

The Canadian Chiropractic Association

A GUIDE TO PATIENT-CENTRED PRACTICE BUILDING

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INTRODUCTION

01

Welcome to *A Guide to Patient-Centred Practice Building*, a research-based guide to developing a marketing communications plan for your practice. No guide can cover all of the many ingredients that go into building and sustaining a practice, and this guide does not attempt to do so. The tips and tools in this guide are based primarily on the knowledge gained from national and provincial research conducted with both the public and chiropractic practitioners.¹ The guide is also informed by the experiences of established practitioners who share what has worked for them.

Recent graduates and newer practitioners will probably benefit most from the ideas and information in the guide. Members with well-established practices may pick up a few new tips or find reinforcement for their current approach.

Both new and established practitioners face a great deal of pressure and competition in developing and maintaining their practices. No single tip or marketing “secret” will turn the key. Establishing and running a practice take time, commitment and hard work. The aim of The Canadian Chiropractic Association (The CCA) in providing this guide is to help make doing so a little easier.

- ① Data from the following quantitative and qualitative research studies has informed this Guide:
- Survey of Canadian Adults: Back Pain, Environics Research Group, May 2003. Commissioned by The Canadian Chiropractic Association.
 - Canadians’ Awareness of, Use of and Attitudes Toward Chiropractic, Environics Research Group, February 2005. Commissioned by The Canadian Chiropractic Association.
 - Attitudes Toward the Marketing of Chiropractic Services, Environics Research Group, January 2006. Commissioned by The Ontario Chiropractic Association and The Canadian Chiropractic Association.
 - Canadian Chiropractic Resources Databank, S. Stowe, June 2004. Commissioned by The Canadian Chiropractic Association.
 - Survey of Patients, Burke & Associates, 2005. Commissioned by the College of Chiropractors of Alberta.
 - Chiropractic Patient Values, Focus Group conducted by Strategic Navigator, June 2006. Commissioned by The Canadian Chiropractic Association.

DEFINING SUCCESS

There are many different types of practices, from sole practitioners to group and multidisciplinary practices. Individual practitioners also have varying interests. Some aspire to general practice, and some like to work with seniors, athletes, young people or other specific groups. Practitioners also have different definitions of success.

One of the first steps to developing a focused marketing and communications plan for your practice is to decide what success means to you. If you are a new practitioner who is just starting out, the answer may seem obvious: to become known and build a patient base as quickly as possible to cover your overhead and earn an income. Dig a little deeper and you may be surprised at what you learn about your

aspirations for your practice. Try asking yourself the five questions below; what you learn by doing so may help you start building the kind of practice that is successful in your terms.

Building a clear picture of what you want, from your practice, beyond income, will help you develop a marketing and communications plan that meets your goals. For example, if you want to focus on athletes and a perfect day means spending quite a bit of time with a relatively small number of patients, then you will take a different approach to practice building than someone who enjoys seeing a wide variety of patients and wants a highly diversified practice.

It starts with your vision.

① What are my values as a health care professional?

② What does a great day in practice look and feel like to me?

③ Do I see benefit in collaborative relationships with other health professionals?

④ What type of patients do I enjoy working with the most?

⑤ What kind of relationship do I want to have with my patients? My community? My colleagues in chiropractic?

WHAT THE MARKET RESEARCH TELLS US

02

Both The CCA and the provincial chiropractic associations have conducted extensive research with the public to learn about who uses chiropractic care, why they use it and what types of communication they find credible. The findings of this research indicate that public attitudes, opinions and behaviour regarding chiropractic are remarkably consistent from coast to coast.

Many of the ideas in this guide are based on knowledge gained from talking to the public. Here are some of the most important findings that can help guide your approach to practice building.

PROBLEMS TRUMP WELLNESS

The vast majority of Canadians who have visited a chiropractor did so initially for relief from pain. Treatment for back pain is the top-of-mind association among all Canadians — chiropractic users and non-users alike. The next most common reasons for seeking treatment are neck and shoulder pain and headache.

Chiropractic is also known to be significantly underused for treatment of musculoskeletal disorders. The majority of people who reported experiencing back pain in a 2003 CCA survey did not seek treatment from a health professional. Over-the-counter pain relievers were the most commonly used treatment, and 14 percent said they did nothing. This indicates that educating Canadians about chiropractic as a cost-effective solution to their pain and dysfunction is a sound communications strategy.

TIP:

Pain and functional limitation are the primary reasons that drive patients to seek chiropractic care. Effective marketing should target what is relevant to the consumer. While chiropractors know that adjustment can address more than back pain, new patients must first come in the door. Those who are seeking a solution for a problem related to musculoskeletal pain are the most likely to be motivated to do that. Once a relationship is established on the patient's terms, the practitioner has an opportunity to educate and encourage the patient to consider wellness or maintenance care.

SOMETHING'S GOTTA BE WRONG

Almost 90 percent of Canadians say they visit a health professional only when they have a problem or concern. In other words, the vast majority of Canadian adults seek health care when they feel that something is wrong and needs to be examined. What does this mean for promoting wellness care? Only 13 percent of Canadians strongly agree that chiropractic treatment is good preventive care. On the other hand, 44 percent strongly agree that chiropractic is effective treatment for back pain, joint problems and headache. If you are trying to attract new patients, particularly people who may never have visited a chiropractor before, it makes good marketing sense to use a message with which they already agree to attract them, rather than trying to convince them of something the majority does not understand.

In general, Canadians associate “wellness” with things they do for themselves, such as losing weight, eating properly, getting exercise, sleeping well and finding time to de-stress. Once you have satisfied a patient by addressing his or her immediate concerns, you have a greater opportunity to explain how chiropractic care may benefit general health.

TIP:

Marketing communication that clearly focuses on how chiropractic treatment can address specific pain-related problems will convince more Canadians than will general health and wellness messages.

BACKS ARE A BIG MARKET

A 2003 CCA survey of Canadians' experience of back pain found that 80 percent of Canadians will experience back pain at some point in their lives, and more than one-fifth of adults reported experiencing pain that was “severe.” Almost 30 percent reported pain that lasted one month or longer. These people are a big market!

EXISTING PATIENTS ARE YOUR TOP SOURCE OF REFERRALS

A 2003 CCA survey of all licensed practitioners in Canada found that almost 60 percent of new patient referrals came from existing patients. This underscores the importance of establishing a positive relationship with each and every patient.

Patients respond best when they feel that care is conforming to their needs, rather than to the practitioner's needs. For example, in some cases, referral to another health care provider may be the most appropriate care you can provide. Patients respond positively to referral as a demonstration of responsibility and diagnostic acumen on the part of the practitioner. Indeed, many Doctors of Chiropractic (DCs) say the patients they referred to another health care practitioner became their best source of new patient referrals. A patient-centred approach is important in practice building.

