

## Background

The OCA has created a comprehensive strategy to promote the benefits of chiropractic care in general and, more specifically, to advocate for the inclusion and elevation of chiropractic coverage under extended health care (EHC) plans. The objectives of this strategy are to:

- enhance awareness of chiropractic and its end benefits
- increase understanding of chiropractic, its business case and its potential impact on the public health care system
- increase public education around chiropractic-related issues and associated OCA modules (Pack it Light, Plant and Rake, etc.)

In late 2006, the OCA launched its Patient Advocacy Program. The purpose of this program was to encourage chiropractors and chiropractic staff to talk to their patients about the benefits of chiropractic care and, in turn, to encourage patients to communicate their feelings about the importance of chiropractic coverage to their employers and/or unions.

*For further background, please refer to the EHC Patient Advocacy Campaign materials:*

- *Program backgrounder*
- *How-To Guide*
- *“When chiropractic is covered, everyone benefits” pamphlet and posters*

**Note: The Patient Advocacy program was launched in October 2006. Please contact the OCA if you have any questions about this initiative, or if you require additional materials.**

One-on-one dialogue with patients is just the first step in this process. In order to enhance grassroots awareness and understanding about the benefits of chiropractic, the OCA needs its members to help take these messages to larger audiences, including:

- Community and special interest groups
- Extended health care audiences: employee groups, employers, union representatives, health and safety representatives, health insurers, and benefits advisers

Many members have had occasion to speak to groups about public education activities such as the OCA's *Pack it Light* and *Plant and Rake* programs. As well, the OCA regularly addresses government, public, health care and EHC audiences. However, there is potential and a need for more discussion with public and workplace audiences about the benefits of chiropractic care.

Along with this **Backgrounder & How-To Guide** the OCA has designed a series of high-quality presentations to assist members “spread the word” by speaking to interested groups about the benefits of chiropractic care.

You'll find tips and suggestions throughout this guide, as well as OCA staff contacts to help support your outreach activities.

Step 1: finding an audience .....2  
 Step 2: qualifying the opportunity .....3  
 Step 3: preparation .....4  
 Who to contact.....5

**Step 1: finding an audience**

Our goal is to target organizations and groups that have an interest in health care issues. These groups fall into two broad categories:

1. Public health care / general interest

Target audiences	Examples / contact points
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hospitals and nursing homes</li> <li>Service organizations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Health care workers</li> <li>Clubs (i.e.Rotary, athletic or specialty clubs)</li> </ul>

2. Extended health care / private health plans

Target audiences	Examples / contact points
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Employers</li> <li>Union groups</li> <li>Insurance and benefits advisory groups</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Human resources departments</li> <li>Workplace health &amp; safety committees</li> <li>Workplace wellness program coordinators</li> <li>Workplace “lunch ’n learn” program organizers</li> <li>Union locals</li> <li>Local insurance and benefits associations</li> </ul>

Within these categories, there are two different types of audiences:

1. **Consumers (or end users) of chiropractic** – audiences consisting of employees, union members, health plan members, public interest groups (in other words, prospective patients).

In most cases, as a chiropractor practicing within the community and with local knowledge and relationships, you will be ideally placed to speak to any audience.

2. **Stakeholders (or decision makers) about chiropractic coverage** – audiences consisting of other health care professionals, employers, unions, health insurers, benefits advisers.

As a primary health care professional, you are well qualified to address audiences of all sorts about the benefits of chiropractic. However, if the group is looking for specific information that is beyond your scope, where appropriate the OCA can arrange for additional resources, including a designated speaker to assist you with the opportunity.

Speaking opportunities arise in a variety of ways. In some cases they develop formally, such as when a group plans an event or meeting and invites an outside speaker. In most cases, however, the best way to find an opportunity is to create one. Most groups are constantly on the lookout for speakers and new information.

**Tips:**

- **Talk to your patients.** Many will have workplace EHC coverage, and may be able to facilitate an introduction to their employer. Others may be directly involved in workplace and non-workplace organizations that would be interested in learning more about chiropractic.
- **Be receptive** to opportunities that may present themselves via patients, friends and community events. The more we get our message out to larger audiences and interest groups, the greater our chances to inform and educate these groups about the case for chiropractic.
- **Ask for assistance.** The OCA has expert resources, experienced speakers and professional tools that can help maximize every opportunity

**Step 2: qualifying the opportunity**

Once you've identified an interested audience, there are three steps involved in qualifying the speaking opportunity:

- A. Determine the audience and its needs
- B. Request a presentation from the OCA
- C. Review logistics
- D. Confirm the event and make arrangements

**A. Determine the audience and its needs**

Start by clearly articulating your interest and objectives in presenting to the proposed group.

Be sure to emphasize that your goal is to inform, not sell. Think of advocacy as public relations; it is about marketing and image, and increasing understanding.

**B. Request a presentation from the OCA**

Once you've established your audience's interests, contact the OCA to request a presentation.

OCA staff will advise on the presentation most appropriate for your audience. The OCA will customize the presentation and provide it to you in Microsoft Office PowerPoint "Show" format (.pps). This will be a self-executing, protected document format file, similar to Adobe PDF, that will run on any computer (neither the Microsoft PowerPoint software itself nor knowledge of the program is required).

