

## **Back Pain: Chiropractic vs. Medical Doctors Who Gets Better Results and Who is More Cost Effective?**

**Chiropractic Proves 300% more effective  
Chiropractic Proves 50% More Cost Effective**

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**In 2010 a study of back pain patients insured by Blue Cross Blue Shield of Tennessee revealed patients receive nearly 3x better results at almost half the cost when consulting a chiropractor instead of a traditional medical doctor.**

**Statistics show that back pain, and more specifically lower back pain will affect 70-80% of all Americans. Back pain is one of the top 10 most costly conditions treated in the United States. Costs directly associated with examination and treatment are in excess \$50 billion dollars per year. Indirect cost of back pain include lost work day, reduced employee productivity and disability are \$47 billion dollars. That makes the total economic impact of lower back pain in excess of \$97 billion dollars per year.**

**The study was conducted on 85,402 patients, all insured with Blue Cross Blue Shield of Tennessee. This insurer was chosen because it provided equal access to both traditional medical and chiropractic care. The population of patients were diagnosed with the following conditions: Spinal disc disorders, Lower back pain, muscle spasms, joint mobility restrictions, Sacroiliac joint sprain/strain and lumbar spine sprain/strain. The results of the study revealed those patients who initiated care with a chiropractor had a 61% “very satisfied response” when surveyed. Those patient who initiated care with a medical doctor had a 27% “very satisfied response.” The patients who initiated care with a chiropractor incurred 40% less cost than those choosing traditional medical care.**

**There is a growing body of evidence indicating that chiropractic care is more effective and less costly than medical care for back pain. In contrast**

to this and many other studies indicating the efficacy of chiropractic care for back pain, only 7% of U.S. back pain sufferers consult a chiropractor. Using the data from this study insurers nationally would realize billions of dollar of savings if the population of back pain patients initiated care with a chiropractor first.

Insurance companies that restrict access to chiropractic care at this juncture with statistical evidence, are paying more for care and delaying necessary, effective care for no apparent reason other than politics or prejudice. If all restrictions for chiropractic access were removed carriers would save money and offer a significant public health benefit. The statistics speak for themselves.

**Reference:**

Liliedahl R., Finch M., Axene D., Geertz C., (2010) Cost of Care for Common Back Pain Conditions Initiated with Chiropractic Doctor vs. Medical Doctor/ Doctor of Osteopathy as First Physician: Experience of One Tennessee-Based General Health Insure, Journal of Manipulative and Physiological Therapeutics 33 (9) pgs. 640-643