TIP:

Remember the old saying, “A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush.” Focusing efforts on your existing patients will yield long-term benefits. They will come back and will tell others how satisfied they are with your care. Take the time to make every patient visit satisfying — on the patient's terms — from start to finish.

MAKING FRIENDS WITH MDS IS GOOD PRACTICE

More than half of Canadians say they would visit a health professional other than a Doctor of Medicine (MD) only on the advice of their family doctor. Almost half say their preferred source of information on chiropractic care is brochures in their MD's office. These findings indicate the high reliance Canadians have on the relationship with their family physician. That underlines the benefits of developing referral relationships with the MDs in your community. You may be surprised at how many are responsive when approached the right way.

TIP:

Building a referral relationship with MDs in your neighbourhood can help boost your practice — and benefit your patients. The CCA's DC-MD Relationship-Building Toolkit, Part 1 and Part 2, provides practical advice and materials. (See the "Resources" section in the "Communications Support from Chiropractic Associations" chapter of this guide.)

PUBLIC EDUCATION WORKS

Canadians are most interested in receiving self-help and prevention information from chiropractors. Paid advertising ranks near the bottom of the list of credible sources of information about chiropractic care. This is a typical response when members of the public are asked about their preferred sources of health information. Clearly, advertising has a role to play, but public education messages work best and personal contact is the most credible means of communication.

A 2005 CCA survey reveals that Canadians take a dim view of public displays aimed at soliciting new patients, but they view public education displays positively. What's the difference? One approach positions you as a salesperson trying to get people to come to your practice. The other positions you as an expert educator providing people with practical, helpful advice about preventing or managing health problems.

TIP:

Get out into your community and become a public health educator. Set up a backpack display in a local venue and give demonstrations on how to pack and wear one correctly. Get together with your local hardware store and demonstrate snow shovelling techniques in the parking lot. You will attract an audience and be respected for it. Public education is a great way to network and become known as an expert. Referrals and new patients will follow.

YOUR SERVICES ARE VALUABLE

Most Canadians say they are indifferent to advertisements for free or discounted consultations. They say such advertising does not influence their decision to consult a chiropractor. A significant number indicate that this type of advertising actually reduces their confidence in chiropractors.

Similarly, a large majority of Canadians do not favour long-term prepayment plans even if a discounted fee is offered. Only 3 percent of Canadians think it would be appropriate for a practitioner to accept prepayment for more than 10 visits.

TIP:

While you may wish to adjust your fee schedule to accommodate a patient's ability to pay, many people view advertising free services as promoting unnecessary care. Doing so also positions care as a retail commodity rather than a professional service. Make sure your practices conform to the regulations in your province. Some prohibit prepayment for services.

These findings will help you direct your time and effort toward activities that create a positive and memorable impression among potential patients. The balance of this guide offers practical advice and tips for creating a communication plan that works for you.

POSITIONING YOUR PRACTICE

03

Think of a well-known consumer product or service. You know the name and you can probably recall the logo, the way the name is presented, a colour associated with it, and a slogan or position statement for the product or service. Overall, you have a sense of what that product or service is like — trustworthy, low-cal, fun, reliable, inexpensive, sexy and so on. That is branding at its very simplest — what a product or service “looks” like and what it “stands for.” This is an area in which the marketing of health services borrows from retail marketing. How you “brand” or name and present your clinic can work for you or against you, so it is important to think this issue through very carefully.

NAMING YOUR CLINIC

There are many choices when naming a clinic. Some clinic names reflect their location, such as “Downtown Chiropractic,” or the practitioner, such as “Doe Chiropractic.” Other clinic names identify a specialty, such as “Chiropractic Sports Injury Centre,” and still others have names that evoke outcomes, such as “The Wellness Centre.” Whatever approach you choose, here are some tips for picking a name that will work for you and your potential patients.

Keep it short

Remember that the name must appear on something as small as a business card and must work in a broad variety of formats, from an advertisement to a sign. Interestingly, people will instinctively shorten long names down to three or fewer words. Help maintain the integrity of your clinic name by keeping it short. It will also be easier to remember.

Make it meaningful

Clinic names based on the chiropractor's name or location are meaningful because the name itself conveys useful information, and these types of names clearly state that it is a chiropractic clinic. If you want to emphasize a particular attribute of your clinic in the name, however, search carefully for the right word to convey it. For example, your clinic may integrate a number of disciplines, but calling it the "Integrated Chiropractic Centre" will probably not mean much to many people. On the other hand, a name like "Chiropractic Plus" says the same thing in a more accessible way. Words are very evocative, so choose yours carefully to ensure that you have a simple name that conveys the right idea for your clinic.

Pick an appropriate typeface

How you style the depiction of your clinic name is as important as the name itself. Different typefaces "say" different things about your practice. Big bold letters seem to shout, and delicate italics have a feminine feeling. The style of the name should match the feeling or idea of the name itself. For example, a name like "*Chiropractic Sports Injury and Rehab Centre*" would seem odd depicted in a looping, scrolling typeface. Similarly, a name like "**New Day Chiropractic Clinic**" would look equally incongruous in heavy block letters.

DO YOU NEED A LOGO?

Many clinics simply rely on their name and how it is styled graphically to serve as their logo. This is known as a wordmark. Other clinics have a separate logo that is used in conjunction with the clinic name. Which is right for you? Here are a few ideas about logos to consider:

- A logo that integrates the clinic name with an image is often the most useable. Remember that logos take up space on signage and business cards and in advertisements, and they can be awkward to incorporate if they are large or detailed.
- Any logo must work in a very small format or a very large one. Highly detailed drawings do not work well. Keep the logo simple and aim for a "feeling" or idea, rather than a realistic, detailed representation.
- Avoid depictions of spines — lay people tend to find literal depictions of internal body parts unattractive, even creepy. Go for a spinal curve or highly stylized depiction instead if that is the direction you want to take.
- Always keep the consumer in mind. What will appeal to the consumer should be the first consideration.

TIP:

Hire a professional graphic designer to help you style your clinic name and develop a logo if you choose to have one. The public identifies you by your clinic name or wordmark and logo, so seeking professional assistance from someone with expertise in this area is worthwhile. You will design these features only once, so get the best advice possible.

YOUR CLINIC IDENTITY

Think carefully about how you want to describe and position your clinic. What are the main messages that you want to convey? What are the simplest, most patient-friendly words you can use? What aspect of your clinic do you want to emphasize the most? What are the next most important points?

