



CALIFORNIA CHIROPRACTIC ASSOCIATION

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**Survey of 1,608 California Chiropractic Patients
Debunks Myths About Care in Workers' Compensation System**

**Findings Include Data That Shows:
Chiropractic Care Saves Injured Workers From Costly and Invasive Surgery;
The Majority of Patients Were Treated By an MD Before Seeking Care From a
Chiropractor;
MDs and DCs Recommend Disability for Patients at Nearly the Same Rate.**

SACRAMENTO – In an effort to provide more information about patients with actual experience in California's workers compensation system, the California Chiropractic Association surveyed injured workers treated by its members across California. The results of this snapshot survey, released today, go directly to the heart of arguments being used in the workers' comp reform debate now taking place in the state Legislature.

The survey was conducted during the week of January 26-30, 2004. The surveys were distributed to CCA's 3,000 members throughout California who gave copies to their workers' compensation patients to complete and return. A total of 1,608 surveys were tabulated. While it is not a scientifically designed sample of all patients served by the system, we believe it provides insight to the actual experiences of patients in California's workers' compensation system.

Doctors of Chiropractic Comments and Contact Numbers

“Our survey highlights what we have suspected for years: that chiropractors are the doctors of last resort, and that two-thirds of our patients come to us after having seen medical doctors.”

Dr. William Updyke, Santa Clara/San Jose, 408-983-4192

“The survey shows one-third of our patients come to us with a recommendation for surgery from an MD. We have treated these injured workers and helped them get back to work without surgery – saving the system tens of thousands of dollars per surgical procedure.”

Dr. Wayne Whalen, San Diego, 619-258-0162

“I have been a practicing doctor of chiropractic for more than ten years. I am also a small business owner. I have watched my workers’ comp insurance rates increase more than 600 percent over the last 4 ½ years – without filing a single claim. I understand as well as anyone that we need to fix the system, but not at the cost of injured workers.”

Dr. Kassie Donoghue, Sacramento, 916-486-2663

“As a result of last year’s legislation, chiropractic care will be limited by as much as 70 percent this year. If we are prevented from addressing issues of disability, injured workers will suffer significantly as they will be forced to use a medical doctor as a gatekeeper and will not be able to access our care at all.”

Dr. Deborah Sampley, San Luis Obispo, 805-541-8131

Survey Results

What are the real world results among patients receiving chiropractic care under California’s workers’ compensation system?

- 90% of injured workers surveyed report that chiropractic care was the most effective treatment for their injuries. The same number report that chiropractic care improved their injury.
- More than one-third of chiropractic patients (35%) report that they were able to avoid surgery recommended by a medical doctor, therefore avoiding an invasive procedure and saving the system the tens of thousands of dollars associated with each surgery.
- Almost 60% (58%) of injured workers who receive chiropractic care report that they were able to successfully return to the same job after receiving chiropractic treatments.

How do people enter the system and ultimately receive care from doctors of chiropractic?

- Almost two-thirds of the injured workers surveyed (64%) report that they received care from a medical doctor or surgeon prior to receiving chiropractic care, and 38% report that they used physical therapy treatments prior to seeking care from a doctor of chiropractic medicine.
- Among the injured workers receiving chiropractic treatments within California’s workers’ compensation system, of those who responded:
 - 35% report that it required fewer than five visits before they were able to return to work;
 - 55% said that they were able to successfully return to work with 15 or fewer visits;

Who recommends that patients receive temporary disability under California's workers compensation system?

- MDs and DCs recommend temporary disability for their patients at roughly the same rate. Of our workers' compensation patients surveyed, 33% said a medical doctor recommended temporary disability and 35% said a doctor of chiropractic recommended temporary disability.

What are some of the challenges in working within the system to successfully return to work?

- More than a third of the injured workers (39%) report that their employer or employer's insurance company attempted to delay or limit medical or chiropractic care treatments.
 - More than 20% (22%) of injured workers surveyed report that even in cases where medical doctors and doctors of chiropractic recommended that they return to work with restrictions, their employer refused to allow them to return to the workplace.
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