



Corporate Innovators Integrate Chiropractic Care into Healthcare Clinics

Chiropractic Yields Improved Outcomes, Costs, Absenteeism
and Increases Employee Retention





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Did you know that corporate healthcare clinics are on the rise in the United States? Sixty-five percent of large corporations are expected to feature company healthcare clinics by 2020.

Even more surprising to many is that small employers are starting to offer on-site wellness and healthcare services as well. At most clinics, employees are asking specifically for chiropractic care. In fact, patients, healthcare administrators and medical physicians all see value when chiropractic care is integrated into multidisciplinary settings, according to new research.¹ Fully integrating chiropractic care improves outcomes, reduces costs, absenteeism and increases employee retention for companies.

For this white paper, the Foundation for Chiropractic Progress interviewed several doctors of chiropractic (DCs) about their experiences working in corporate healthcare clinics.



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A different approach to healthcare

Corporations have increasingly become concerned with the high costs of healthcare for their employees in the United States. The announcement in early 2018 from Amazon, Berkshire Hathaway and JPMorgan Chase that they would form an independent healthcare company for their U.S. employees is a perfect example of how corporations are becoming more involved in tackling high healthcare costs.²

Many companies have been offering corporate health or wellness clinics as part of the solution. In fact, more than 30 percent of companies already have an on-site clinic.³ That number rises above 50 percent for companies with more than 5,000 employees, according to the National Association of Worksite Health Centers (NAWHC), and the group is projecting that 65 percent of large employers will operate them by 2020.

A workplace clinic is a setting where an employer offers one or more medical and wellness services, delivered by licensed providers, to all or a designated portion of its active population and other eligible individuals. Today's clinics are often referred to as "health and wellness centers," due to the wide range of first aid, occupational health, acute, primary, specialty, condition management, wellness and ancillary services offered at the location.⁴

Many businesses are now reaping the benefits of offering wellness programs, including chiropractic care, as part of their on-site corporate clinic. According to a recent study conducted by NAWHC, the majority of employers

surveyed said their employees have expressed interest in chiropractic services at their clinics.⁵ As the leaders in neuro-musculoskeletal injury prevention and treatment, chiropractic care can be easily implemented in integrative health centers, practices and on-site at companies.



On-site, Near-Site and Shared-Site Clinics

Employers of all sizes and industry types, whether self-insured, fully insured or partially insured, are looking for ways to control spend. The executive suite is interested in proven strategies that provide a strong return on investment financially, as well as from a clinical, wellness and employee satisfaction standpoint.

In December 2014, NAWHC surveyed 255 employers from 15 different industries across the United States. The benchmark report disrupted the notion that on-site clinics are just for large employers.

The report also showed that more than 30 percent of surveyed employers were considering some form of on-site clinic as part of their cost-containment strategy.⁶

On-site clinics, a dedicated health center located on the corporate campus offering a variety of settings and staffing, are quickly gaining in popularity, especially among middle-market to large employers of all industries. However, smaller employers can have a nurse or other provider offer screenings, preventive care, coaching or chiropractic care alone, at minimal cost and still reap the benefits.

Employer-sponsored on-site clinics are all unique, reflecting the demographics, culture, geography and healthcare needs of the employer and its workers, as well as the medical resources available in the local community.

For example, there is a large Silicon Valley networking company who is recognized for having the first fully integrated on-site holistic medical home. The services provided to employees range from medical care to physical therapy, acupuncture, chiropractic, dental, optometry, mental health counseling and health coaches. The clinic offers a vision center, pharmacy, lab, x-ray, as well as a 45,000-square-foot gym. In this example, chiropractic is a part of the integrated front-line healthcare team, not just considered complementary alternative medicine, based on acceptance among medical doctors.



According to Bill Updyke, DC, a full-time contract provider at this clinic, *“When the company was planning its medical center, leaders conducted focus groups with employees asking what types of practitioners they wanted in the clinic. Chiropractic rated very high and is now utilized up and down the range of employees from engineers all the way to the C-suite.”*

Since the company started offering chiropractic care to its employees, Dr. Updyke says that his services have been in high demand. He has been asked to travel to corporate events, such as trade shows and sales meetings, where large numbers of employees will be present to provide chiropractic care along with other clinic providers.

The company promotes health and wellness to its employees through webinars and digital marketing on campus. “Employers are always interested in their employees’ health,”

added Dr. Updyke. “If employers create the greatest opportunity to provide healthcare for employees, their employees are going to be healthy and they are going to love it. It’s really exciting to be a part of.” One of the little-known benefits of on-site clinics is that employees feel that their company has vetted the clinic’s practitioners. Many times, when someone is looking for a doctor of chiropractic (DC), they ask their friends for a reference. With on-site wellness clinics, they can ask their coworkers about their experience and they see management also utilize chiropractic care from on-site clinics.