Effective communication has a focus. If you try to give equal weight to every fact about your practice, the information tends to become a blur. Making thoughtful choices about what you believe are the most important aspects of your practice will help you develop what marketers call your “unique proposition.” Here are four examples to help you get started.

Example 1

Name: New Day Chiropractic

Key message: A family-centred clinic

Supporting messages:

- Specializing in maintaining healthy spine and joint function, from the developing years through the golden years
- Family-friendly convenient parking, extended hours, children’s play area, wheelchair accessible

Example 3

Name: The Chiropractic Wellness Centre

Key message: A team approach to your health and well-being

Supporting messages:

- Chiropractic, naturopathy, physiotherapy, nutritionist and massage therapy services
- Helping you relieve pain and achieve vibrant good health

Example 2

Name: The Back Clinic

Key message: Specializing in pain relief, injury prevention and maintenance of healthy spinal function

Supporting messages:

- Treatment of chronic and acute pain and injuries
- In-clinic rehabilitation specialists and facilities

Example 4

Name: Chiropractic Sports Injury and Rehab Clinic

Key message: Keeping you in the game

Supporting messages:

- Specializing in injury prevention, optimizing joint and muscle function, and rehabilitation
- Offering sports team consultations and individualized programs

DO YOU NEED A WEBSITE?

Websites have become ubiquitous, but do you really need one? What role can it play in building your practice? Most people choose a health care provider through referral from friends, colleagues, family or another health professional. Once people have a name, many will look for further information on the Internet to gain an impression of the clinic and the practitioner. That is where websites come in. Keep these tips in mind if you decide to develop a website.

Keep it simple

Focus on your clinic and what it has to offer a patient. Highlight:

- Your clinic services.
- Your staff and their credentials.
- The types of conditions in which you specialize — in layperson's language.
- Your clinic hours, especially if you have extended hours.
- Your location, the availability of parking and access to public transit.
- An emergency number if you have one.

TIP:

Invest in the services of a professional copywriter. Copywriters are trained wordsmiths and will be able to put your ideas into words that will work for your intended audience.

Paint a picture

Include photographs of your clinic and your staff. Photos help create a sense of familiarity for potential patients so that they will know what to expect. Have a professional photographer who knows how to compose and light a shot take the photos. Grainy photos of people's heads will not serve your purpose.

Speak directly to the potential patient

Use your website to outline what a new patient should expect on an initial visit. Doing so will help demystify the process.

Include your fee schedule

Cost is a consideration for many people. Note any provincial health plan and workers' compensation coverage, as well as coordination of employee benefit plan coverage.

Reinforce your clinic brand

Use the same typeface, logo, colours and branding as on your signage, business cards and so on to build a consistent image for your clinic.

Link to your provincial association website and The CCA website

You do not need to reinvent the wheel on your clinic website. The CCA website contains a wealth of information about chiropractic written for the general public. This content has been carefully vetted to ensure that it conforms to the chiropractic scope of practice and is easy to understand. Linking to your association websites tells the public that you are a member of your professional associations and also helps create a consistent image of the profession. If you want to include other sites, link to reputable, mainstream sites such as Health Canada.

Use a professional website designer

People are becoming increasingly sophisticated Internet users and are exposed to a broad variety of very well-designed and attractive websites. This is the environment in which your site must compete. The bar is being set higher and higher on the Internet, and your site needs to meet a minimum standard of professionalism and graphic design. It's not about being expensive, it's about being on target. An experienced professional can build you a simple, attractive site that speaks to your clinic's position in the marketplace. Good doesn't have to cost a lot; what is important is choosing the right person for the job.

Now you have a "brand" and a "unique proposition" for your clinic. It's time to get out into the public arena and let people know you have a service they can use.

IT ALL ADDS UP

This guide focuses on the communications aspects of building a practice, but, of course, many other factors are involved in creating a financially viable, rewarding practice. Here are a few things to keep in mind.

— **Overhead.** Keep your overhead as low as reasonably possible when starting out. If too much of the practice income is going to pay for rent and other overhead expenses, there will be increasing pressure on the practice to generate new patients — and that may be at the expense of the loyal patient base you have acquired. Your premises should be professional but need not be glamorous to be appealing to patients. Consider sharing space with another practitioner or starting out as an associate to reduce costs until you become better known.

— **Financial management.** Yes, if you'd wanted to be an accountant, you would have become an accountant. Instead, you chose to be a chiropractor, but good financial management is essential to building a solid practice. Seek the guidance of a financial professional to ensure that you are managing your income and expenditures, as well as your taxes and writeoffs. Such guidance can mean the difference between thousands of dollars lost or gained.

— **Insurance.** Insure your practice against losses. A flood or fire in your building can cripple a practice. So can a computer meltdown. Imagine losing all your electronic patient records and patient appointment schedule. Back up your computer files daily and store the backup in a fireproof box or off-site.

— **Location.** The location of your practice can promote or inhibit its growth. There is always a balancing act between affordability and visibility. If your practice is in an out-of-the way location, however, with little or no parking nearby, and is not easily accessible by public transit, you may want to consider relocating. Loyal patients will follow their chiropractor, even if doing so requires a bit of inconvenience, but potential new patients will balance a variety of factors in making a choice. An accessible location can remove a barrier to choosing your practice.

CREATING SUPERIOR VALUE FOR YOUR PATIENTS

04

“It’s not a business. You are a doctor. It should be patients first, business second.”

To gain some first-hand insight about what matters to chiropractic patients, The CCA held a focus group with eight patients chosen at random who are regular users of chiropractic. They were asked how they chose their chiropractor, what was important to them on their first visit, what makes their chiropractor the right practitioner for them, what would turn them off, what advice they would give someone looking for a chiropractor and much more. This section includes many of their comments.

During the discussion, a number of important themes emerged. At the top of the list was competence — the practitioner’s ability to accurately diagnose, explain the problem and provide a successful treatment program with clear markers of progress. Competence was closely integrated with users’ trust and the desire for a personal connection with their practitioner — with being seen as a whole person, not just a collection of symptoms. Trust was an intuitive factor: respondents could not explain why, but they each expressed the view that they could trust their current DC to act in their best interest and to truly care about them. Some of them had changed DCs because, while the competence factor was there, something was missing on the trust side. As one of them said, “It’s a laying on of hands, and when they know what they’re doing, you sense it almost immediately.”

These patients also valued their practitioners because they listened, explained and educated. As well, the patients valued interdisciplinary dialogue and connection between their health care providers. All these patients refer other people to their practitioners.

“I refer my chiropractor to other people because of his skill level, his character, keeping up with current knowledge — all those things rolled together. I’ve got his pager number and that’s a personal thing — you’re not just a diagnosis.”

