, it’s imperative to stay compliant with HIPAA, the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act. Put simply, this means you need to be communicating securely, with consent and with authorized access. It’s easy to text compliantly — all it takes is keeping a few key rules in mind.

Doctors are already texting
Chiropractors and other doctors are already texting patients to do things like:

• Bring in new patients by adding a text chat to their website, so prospective clients can get their questions answered ASAP and schedule a time.
• Send out promotions and special offers to drive more patients to come in.
• Confirm appointments and scheduling to remind patients of upcoming care.
• Advertise products, such as in-house supplements, creams, foam back rollers, etc.
• Get more online reviews by texting patients a direct link to their review page.
• Motivate and remind patients of their care so that they stay on top of their exercises and stretches.

Avoid texting patients from a personal device, such as your own smartphone or tablet, as they lack the security and encryption required by HIPAA laws. PHI, or Protected Health Information, can be intercepted and your chiropractic practice can’t risk that.

You need compliant software for encrypted messaging, which will enable you to keep your communications centralized with administrative oversight. And it’s easier and
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more secure for your communications to stay within one platform where all patient conversations can be monitored by authorized employees within a secure system.

The sender and receiver need to be clearly identified as well, so that you know who’s been communicating with your patients. A compliant software should be able to handle this for you.

Avoid texting patients from a personal device, such as your own smartphone or tablet, as they lack the security and encryption required by HIPAA laws.

Give authorized employees access to patient conversations

From patient exams to performing adjustments and more — not to mention running a business — you aren’t always going to have time to communicate with all of your patients. That’s why you need to make sure that you’re giving authorized access to your employees so that they can handle your patient communications for you.

There isn’t any need for other departments or locations (if applicable) to have access to sensitive information, especially if it doesn’t pertain to them. PHI is at risk when the wrong people have access to it. For instance, there shouldn’t be any reason for your accountant to be accessing messages between the front desk and a patient. Limit the exposure of PHI to only the people who are authorized to view it. This way, you can protect your practice all around.

Obtain consent from patients to text

Patients need to opt-in to receive text messages from your practice. This holds true for all communications, but anything related to HIPAA receives extra scrutiny. Texting a patient who isn’t opted-in can be a violation of HIPAA standards.

How can you get patients to opt in to messages? When filling out new patient paperwork, you can ask patients on your form if they want to receive texts from your practice about their care. That way, you can have documented proof of their consent. This is also why we recommend that your practice encourage inbound communication. If they text you first, that means they’ve already opted in to receiving text messages from you.

Another option, as needed, is that you can text a patient for the first time, tell them what you’ll be texting them about, and also tell them how to opt out (e.g. reply STOP to opt out).

Share PHI with patient permission only

Sharing PHI ties back to getting consent from your patients. They want to be able to text you about their care, and you need to check with them before you choose whether or not to share their PHI and talk about it.

Texting about non-PHI issues has different (and less) scrutiny than texting about PHI. So, if you’re going to text about patient info and care, it’s best to get express permission. How do you ensure this happens? You need to check in with patients before you text about their care. You need to do this with every patient, but not each time you talk with them within the same conversation. You can opt for them to fill out a form, or to verbally confirm that they want their PHI to be shared.

Example: “Hey, [Patient]! We have your results. Would you rather us text them to you, or you come to the office?”

Keep contact information up to date

You’ve got to keep your contact records clean and patient data up to date. That applies just as much to texting. Texting the wrong person can result in serious HIPAA violations, and expose your patient’s PHI to the wrong people.

Confirm patient contact information every time they come into your office. And when you text them, make sure to ask them to confirm their identity by simply asking for their date of birth. This is a strong way to ensure you are contacting the right person every time. Confirming info is also a great excuse...
to re-engage past patients if you haven't seen them in six months or a year and want to touch base.

**Keep patient records indefinitely**
The problem with using a personal device or an unsecured platform to communicate with patients is that it allows for conversations to be deleted, altered or misrepresented. And if an employee leaves, they take all of that information with them on their personal cellphone.

It’s important to retain all patient conversations. A personal device can be traded, lost, broken, or the number might have changed. To protect yourself, always keep a record of your conversations with patients.

Conversations between your practice and your patients should only be related to their care and they should be kept indefinitely. As mentioned earlier, you need to choose texting software that doesn’t allow for patient messages to be deleted. This feature is required by HIPAA standards and is an absolute must for your practice.

Build a subscriber list of patients
Patients typically come once or for the duration of their treatment, so you need to find a way for them to keep coming back. There are many opportunities to engage with your patients, even without PHI.

You can start by building a list of patients who want to receive advice on how to live a healthier life. A good way to engage and educate your patients is to text them infographics or tips to maintaining a healthy back. Or you can even encourage your patients to follow you on social media if you are active on there.

After a patient completes their appointment, you can text and offer them to opt in to your subscriber list with a keyword. For example:

“Hey [Patient]! Thanks for coming in. If you’d like to receive notifications about how you can build healthier habits, text HEALTH back to this number.”

When your patients can engage with you outside of their regular appointments, it will show them that your practice cares and wants to look out for their well-being even when they don’t have an appointment. Patients are your most valuable asset and engaging them is a key factor in getting them to return.

**Text your way to better patient communication**
Texting for your chiropractic practice is a great way to navigate your internal and external communications. Things can get busy around the office between performing adjustments and diagnosing pain, and you need a quick way to relay information between your staff and your patients.

With a HIPAA-compliant text messaging platform, you’ll be able to give the quick care your patients need while also taking a load off of your own back. Texting compliantly is really quite simple — all you need to do is follow a few good practices.

**JESSICA AYRE** is a content marketing specialist at Text Request, a HIPAA-compliant business texting solution. If your practice wants to start texting customers, Text Request can give you all the tools and resources you need to create a safe and successful text messaging strategy. Learn more at TextRequest.com.
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