“The confidence level in the providers at on-site clinics is higher than any other provider in the community.”

—Robert Murray, DC, CCSP
Physical Medical Specialty Lead
at One Medical

Dr. Murray continues, “On-site clinics take the variable out of the mix by vetting DCs. That instills greater confidence from the company, from the employees and even from other medical personnel working at the clinics.”

Wellness clinics are increasingly part of an employer’s health benefit package. While most healthcare clinics are located on-site or in close proximity to the workplace, a growing number are near-site or shared clinic locations, serving populations from multiple locations of the same employer or

multiple employers. The objective is to provide easy access and immediate attention, at little or no cost, for a host of services and products that an employee would normally have to leave the worksite to obtain.

One example is **Crossover Health**, a next generation healthcare organization that uses a membership-based approach to fundamentally change the way healthcare is practiced, delivered and experienced. It is licensed in multiple states, with a client list of leading innovative companies that support a healthy, motivated workforce. Crossover offers on-site and shared-site clinics in Silicon Valley, as well as in other locations throughout the United States. It focuses on targeting the needs of the local employee population to solve their prominent healthcare problems, improve health and reduce costs for employers.



According to **Daniel Lord, DC, CCSP** and physical medicine senior program manager at Crossover Health, the most significant advantage of near-site or shared-site clinics is that the company is not completely responsible for all the costs or overhead. In the case of Crossover Health, they build and provide the equipment for the clinics. The company purchases “memberships” per employee per month. So, the company is still able to offer their employees an attractive healthcare benefit without the overhead cost or providing the space on their campus to build the clinic.

“We generally see companies with 2,500 to 3,000 employees as the minimum size to join a near-site clinic,” said Dr. Lord. “However, there is some flexibility based on what the company actually wants. We’ve provided on-site clinics to companies with 1,000 to 1,500 employees that consist of on-site physical therapy, chiropractic, mental health and acupuncture.”

How Clinics Differ

Each clinic’s services, cost-sharing, use privileges and staffing, can be customized to meet the needs of a specific organization and employer benefit strategies. These must be reflective of the objectives of the sponsoring employer (i.e., lowering medical costs, offering convenient care access, improving health and productivity of the population, reducing unnecessary services) and the healthcare needs of the population. There are several models employers

can choose to design, build and manage a worksite clinic: employer-managed, vendor-managed, provider-managed or a combination of these. In some states, how a worksite clinic is managed is dictated by state law.

A physician may be present in the clinic during all hours or part-time, alongside supporting nurses and staff.

Some on-site clinics provide various pharmacy, specialty or ancillary clinical services such as chiropractic, massage, occupational therapy, physical therapy, dentistry, optometry and others, depending on employee demand or employer on-site clinic strategy.

Cerner, a Kansas City-based global healthcare technology company, has several on-site clinics at its campuses.

Its first clinic opened in Kansas City in 2006 and Curt Krause, DC, joined the company in 2009. According to Dr. Krause, associate patients, called members, enjoy the convenience of the on-site clinics. "The appointment-based model is designed to create efficiency, limiting or eliminating wait time and replacing it with quality time with the care team," said Dr. Krause.



"With the average appointment time, members can be back to their desks within approximately 30 minutes." In addition, members (including associates' dependents) enjoy visits on-site, which are covered through Cerner's health benefits at 100 percent. The clinics are fully integrated offering primary and same-day care, chiropractic, health coaching, dietetics and pharmacy services. There are also on-site fitness centers where certified athletic trainers coordinate with Dr. Krause and his colleagues to provide musculoskeletal assessment and treatment for members.

In addition, a growing number of clinics are utilizing telemedicine vendors to supplement the services after hours or to employees in remote locations.

Many clinics are including chiropractic as part of the integrated front-line healthcare team, not just considered complementary alternative medicine.

The medical providers in these integrated clinics have learned how chiropractic care can benefit patients with neuro-musculoskeletal conditions and complaints and actively refer and involve the doctors of chiropractic in treating the patients. "It comes back to the vetting issue," said Dr. Murray.



Dr. Murray continues, "At our clinics, we've vetted such a strong team that the primary care physicians readily embrace us. In fact, I can't tell you how many times the door flies open from the medical provider, 'I need you to come and have a look at this person's neck, back, wrist, whatever'."

Dr. Lord adds, "At Crossover Health, physical medicine plays a key role and chiropractic is a core pillar of the integrative practice."

Benefits to Employers

Employers are learning that there are several benefits of providing chiropractic care at their health or wellness clinics including cost savings, reduced absenteeism, healthier employees and increased employee retention.