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

First impressions count, and a new patient makes the first impression of you and your practice even before walking in the door. It takes more than your expertise as a clinician to attract and retain patients, so paying attention to all aspects of your practice is important. Here are the things that typically contribute to that “sight unseen” impression:

- Your advertisement in the Yellow Pages or community newspaper.
- Your website.
- Your street-front signage.
- What someone else has said about chiropractic in general or your practice in particular.
- The potential patient’s encounter with your staff when booking the appointment.

“The office doesn’t have to be fancy as long as it’s clean. If it’s low-key but cozy and friendly, that’s fine.”

Once through your door, a new patient makes fresh impressions that can work for your practice or against it. Ask yourself these questions:

- Is the waiting room clean, tidy and inviting? Is professionally produced information on chiropractic care available to patients while they are waiting?
- Does the receptionist greet people warmly and make them feel at ease?
- Are appointment times respected?

“Whoever is at the front desk is critical — it’s that whole welcoming thing.”

“It’s the personal touch — every time I walk in, it’s ‘Hi Jim, how are you?’”

PATIENT CONCERNS

Now the patient is in the consulting room with you, and the most important impressions of all are made. First, let’s look at some of the concerns of new chiropractic patients.

Radiography

Some new patients may balk at being told they need a full set of spinal X-rays, most likely at their own expense. Yes, there are definitely times when it is important to insist that a patient have radiography before embarking on a treatment plan. And, of course, treatment should not commence without radiography that you feel is necessary. But if there is no pressing clinical need on a first visit — for example, with a patient whose assessment indicates uncomplicated mechanical back pain — do not insist on X-rays. Once you have addressed the patient’s immediate concern and have won his or her confidence, you may wish to introduce the idea of radiography to assist in a program of spinal care.

Treatment if ...

Virtually all Canadians are familiar with an approach to health care in which they visit a health professional, explain the problem, may be sent for tests and then receive a diagnosis and treatment recommendations. They do not expect to be asked to first attend a health talk or similar type of event to receive a diagnosis or treatment from a health care professional. Making your diagnosis and treatment of patients dependent on their attending an event they did not request and do not want to attend will send many out the door.

“I started by taking my son there — he played a lot of hockey when he was younger and was hurting his back. Then I went. Now [the chiropractor] sees pretty much the whole family. The kids have had a few accidents, so [chiropractic has] been very helpful to them.”

All or nothing

Patients seek health care because they have a personal health problem. Insisting that a patient’s family must visit your practice before you will treat the individual is not only considered unethical by The CCA, it is also a turnoff for patients. Once you have built a relationship with a patient, opportunities to suggest that other family members might benefit from a consultation may arise. Never pressure.

“My chiropractor uses the great analytical skills that he has. He tells me what’s wrong, this is what it is, this is how I’m going to fix it — everything’s going to be fine — so you get the comfort, the reassurance.”

Fright and flight

Scare tactics may work some of the time, but this approach is more likely to backfire. The best way to build a patient’s confidence is to explain your diagnosis in plain language that the patient can understand and then give reassurance if you think the problem can be treated effectively. Painting a picture of deteriorating health and disability may frighten some patients into treatment, but many will opt for a second opinion and their confidence in you and your practice may be undermined.

“My chiropractor laid out a plan of action. It wasn’t just go in, get a treatment, go home and be the same. There was something we hoped to achieve so we could both see progress. It wasn’t just this endless thing happening. The plan was fantastic.”

“There was a chiropractor that, when I first went to him, he wanted me to sign a contract and I said no, I’m not prepared to sign a contract. I’m in it for my own health and well-being. I will be a regular patient and I do take this seriously. But he wanted a retainer up front and I said no way.”

When will it end?

Patients who require and desire regular, ongoing treatment may like the idea of a prepaid plan that saves them some money — **if the regulatory college in your province allows prepayment for services**. But pushing a long-term, prepaid plan on new patients or patients who have had little experience of the benefits of chiropractic is not a good place to start. Remember: the research tells us that most Canadians are very sensitive about prepaying for more than 10 visits. Keep that in mind when building a relationship with a new patient.

“My wife was walking through the shopping mall one day and they had one of those booths, and my wife went for the free assessment and I think she got treated twice. The second time she came home with a \$1,600 plan for four months and I thought, like, you’ve only seen her twice. She didn’t sign the plan. I just found it offensive.”

“If you think they just keep making you come back to generate income, that would turn you off. None of us mind spending money on our health, but you don’t want to be taken advantage of.”

TIPS FOR NEW PATIENT VISITS

Here are five tips that established practitioners have shared for making a new patient's first visit successful, especially with patients who have not previously received chiropractic care or have had a less than satisfactory experience with their previous practitioner.

“The personal connection is important. You know they know you, they know about your life and who you are as a person, not just as a customer or a client. You're not just a diagnosis.”

Ask the patient

As obvious as it may sound, simply asking patients what they think the problem is right at the beginning opens the relationship on their terms and gets things off on the right foot. Also, ask patients:

- If they have had previous experience with chiropractic care.
- If they are nervous about their visit.
- If they have any particular concerns.
- What they want to get from their care.

“My chiropractor has a gift for seeing the whole picture. He doesn't just look at you as a neck problem or a back problem. He can look and tell if you've got a headache coming on. He doesn't just see me as a medical problem, he sees the whole person.”

“The listening factor is important. They need to hear what you're saying, then analyze it.”

Explain your examination

Explain what you are doing and what you are looking for. Use props, such as a model spine, to educate and illustrate.

“I like getting information about what's going on, where the particular problem is and pro-active things to prevent injury in the future.”

Explain an adjustment

Many new patients will not know what to expect. Walk them through an adjustment the first time and provide reassurance.

“I welcome all the info I can get on what the problem is, how it presents and what I can do about it.”

Respect the patient's concerns

Some patients may express hesitation about having their neck adjusted. Take the opportunity to educate, but do not try to “win” by convincing the patient to have cervical manipulation. Offer alternatives and build trust during subsequent visits. Gently introduce the benefits of cervical adjustment at a later date, but be prepared to back away if the patient is still not comfortable with it.

“That controversy about the woman who died — that made me a bit nervous.”

Be positive and reassuring

Patients want to have confidence in their health care provider. Listen carefully to what they have to say, speak in layperson's terms and provide them with reassurance that, by working with you, they should start to feel better.

“It's about trust and personal connection.”

“It was relief I was after.”

“I had horrible neck pain.”

“I was desperate for relief.”

Provide treatment on the patient's terms

Research shows that most patients first come seeking relief from pain. Meet their immediate needs before trying to introduce the benefits of regular spinal care.

