



British Columbia Chiropractic Association approves new WCB agreement

For Immediate Release

(RICHMOND, B.C., 4 November, 2004) - British Columbia's Doctors of Chiropractic have approved a new four-year agreement with the province's Workers Compensation Board.

Back injuries and problems related to the spine constitute the second most frequent cause of WCB claims (about 25 per cent of all claims costs), impacting employees, employers and the economy in the hundreds of millions of dollars each year. Claims and disputes involving back issues are by far the most constant and costly faced by the WCB. The British Columbia Chiropractic Association will continue to work with the WCB in safety education and public information, and member doctors will counsel patients on best health practices and prevention of injuries in the workplace. This will assist in efforts to lower employer WCB payroll premiums.

“What this means for employers, workers, their unions and industrial paramedics is that they can directly access the most appropriate health professional for the diagnosis of workplace associated back and neck concerns, and, subsequently, the most effective course of treatment for most situations,” said Dr. Jim Cooper of Penticton, president of the British Columbia Chiropractic Association. More than 800 chiropractic doctors in B.C. treat more than 500,000 individual patients each year. WCB-insured injuries are a significant part of health care utilization.

Published studies, often based on data from workers compensation boards, repeatedly confirm that chiropractic care for spine and related conditions results in superior outcomes, more rapid pain relief and recovery, and a quicker return to productive lives. The latest of these was published in the October 11, 2004, edition of the prestigious *Archives of Internal Medicine*, a publication of the American Medical Association. The study focused on the 4-year history of 1.7 million members of a California managed health plan, only 700,000 of whom had added chiropractic benefits. The study concluded that if all members of the plan had chiropractic coverage, total health care costs would drop by 12 percent and the plan would save \$47.5 million per year. This would be the result of less utilization of hospital beds, drugs, surgery, x-rays and, most important, speedier recovery. Employers should carefully review that their employee health and safety programs reflect published studies.

“All workers and those involved in workplace safety should encourage early and direct contact for a chiropractic consultation,” Dr. Cooper said. “This is a huge issue for employers. Irrefutable evidence demonstrates that employers’ WCB payroll premiums could be reduced by 20 per cent. After any back or spine injury, or work-related concern, workers should go straight to their family chiropractor for a consultation and subsequent help with the WCB process.”

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