1

Cost Savings

2

Reduced Absenteeism

3

Healthier Employees

4

Retention

Cost Savings 

Making first aid and acute care services available at the worksite reduces the use of hospital emergency rooms – the highest cost setting for obtaining medical services – for non-emergency conditions. Back pain is expensive and the economic burden of lower back pain (LBP) is immense and appears to be growing. The February 2010 issue of the *Archives of Internal Medicine* reports that LBP treatment costs in the United States are more than \$50 billion a year – more than half the amount

spent per year on cancer treatment.⁷ Employees who experience LBP often suffer loss of productivity and income, along with the expenses associated with medical, rehabilitation and surgical intervention. In the workplace, LBP is second only to upper respiratory conditions as a stated cause for loss of work. Employees receiving chiropractic care typically have a lower utilization of radiology services, outpatient and emergency care and physical therapy, therefore, reducing healthcare costs for employees and employers.

Reduced Absenteeism



Likewise, LBP, severe headache or migraine, neck pain and facial pain all contribute to lost productivity among workers. According to the American Productivity Audit,⁸ 52.7 percent of the workforce surveyed reported having headache, LBP, arthritis or other musculoskeletal pain in the past two

weeks, and workers lost on average 4.6 hours per week of productive time due to a pain condition. Chiropractic care provided to employees at company clinics keep employees on the job, decrease sick days and reduce the typical three to four hours of time taken for off-site doctor appointments.

Employees who participate in wellness programs appear to thrive at work, and employers that have a healthier workforce due to wellness programs are able to offer lower insurance premiums.

Healthier Employees



DCs are well-trained and positioned as the first option for drug-free, non-invasive, evidence-based and effective back and general neuro-musculoskeletal pain management. While spinal manipulation is a sizable portion of chiropractic care, DCs also provide a substantial amount of other care and counsel to patients. Modalities such

as heat, cold, electrical stimulation, lasers, soft tissue techniques and full rehabilitation of injuries or pain syndromes are commonplace. Therapeutic exercises and fitness recommendations are usually made to patients and many receive advice about nutrition, vitamins, weight loss, smoking cessation and relaxation techniques.



Employers are learning that corporate health and wellness clinics help with the retention of employees. Investing in the well-being of employees with workplace health and wellness benefits can help attract and retain employees – clinics are often viewed as the most popular benefit by workers.

According to Dr. Murray, “In a very competitive environment, an on-site wellness center is no longer looked at as a perk. They are looked at as a must-have. It costs employers a lot of money to attract and retain employees, so any benefit that strengthens retention is essential.”

Benefits to Employees

Employees with access to chiropractic care at corporate health and wellness clinics enjoy a number of benefits as well, including: patient satisfaction, improved health, injury prevention and reduced opioid use.

1

**Patient
Satisfaction**

2

**Improved
Health**

3

**Reduced
Opioid Use**

Patient Satisfaction



An advantage of offering chiropractic care in a corporate health clinic is greater patient satisfaction, particularly when their therapeutic goals of pain relief and function restoration have been met or exceeded. The NAWHC has found that patient satisfaction with chiropractic care offered at worksite clinics is high. Satisfaction is

an important consideration because a primary goal is to meet employee expectations for care that will enable a more rapid return to work.

According to Dr. Lord, Crossover Health tracks Net Promoter Scores (NPS) at its clinics. "Patient satisfaction is over 95 percent for both the clinic and the doctors of chiropractic," stated Dr. Lord.

Improved Health



Chiropractic care is an evidence-based, effective treatment for back pain, neck pain and headaches. DCs know the nervous system is the one system in the body that directly affects every other system. This is because nerves conduct sensory information from every part of the body and then deliver this information to the brain. The brain then analyzes the information to determine what the body needs to

maintain a healthy state. Misalignment in the spine can interfere with proper nervous system function leading to inherent changes to movement patterns, which can create irritation and inflammation of the surrounding soft tissue and supporting structural components. Doctors of chiropractic are healthcare professionals specifically trained to locate and correct spinal misalignments.



The opioid crisis raging in the United States shows no signs of abating. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), from 1999 to 2016, more than 350,000 people died from an opioid overdose.⁹ In 2016, the number of overdose deaths involving opioids (including both prescription and illegal opioids) was five times higher than in 1999.¹⁰

The impact of the opioid crisis is being felt even among employers. From the cost burden of abuse and addiction treatments to absenteeism and lost productivity, the opioid epidemic is taking its toll in the workplace. A survey by the National Business Group on Health found that 60

percent of employers say they have been affected by at least one case of opioid misuse or abuse.¹¹ Many employers are addressing the issue by stepping up their education efforts, as well as offering more drug-free pain management options, such as chiropractic and acupuncture.