“I was complaining of aches.”

“I had a car accident.”

“I was in so much pain and nobody could pin it down.”

PATIENTS' STORIES

Here are stories from three new patients about their initial visit to a chiropractor. Their experiences can help you ensure a positive outcome with your new patients.

Patient 1

Patient 1 visited a chiropractor for whiplash and was told to wait a week for treatment and to first attend an information session. The patient was also told to bring his wife to the session. The patient was upset and felt he was being pressured into attending the information session when what he wanted was to receive treatment so that he could return to work. He went to the session, at the end of which he was asked to sign a treatment contract. He refused and complained to the provincial regulatory college.

Patient 2

Patient 2 went to see a new chiropractor who had taken over the practice of the patient's previous DC. The patient complained of low back pain after too much yardwork. The new DC insisted that she have a complete set of spinal X-rays taken, even though the patient protested that she did not think it was necessary and could not afford it. The practitioner also required that she attend an information session before commencing treatment. After she left the office, the patient received five phone calls from the practice receptionist asking her when she was going to get the X-rays taken and reminding her of the information session. Patient 2 never returned.

Patient 3

Patient 3 was unfamiliar with chiropractic care and made an appointment with a DC for her teenage daughter on the advice of a friend. Her daughter complained of sporadic joint aches and pains, stumbles and falls. The friend thought a chiropractic consultation might be helpful. The DC conducted an examination and was sensitive to the self-consciousness common among teenage girls. The DC was gracious when the teenager seemed uncomfortable with the idea of adjustment, and instead recommended some simple exercises. They had a good chat about the merits of different types of running shoes. The DC reassured the mother that nothing serious was wrong with her daughter. The mother returned to seek care for herself and continued as a loyal patient.

PATIENTS' ADVICE TO NEW PRACTITIONERS

Eight patients who visit a chiropractor regularly were asked what advice they would give to a new practitioner starting out about how to attract and keep new patients. Here is what they said:

- “See the patient as a whole person — not just as a neck or back problem.”
- “First, be professional, caring and attentive.”
- “Don’t prolong treatment — don’t leave the patient wondering if it will ever end.”
- “Maintain a caring, healing approach.”
- “Really try to integrate into the community health care system.”
- “Educate people.”
- “Hold an open house.”
- “Give seminars and presentations.”
- “Hook up with other health professionals.”
- “Community education is really important.”
- “Have an authentic connection with your patients.”
- “Build relationships.”

CONNECTING WITH YOUR COMMUNITY

05

In Dale Carnegie's classic book *How to Win Friends and Influence People*, he states that the first principle of success is "becoming genuinely interested in other people." Think about the simple truth of that statement and its implications: if you take a genuine interest in others, you will become more successful. After all, you know that achieving anything is difficult without the support of others, and who is more likely to help you — a friend or a stranger?

Those of you who have read or listened to professional development tapes are probably familiar with the term "sphere of influence." The term refers to people you know, such as friends, family, patients, staff, classmates, peers, your banker, your landlord, tenants in your building and so on. Expanding the people in your "sphere of influence" and taking a genuine interest in them is one of the best ways to develop your practice.

By getting involved in your community, you can really target your practice to the people with whom you enjoy spending time. Once you decide what your focus is, you can then begin to target your activities to attract the kind of patients you wish to work with and stop wasting energy on "just getting people through the door."

TIP:

Get involved for the right reasons. If you go out to volunteer with a sports team and start handing out business cards right away or spend the time talking about yourself, you will actually alienate more people than you will attract. If, however, people sense that you are genuinely interested in them, they will be more receptive to you.

There are a great many ways to connect with your community and expand your circle of influence. Remember that the choice of a chiropractor is a choice to work with a specific person. The more people who come to know you and who view you as a caring, competent and involved individual, the greater the number of ambassadors you will have.

A PUBLIC SERVICE APPROACH

Health professionals have a unique relationship with the public. You hold a position of trust, and people rely on you when they are vulnerable, in pain or generally not well. The service relationship people have with a health professional is not typically like the one people might have with an accountant, lawyer or tax consultant. People expect health care professionals to care about them in a way they do not expect from other professionals.

Health care culture in Canada is also unique. Our universal, publicly funded health care system means Canadians have a strong sense of entitlement to care and, generally speaking, they do not view health care as a financial transaction. Even though provincial insurance plans do not cover many health care services, the prevailing attitude among Canadians is that health care services are not a retail commodity.

This attitude has important implications for the style, tone and messaging in health services communications. A public service approach rather than a sales approach is more accepted. Basically, it's a question of professional communication versus retail marketing.

The goal of retail marketing is to sell and move product. Professional communication, on the other hand, is the promotion of ideas, information, quality, relationships, benefits and outcomes. While professional communication uses some retail marketing strategies (e.g., assessing consumer needs, identifying target audiences, developing products or services to meet those needs), the primary aim of professional communication is to build relationships, educate and assist. It is not to encourage a business transaction.

This leads to an important distinction between "self-promotion" and "public education." Of course, building a practice requires promoting yourself and your clinic, and educating the public about chiropractic is important to attracting patients. Using retail marketing techniques, however, to promote your practice may succeed in attracting some of the patients some of the time, but, in the long term, such an approach may entail a cost to both your credibility and that of the profession as a whole.

Similarly, scare tactics and high-pressure methods that masquerade as "education" may offer short-term gain but long-term pain.

A public service approach to practice building is the most professional and effective one to use over the long term. Such an approach emphasizes education and the empowerment of the patient as a participant in his or her care. It focuses less on the volume of patients or the number of treatments and more on the unique needs of each patient. A public service attitude values quality over quantity and always puts the needs of the patient before the needs of the practice. Taking this approach may result in slower growth of a practice, but experience shows it pays off in terms of the stability and credibility of the practice over the long term.

This chapter provides a broad variety of ideas for connecting with your community and sharing your expertise in the spirit of public service. Many established chiropractors will tell you that doing so is the best investment of time you can make.

IDENTIFYING YOUR AUDIENCES

Effective communication starts with setting clear objectives that establish what you want to achieve. The first step in setting objectives is to determine the audience you want to reach. Then you can develop messages that will be meaningful to that audience.

Who is your audience? You may instantly have thought “everybody” or “the general public,” but reaching everyone is difficult. Think in terms of specific target audiences and what will make chiropractic care meaningful to each of them.

The trick to identifying your audiences is to think like a patient. What group of people is it, and what is their potential problem or opportunity? Knowing this will help you develop communications that will resonate with them and their situations.

