



Back pain costs the Canadian economy
about \$16.4 billion a year.

Chiropractic can help.

Ontario Chiropractic Association. **Treatment That Stands Up.**



What is chiropractic?

One of the largest primary-contact health care professions in Ontario, chiropractic is a non-invasive, hands-on health care discipline that focuses on the neuromusculoskeletal system.

Chiropractors practice a manual approach, providing diagnosis, treatment and preventative care for disorders related to the spine, pelvis, nervous system and joints.

For many conditions, such as lower back pain, chiropractic care is frequently the primary method of treatment and, where other conditions exist, chiropractic care may complement or support medical treatment by relieving the neuromusculoskeletal aspects associated with the condition.



There are many reasons to seek chiropractic care:

- Back pain
- Neck pain
- Headache
- Whiplash
- Strains and sprains
- Repetitive strain injury (RSI)
- Work and sports injuries
- Arthritis
- Limited range of motion in the back, shoulder, neck or limbs



More than 1.2 million patients in Ontario rely on chiropractic care every year to help them live healthy, active lives.

Who are chiropractors?

A Doctor of Chiropractic has spent four years at an accredited chiropractic institution, receiving more than 4,200 hours of specialized clinical training. The chiropractic curriculum at the Canadian Memorial Chiropractic College, in Toronto, includes studies in anatomy, pathology, biomechanics, chiropractic principles, diagnosis and adjustment techniques.

As primary care practitioners, chiropractors can develop and carry out a comprehensive treatment/management plan, recommend therapeutic exercise and other non-invasive therapies, and provide nutritional, dietary and lifestyle counselling.

Chiropractors are one of only five classes of health care professionals in Ontario that are able to use the title Doctor, with its accompanying rights and obligations.

Chiropractic: part of Ontario's health care team

Getting Ontarians back in action

As Ontario's workforce ages, the province's employers are struggling to manage rising extended health care and drug costs, and reduce workplace absenteeism due to illness and injury.

According to the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB), neuromusculoskeletal conditions — including repetitive strain injuries (RSI), shoulder and back pain — accounted for more than **27 million lost-time days from 1996 to 2004 in Ontario and \$3.3 billion in direct costs.**

Chiropractic can relieve the strain

According to Health Canada, back pain is the second most common reason for seeing a medical doctor.

With the expertise to effectively treat neuromusculoskeletal conditions, chiropractors can help ease the strain on family physicians, and the rest of the health care system across Ontario.

- According to studies, chiropractic treatment has consistently been shown to reduce workplace absenteeism and hospitalizations.
- Recent reports (by the Ontario WSIB, the Manitoba Workers' Compensation Board, and a study published in the Archives of Internal Medicine), show chiropractic treatment is more effective – and cost effective – for occupational and non-occupational back injuries and related conditions than other common forms of treatment.

Teams in practice

Multidisciplinary clinics that include chiropractic are becoming commonplace in Ontario. As well, Ontario demonstration projects are proving the practicality and wisdom of including chiropractic in multidisciplinary primary care teams. These include:



Chiropractors are frequently consulted for treatment and care by high-level athletes and professional sports teams, including the Toronto Maple Leafs and the Toronto Blue Jays.

- An initiative of the Canadian Memorial Chiropractic College, led by Toronto chiropractor Dr. Deborah Kopansky-Giles, has brought chiropractic treatment to the patients of St. Michael's Hospital's Inner City Health Program.
- In the Hamilton area, chiropractor Dr. Silvano Mior has been leading an inter-disciplinary collaboration study for two years. The study has found that the number of patients taking medication for neuromusculoskeletal conditions decreased by 23 per cent when treated by a chiropractor.

Evidence demonstrates the value of chiropractic

“Comparative Analysis of Individuals With and Without Chiropractic Coverage: Patient Characteristics, Utilization and Costs” (Archives of Internal Medicine, Oct. 2004; 164: 1985–1992).

Conclusions:

- Members with chiropractic insurance coverage had lower annual total health care expenditures.
- Back pain patients with chiropractic coverage had lower rates of low back surgery, hospitalizations, and lower utilization of magnetic resonance imaging.
- Patients with chiropractic coverage had lower average back pain episode-related costs.
- Systematic access to managed chiropractic care not only may prove to be clinically beneficial but also may reduce overall health care costs.

Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB) Program of Care for Acute Lower Back Injuries: One-Year Evaluation Report, June 2004, OCA public website, www.chiropractic.on.ca/downloads/ALBIReport.pdf.

Conclusions:

- Workers treated by chiropractors received timely care.
- Chiropractic patients were half as likely to become chronic.
- Chiropractic patients were able to access care earlier and returned to work sooner.

Impact of Delisting Chiropractic Services, Deloitte & Touche, 2004, OCA public website, www.chiropractic.on.ca/deloitte.pdf.

A high-level analysis of the impact of the delisting of chiropractic in advance of the decision in 2004 by the Government of Ontario to remove chiropractic from the list of services covered by the Ontario Health Insurance Plan (OHIP).

Conclusions:

The impact of delisting chiropractic services on the health care system in Ontario would:



- Reduce access and increase wait times, resulting from off-loading of patients from chiropractors to already scarce and over-burdened physicians;
- Increase costs resulting from the substitution of higher-priced physician services and higher use/incidence of hospital services.

United Kingdom back pain exercise and manipulation (UK BEAM) randomised trial: Cost Effectiveness of Physical Treatments for Back Pain in Primary Care, British Medical Journal, 2004, Canadian Chiropractic Association public website, [www.ccachiro.org/client/cca/cca.nsf/object/UK_BEAM04/\\$file/UK_BEAM04.pdf](http://www.ccachiro.org/client/cca/cca.nsf/object/UK_BEAM04/$file/UK_BEAM04.pdf).

Conclusions:

- Spinal manipulation is a cost effective addition to “best care” for back pain in general practice.
- Manipulation alone probably gives better value for money than manipulation followed by exercise.

For further information on chiropractic care, go to the OCA website at www.chiropractic.on.ca.