Another recent study published in *The Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine* concludes that for adults receiving treatment for LBP, the likelihood of filling a prescription for an opioid was 55 percent lower for those receiving chiropractic care than for adults not receiving chiropractic care.¹²

Making the Case for Chiropractic

Doctors of chiropractic provide conservative care focused on the diagnosis, treatment and co-management or referral for neuro-musculoskeletal

conditions, including LBP, neck pain, extremity pain, among others. The primary therapeutic procedure by DCs is spinal manipulation or spinal adjustment.

Doctors of chiropractic receive a minimum of seven years of higher education and are specifically trained to diagnose, evaluate and provide non-pharmaceutical care and rehabilitation to individuals suffering from acute, subacute and chronic back, low back and neck pain, headaches, neuro-musculoskeletal conditions and general health and wellness.

DCs promote wellness and injury prevention, while chiropractic care has been demonstrated to deliver effective treatment for the symptoms of neuro-musculoskeletal conditions. Chiropractic care at corporate health and wellness clinics has been shown to deliver substantial value through convenient care access, high-quality of care and delivery and lower overall costs.¹³



In a recent comparative effectiveness clinical trial, patients who received standard medical care plus chiropractic care reported a statistically significant moderate improvement in LBP intensity and disability compared with those who received usual care alone. This trial provides additional support for the inclusion of chiropractic care as a component of a collaborative healthcare environment for LBP, as currently recommended in existing guidelines.¹⁴

The Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine shows that patients treated off-site were significantly more likely to have physical therapy and outpatient visits. In addition, the average total number of physician office visits, radiology procedures and musculoskeletal medication used per patient for each event were significantly higher for the off-site group. Headache, neck pain and LBP-functional status improved significantly.

These results suggest that chiropractic services offered at on-site clinics may promote lower utilization of costly healthcare services, while improving musculoskeletal function.¹⁵

Another important consideration for adding chiropractic care to a corporate healthcare center is the overall feedback regarding the services from employers and providers has been extremely positive. For example, a Silicon Valley-based technology giant opened their first clinic in 2009 and the chiropractic services delivered across the enterprise expanded rapidly.

“The company started with a beta test to determine the actual need for chiropractic services on-site, since they weren’t sure the population would embrace it, use it or need it,” said Dr. Robert Murray, who was the first DC to join this clinic. “I started part-time and quickly we had the need for two part-time DCs within a year. Since then, the clinic has grown to 11 DCs, soon to be 12, in nine of the 11 on-site wellness centers in the Bay Area and now New York City.”

According to Dr. Murray, they see a large cross population of employees from senior vice presidents all the way to interns at this “forever young company.”



“Interestingly, right now we are experiencing a pregnancy boom at this company and are seeing a lot of women come in for chiropractic care to treat pain and discomfort in the upper back and lower back,” added Dr. Murray.

Dr. Lord’s clients’ employees also have a growing demand for his services. “When you put evidence-based, value-based DCs in a clinic who follow guidelines and are patient-centered, the patients love it and the employers love it.”

Another example of this growth is **Motiva Health**, founded in 2015 by Kale Ptacek and Matt McCormack, both DCs, to implement on-site chiropractic and wellness clinics for small- to medium-sized corporations. With a vision of changing where companies and employees begin with their musculoskeletal care, they have provided services at numerous enterprises throughout the San Francisco Bay Area.

“There are a lot of medical-centric and medical-led corporate healthcare and wellness clinics,” said Dr. Ptacek.



“We wanted to bring a chiro-specific focus to our on-site healthcare company. With musculoskeletal care and behavioral health at the forefront, we take a whole health, holistic and conservative care approach to on-site care – including chiropractic, acupuncture, massage, telehealth, nursing and health coaching.”

Client Outcomes:

- Overall 5-to-1 return on investment from cost avoidance
- More than \$500,000 in cost avoidance from prevented surgeries alone
- Estimated \$123,567 in savings when on-site pricing is compared to off-site billable services
- Estimated three-times higher rate of utilization of chiropractic services on-site vs. off-site
- 99 percent patient satisfaction with patients feeling confident that the provider can assist with other health issues that arise.





Conclusion

Corporate health clinics, whether on-site, near-site or shared-site are evolving to meet the specific needs of employers of all sizes and industries. In fact, experts predict they will continue to gain popularity and grow by 15 to 20 percent each year. Small to medium-sized businesses are starting to utilize retail clinics such as CVS or Walgreens or have on-site nurse practitioners or other providers. Many companies are utilizing technologies such as telemedicine so employees don't have to spend several hours going off-site for a doctor's visit.

The ideal well-rounded and fully integrated healthcare team consists of a medical doctor, an optometrist, a dentist, a nutrition and fitness coach and a doctor of chiropractic. As such, a growing number of employers are adding chiropractic care to the wellness portfolio. By adding chiropractic care, employers will strengthen the opportunity for cost savings, improved outcomes, greater worker productivity and stronger employee retention.

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