It is very important to think in terms of what will interest your intended audience. Most people are not interested in learning about chiropractic per se, but they may be interested in learning about how to relieve the back pain or joint or muscle aches they are suffering, or how to prevent musculoskeletal injuries if their children are active in sports.

Remember that the more specific the audience is, the easier developing a communications plan to reach it will be. The more general the audience, the more difficult it will be to decide whether an initiative will be successful. Tying your target audience to an objective helps provide clarity and focus. Here are some examples of audiences you might target:

MDs — develop interprofessional cooperation and patient referrals with local practitioners.

Recreational athletes — educate on preventing musculoskeletal injuries and improving joint and muscle performance; target golfers, running clubs or people who engage in any sport that interests you.

Seniors — educate about maintaining musculoskeletal health and wellness, management of arthritis pain, and maintaining good posture to avoid falls.

Parents — educate about posture with respect to children, kids and backpacks, lifting a child, babies and colic.

The general public — network with members of the public through community events, such as health fairs, health charity fundraising runs and so on.

Sedentary office workers — target prevention of repetitive strain injury.

Factory workers — target safe lifting and prevention of back pain.

Whiplash sufferers — educate about how to speed recovery.

Pregnant women — provide prevention strategies for back pain.

Homeowners — provide advice on prevention of musculoskeletal injury when working in the yard and garden or when doing household projects.

Headache sufferers — educate about treatment options.

High-frequency travellers — provide preventive advice.

Chronic pain sufferers — educate about pain relief options.

As you can see, moving beyond “the general public” and identifying specific groups of people you want to reach leads naturally to specific actions you can take. This is a basic building block of marketing communications. Now you can identify specific activities for reaching each group and expanding awareness of you and your practice.

NETWORKING

Think of all the people you come into contact with on a weekly basis: bank employees, postal workers, couriers, secretaries and many more. You are surrounded by hundreds of people, and each of them represents an opportunity for you to share your expertise and expand your

circle of influence. Some contacts may help your business, some may not, but you’ll never know until you try. That printer you had lunch with last week might donate services for your next charity fundraiser; that coffee shop owner might give you a discount on refreshments for your women’s health seminars. Networking works both ways. You might be able to help your bank manager reduce staff sick days by providing some information on maintaining spinal health. She might then introduce you to other branch managers, whose staff you could help educate.

Getting acquainted with the people in your community will yield many rewards. It’s a win-win for everyone. Here are some ways in which you can network.

Volunteer your services

Offer your services to a local high school or community sports team. Young athletes, whether they play tennis, football, hockey or soccer, are serious about their sport. You can help by offering your expertise. Volunteering leads to relationships and referrals.

The many opportunities to provide volunteer services will expand your network and give you a credible presence in the community. Pick something that is genuinely meaningful to you. The benefits will follow.

Join a business organization or service club

Many business or professional groups provide excellent networking opportunities. Look into your local chamber of commerce or service clubs, such as the Rotary Club. Talk to other business people and find out what they are involved in. The more relationships you build on common ground, the greater will be others’ acceptance of you as a health professional.

Shop where you work

You might be amazed at how many referrals you receive from people you know who are not patients but just know you and have a good impression of you. Go out of your way to introduce yourself — to your bank manager, the staff at the coffee shop and other people you encounter. Introduce yourself and have a lunch meeting with the dentists, florists, health food store owners, estheticians and store owners in your area.

Do not try to solicit business during such encounters, just get acquainted. If you need a plumber, mechanic or other service provider, use one of your patients who has the necessary skills. Supporting local businesses and patients will lead to them supporting you.

Become politically involved

Becoming involved politically at either the municipal, provincial or federal level is a great way to expand your network. Pick the party of your choice and volunteer your services. Even between elections, there are many ways to contribute.

Connect with your peers

Consider becoming involved in your provincial chiropractic association. You will find many opportunities to connect with your peers, find mentors and soak up a wealth of information and insight. If there is a local chiropractic group in your area, consider joining it. Involvement with your peers will help keep you sharp.

CLINIC EVENTS

Hold an open house in your clinic for members of your community and give a health talk on a specific theme. Make sure your topic is of interest and relevance to the people you want to attract. Most importantly, hold the talk at a time that is convenient for those people.

Promote your open house to your existing patients and invite them to bring a friend or pass the information along to people they know who might be interested in the topic. Do not forget to include other health professionals in your neighbourhood. Publicize the open house with posters on community centre information boards and by distributing a flyer through organizations or businesses in the vicinity of your practice.

TIP:

You will have the most long-term success by educating and providing information — not by promoting yourself. Spending all your time handing out business cards and trying to book appointments may counteract all the good you have done. You may attract a few patients right away, but in the long run you may drive away many more.

PUBLIC DISPLAYS AND EVENTS

Participating in relevant public events is an excellent way to network and a good opportunity to distribute helpful educational materials to target audiences. Participation can take a variety of forms, such as staffing a display or booth at a local health or lifestyle fair, sponsoring a local charity run or organizing a chiropractic team to run in an event. Your community will provide many opportunities for such activities.

Participating in public events is often most successful when done as a group with your chiropractic colleagues. Remember, it's not about booking patients for the next day — it's about educating, providing a public service and building a professional image of chiropractic.

When staffing a booth or display, remember your audience and the nature of the event. For example, if it is a sporting event, provide handouts related to sports injuries and prevention. If the audience is seniors, make sure that the people staffing the booth or display are knowledgeable about issues relevant to seniors, and provide relevant handouts.

Avoid blatant self-promotion. Your participation as an expert providing a public service will increase your credibility among the public.

TIP:

Stephen Covey, author of the acclaimed book *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*, talks about successful people having an attitude of "plenty" as opposed to an attitude of "scarcity." An attitude of plenty says, "Let's work together because there is lots to go around," while an attitude of scarcity says, "I need to hoard this for myself because there isn't enough for everyone." Working together for the benefit of all is acting on the successful attitude of plenty. There is plenty of business for everyone.

Organizing a booth or display

Following these guideline will help ensure that your booth or display is effective:

- Use professional signage, posters and visuals
- Establish a theme relevant to the venue.
- Have take-away material on hand.
- Locate the display in a high-traffic area.
- Have display staff wear name tags.
- Keep the booth tidy.
- Ensure that the display is always staffed.
- Have an interactive feature, such as a computer quiz or knowledge-testing questionnaire relevant to the theme.
- Use visual aids, such as a model spine.

Think about the exhibits you have seen and events you have attended and what made a good impression on you. Incorporate that learning into your display or booth. If you plan to participate regularly in this type of activity, invest in a portable display unit.

Do's and Don'ts of displays

Here are a few tips to help make your display a success.