The following OCA-developed presentations, suitable for a wide range of audiences and interests, are currently available:

Presentation	Description / Target Audience
"Chiropractic Care"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Basic information about chiropractic and the benefits of chiropractic care</li> <li>• Answers the questions <i>What do chiropractors do? How can chiropractic care benefit you?</i> and <i>How can chiropractic care benefit your organization?</i></li> <li>• Designed for "end user" or or "non-decision maker" audiences, including employee groups, clubs, etc.</li> </ul>

Presentation	Description / Target Audience
“Caring for Your Back”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Addresses the importance of back care from both workplace (ergonomic) and personal (lifestyle) perspectives</li> <li>Provides tips for maintenance of a healthy back</li> <li>Also suitable for “end user” or “non-decision maker” audiences, including employee groups, clubs, etc.</li> </ul>
“Chiropractic Care: Organizational Perspectives”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Addresses the “case for chiropractic” and supporting evidence</li> <li>Answers the question <i>Why should organizations support chiropractic care?</i></li> <li>Best suited to “decision maker” audiences such as employers, unions, benefits advisers and health insurers</li> </ul>
“The Benefits of Inter-Professional Care”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Overview of chiropractic, chiropractic practice, evidence and models of professional interaction</li> <li>Designed for health care professional audiences such as MDs</li> </ul>

**C. Review logistics**

Third, discuss and review logistics with the organizer. Here’s a suggested checklist:

- i. Audience and size (for quantity of handout materials)
- ii. Time frame (60 to 90 minutes recommended)
- iii. Location (be sure room is suitable for size of audience)
- iv. Presentation medium: you’ll require a computer (presentations are available for both PC and Mac) with a CD-ROM and a projector
- v. Any other arrangements or requirements

**D. Confirm event and arrangements**

Contact OCA staff to review the opportunity and requirements, and then confirm the event and particulars with the organizer (OCA staff can assist with this).

**Tips:**

- **Don’t oversell.** Although our ultimate goal is more patients, advocacy opportunities are not practice building opportunities, so be sure to stress that your objective is to educate, not sell
- **Don’t assume acceptance.** Many individuals and decision makers know little about chiropractic, and many others have misinformation about the profession. Increasing knowledge is one of the keys to building acceptance and trust
- **Written confirmation,** either by letter or e-mail, is recommended

**Step 3: preparation**

Start by reviewing the presentation you’ll be giving. For your convenience, the OCA has provided recommended talking points and background information in the form of speaker’s notes for each slide. In addition to ensuring that key points are covered, this will ensure that you are comfortable with the content and provide you with an opportunity to ask questions and clarify any points in advance of the presentation.

Here are some useful suggestions to help you prepare as a speaker:

- Start and end on time
- Introduce yourself and explain your background and credentials

- Tell your audience what to expect – for example, you might prefer to answer questions at the end of the presentation, instead of during your talk
- Know your audience as well as your material, and adjust your delivery (speed, tone of voice, use of terminology) if required
- Maintain eye contact with your audience; don't read your presentation

**Tips:**

- **Be yourself.** The recommended talking points are guidelines, not a script. Your presentation will be far more effective and successful if it is delivered in your words and speaking style
- **Draw on your experience.** It is important that your presentation feels personal; using examples from your practice to illustrate key points will make your presentation meaningful and memorable
- **Understand your audience.** Have an understanding of the audience and where they are coming from prior to presenting/speaking
- **Don't be negative.** It is important not to criticize other professions or the primary health care system in general, for the sake of promoting chiropractic. Staying positive will build credibility for the profession
- **Stay on message.** Review the Patient Advocacy Campaign materials and the key messages below
- **Remember, the focus and objective of your presentation is health care and EHC education** – enhanced understanding and awareness of chiropractic will benefit both the profession and in the long run individual practices.

**Key messages: the case for chiropractic**

- Chiropractic plays an important role in keeping Ontarians healthy and productive
- Chiropractic care is an effective and cost effective form of treatment for neuromusculoskeletal disorders
- Studies have shown that patients treated by a chiropractor for back pain returned to work sooner and had reduced rates of chronic problems and hospitalization
- Chiropractors understand that organizations are grappling with rising benefit costs. Chiropractic care can help employers, unions and other plan sponsors manage these costs by reducing the use of prescription drugs. They can also help by assisting workers injured on or off the job to return to work more quickly, and by helping to keep workers healthy and, therefore, productive
- Chiropractors do more than treat backs; we help our patients lead healthier lifestyles, get back to doing the things they love, and stay active and productive
- Chiropractors want patients and their employers to know that we are part of the solution in controlling rising EHC costs, not part of the problem

— *EHC Patient Advocacy Campaign: Program Backgrounder*

**Who to contact**

Questions and requests for assistance, materials and further information should be directed to:

Andrew Lang – Manager of Stakeholder Relations [alang@chiropractic.on.ca](mailto:alang@chiropractic.on.ca)  
at: 905-629-8211 / 1-877-327-227, ext. 37 or

Jennifer Paige – Manager of Communications and Marketing [jpaige@chiropractic.on.ca](mailto:jpaige@chiropractic.on.ca)  
at: 905-629-8211 / 1-877-327-227, ext. 25 or

Valerie Carter – Director, External Relations [vcarter@chiropractic.on.ca](mailto:vcarter@chiropractic.on.ca)  
at: 905-629-8211 / 1-877-327-227, ext. 33