DO

- Get colleagues involved
- Promote the chiropractic profession as a whole, rather than individual practices
- Provide appropriate handouts and give-away materials from reputable sources
- Be friendly and approachable
- Use open body language and active listening
- Promote your event in advance
- Display your affiliation with The CCA

DON'T

- Book appointments with potential patients
- Provide treatment
- Offer free consultations
- Make on-the-spot diagnoses or conduct screening tests
- Disparage other health therapies or health professionals
- Pressure the public

SPEAKING EVENTS

Speaking engagements are a great way to educate people about chiropractic and raise your profile. If you held a successful open house or health talk at your clinic, you might consider broadening this type of activity and offer it at other venues. A little creative thinking may yield a wide variety of opportunities to fulfill your public service mission.

If you practise in a neighbourhood with office towers, choose a topic of interest to office workers, such as ergonomics, and go around to the neighbourhood employers with a flyer for the lunchroom bulletin board. You may also want to speak to the human resources managers of larger businesses and ask if they would like you to make a lunchtime presentation to staff.

Know your neighbourhood. Does it contain retirement homes, daycare centres, or major retailers, such as grocery chains or home supplies centres with stocking centres? Find the topics that will be of interest to the people who live and work around you, and become a public educator. It works!

TIP:

Position yourself as an expert on a topic of interest to your audience to make chiropractic care relevant to them. Remember: generally speaking, most audiences are interested in prevention and self-help information that is relevant to their specific situation. Think about it this way: would you come out for a talk on medicine or optometry? Probably not. Similarly, people are not likely to make time for a presentation on chiropractic, but they may be interested in tips for getting a better night's sleep, managing back pain during pregnancy or enhancing muscle and joint function in relation to sports.

Here are a few opportunities for public speaking:

- Address a local gardening club or offer to host a seminar at a local gardening centre on preventing back pain when working in the yard.
 - Arrange talks at local sports clubs or golf courses on preventing and treating sports injuries, and enhancing joint and muscle function.
 - Offer to provide a lunch-and-learn talk for major employers in your area. Vary your focus depending on the type of employee, such as assembly line workers, warehouse workers, sedentary office workers and so on.
 - Set up a panel of local chiropractors to address healthy lifestyle issues. Promote the seminar through members' offices, or invite patients to bring a friend. Consider running a seminar notice in your community paper, where advertising is probably much less expensive than in a major daily newspaper.
 - Seek speaking opportunities at your local business clubs or chamber of commerce. Talk about stress in the workplace, proper ergonomics or the prevalence of back pain and its impact on employee health and productivity.
- Find out if your local community centre offers a seminar series and propose topics of interest to community centre users.
 - Visit your local elementary school and offer to give a presentation on backpack safety.
 - Offer to participate in the activity programs at local retirement residences. Talk to seniors about staying fit in their elder years when mobility is often decreased and arthritis and osteoporosis are limiting factors for many.
 - Seek out the women's clubs in your area and offer to give a talk on posture, stress relief or other topics of relevance to women.

TIP:

When you are in the limelight, you are an ambassador for the profession. Take a public service approach. Talk about what matters to your audience.

Tips for successful public speaking

Here are some tips for ensuring that your speaking engagements are successful and position you as a credible health professional:

Be relevant to your audience

Have a good idea to whom you will be speaking. If the audience members are of different ages or have no single factor in common, ensure that your remarks touch on a variety of situations so that they are relevant to the various individuals in the group.

Focus on practical self-help and prevention information. Arrive early and greet some members of the audience as they arrive. Doing so will make you more comfortable and create a caring impression.

Know the room or location

Be familiar with the place in which you will speak. Arrive early, walk around the speaking area and practise using the microphone and any visual aids.

Know your material

Practise your presentation beforehand and get feedback on it from friends and colleagues. Make it as relevant and practical as possible — your audience is looking to you for credible information and advice on issues that affect them. Use simple language and give examples to illustrate points. Never “wing it.”

Involve your audience

Pose a question and ask for a show of hands from the audience. Ask for a volunteer from the audience to help demonstrate a stretch, good postural alignment or another tip. Invite dialogue throughout the presentation and leave time at the end to mingle.

Stick to your time allocation

Do not go over your time allotment and make sure to leave time for questions and answers. Long-winded presentations will both inconvenience and bore your audience. If questions from the audience are numerous, wrap up the formal part of your talk on time, and then mingle with the members of the audience who wish to remain afterward.

Provide handouts

The CCA and many provincial associations have high-quality handouts that you can give to people at speaking events. A handout serves as a reminder of your presentation, and reinforces your expertise.

WOMEN AND HEALTHCARE

Market research tells us that the majority of health care decision makers are women between the ages of 25 and 54. Health care practitioners who can meet the needs of women not only are far more likely to increase their patient base among the female population (approximately 54% of all Canadians), but also will probably gain new patients from among the husbands, children and parents of those women.

New and expectant mothers are especially interested in their own and their babies' health. Working mothers struggle to find time for their own health care needs while juggling the demands of job and family. Older women are faced with new health concerns and new aches and pains. So, give some thought to how to reach out to the women in your community. For example, consider developing a series of monthly workshops for women, possibly in collaboration with other health professionals, to further expand your network of relationships. Here are some workshop ideas.

- **Breastfeeding.** Host a breastfeeding workshop together with a lactation consultant or midwife.
- **Healthy pregnancy.** Invite a nutritionist or public health nurse to participate in a pregnancy seminar.
- **Colic.** Focus a workshop on mothers with colicky babies. Invite mothers who have experienced this problem to participate and to share their experiences.
- **Scoliosis.** Host a question-and-answer workshop to address parents' concerns about scoliosis in children.
- **Kids and sports injuries.** Invite local coaches of popular children's sports to join you in presenting a workshop on preventing sports-related injuries.
- **Stress relief.** Team up with a relaxation consultant or psychotherapist to give a workshop on de-stressing for busy women.

Promote the workshops in your office and through free community service calendars on local radio and television stations. Ask to put up a poster in stores or venues that your audience frequents. Encourage your workshop partners to join you in promoting the seminar. It's a win-win for everyone.

PATIENT RETENTION, REACTIVATION AND REFERRALS

06

The CCA's market research shows that people seek care when they have a problem and tend to cease care once they are feeling better. The most common reason cited for discontinuing chiropractic care is "the problem got better." This is a great testament to the effectiveness of chiropractic treatment, but it also poses a challenge to getting patients to return for re-evaluation and maintenance. Even though patients may experience another episode of what troubles them, many will simply tough it out and not get around to visiting you again.

Here are some methods for creating loyalty in new patients and staying in touch with previous patients. These methods require little organization and time, involve little cost and work over the long term.

FIVE METHODS FOR CREATING PATIENT LOYALTY

1. The Welcome Note

Sending a handwritten welcome note to new patients after their first visit lets them know you care. It tells them that they mean more to you than being just another patient. Yours may well be the only welcome note they have ever received from a health professional. Include your business card and emergency contact instructions, and simply say that you look forward to seeing the patient again at the next appointment. A computerized letter is fine, but a short handwritten note on your office stationary is more genuine.

2. The First Adjustment Follow-Up Phone Call

Many patients will experience relief after their first adjustment, but some may have temporary discomfort or concerns. A follow-up phone call will ensure that any post-treatment concerns are addressed and will encourage the patient to return for the next appointment.

3. The Thank-You Note

Send a thank-you note to anyone who refers a patient to your office. Doing so is a courtesy that is always appreciated but often neglected. A simple thank you will also encourage more referrals. Be careful about gifts because they may be considered kickbacks. As in so many things, it's the thought that counts.

4. The Annual Reminder Card

Dentists and optometrists send reminder cards. You should, too. A simple annual reminder for a spinal health checkup keeps you in mind. If a patient has not visited you for some time, he or she will probably have experienced some aches and pains in the interim. A reminder card can prompt the patient to come in again.

5. The Happy Birthday Greeting

Sending a birthday card says you are thinking of the patient. Almost everyone appreciates a birthday card, and it also serves as a reminder for patients who have not been in for a while. A simple "wishing you good health" message is all that's needed.

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS WITH MDS

The CCA has developed a two-part, CD-ROM-based guide to building relationships with MDs. This resource is the result of research conducted both with MDs who refer to chiropractors, and with DCs who have good referral relationships with MDs. The resource contains a wealth of advice and practical support tools for establishing and building relationships. Included are:

- Sample introductory letters.
- Template reporting forms.
- A PowerPoint presentation on chiropractic designed for medical audiences.

- Key research papers.
- Referenced condition papers on major indications for chiropractic care to share with MDs.
- Tips for handling sensitive situations.

The resource is available at no cost and can be downloaded from the CCA website (www.ccachiro.org). The guides are located in the "Members" section of the website. To access it, you will need your CCA ID number and you will need to create a password if you have not already done so. Help with either of these things is only a click away on the website.

To find the guides on the website, click on "Member Resources" on the top navigation bar of the home page. Then choose "Your Guide to Building DC-MD Relationships" on the right-hand side of the screen.

ADVERTISING

07

As a practice-building tool for chiropractors, advertising can be a useful addition to your communications arsenal, but it has its limits. This section explores what advertising can do for your practice, when and where to advertise, and provides a step-by-step approach to help you write and design effective, practice-building advertising.

Regardless of the tips in this chapter, all chiropractic advertising must conform to the advertising regulations established by the licensing authority in your province. Some provinces permit testimonial-style advertising, and some do not. Some restrict Yellow Pages advertising to only a clinic name and contact information listing; others permit more descriptive advertising. Before creating an ad, check with your provincial licensing authority to ensure that you are familiar with the guidelines in your province.

ADVERTISING HEALTH SERVICES

Advertising works for Coke and Nike, but does it work for health care communications? There is a difference between much of the traditional brand advertising you have been exposed to and the kind of advertising that is effective in promoting a health service.

In the consumer marketplace, advertising is primarily used to sell a product or service. The ads you see every day are mostly aimed at motivating consumers to purchase a product because it is on sale, is new, is better than other products, or fits the image consumers have or want to have of themselves.

These typical selling and motivational propositions, however, generally do not apply to health care. Even though people may pay for health services, such as chiropractic, dentistry, physiotherapy or massage therapy, people do not view them as sales commodities. Consequently, a “selling” approach to professional health services advertising does not connect with the image the public expects from health care providers. In fact, it usually diminishes the credibility of the provider and the profession.

As the examples on the following pages demonstrate, an understated, professional approach to advertising your practice will create the right tone.

This chapter focuses on raising awareness of a practice through advertising not on general image building or awareness raising for the profession as a whole. Advertising is expensive, and the cost of radio and television advertising is generally out of reach for most individual practices. Local print media are usually the most affordable in terms of advertising, and this chapter will focus on such print publications as the Yellow Pages and community newspapers.

WHAT TO EXPECT WHEN YOU ADVERTISE

Chiropractic advertising is not a “silver bullet” that will automatically bring customers in the door or result in the kind of consumer response that advertising a new soft drink will. A soft drink purchase is a casual, spontaneous decision; a health care choice is not. Many factors must converge before an individual will seek out a health care provider. Most importantly, that person will not act unless he or she has a problem, is motivated to address it and decides that chiropractic is a treatment option.

Advertising is best viewed as one element of a long-term communication effort to build your practice, and it must align with all the other aspects of your business. If you tell people you offer a friendly, family-oriented practice, but your office is dreary without a toy or book in sight, your advertising efforts will not match what you are offering.

WHEN TO ADVERTISE

There are three main reasons to consider using paid advertising to help build your practice:

1. Raising awareness of your practice

Advertising can increase the visibility of your practice and inform potential patients about your services, location and how to reach you. It is also an opportunity to set yourself apart by conveying a core idea about your practice. This happens by promoting the key messages about your practice, as discussed in the “Positioning Your Practice” chapter of this guide. The important thing is to determine your core idea or “positioning,” describe it in clear terms and reiterate it throughout all your communications.

2. Publicizing an event

Advertising is an effective method of informing the public about where and when an event will take place. Often local media will air or print public service announcements at no cost when an event such as a seminar or sponsorship of a charitable event is open to the public and nothing is being sold. Sometimes, however, purchasing the advertising space to publicize your event or involvement is necessary.

3. Raising awareness of chiropractic

Advertising that raises awareness of the chiropractic profession and links it to specific health issues (such as back pain) is an appropriate way to inform the public about chiropractic as a treatment option. This type of advertising needs to be crafted carefully and is usually undertaken by your national and provincial associations on behalf of the profession as a whole.

WHEN NOT TO ADVERTISE

Advertising is effective for certain types of messaging, but not all kinds. Advertising is not a credible method for doing the following.

Educating people about chiropractic

Seminars, newsletters, magazine articles and display booths are effective ways to educate people about chiropractic. Advertising that is of an “educational” nature, however, usually fails because ads ideally should be brief and address something of immediate interest to the reader. People do not read ads to “learn” about a subject of no personal relevance in their lives; they do, though, respond to ads that speak about issues that are already on their minds, such as back pain or a sports injury.

Fighting back

Using advertising to correct misconceptions or clarify issues generally backfires and lessens credibility for several reasons:

- Many people are already skeptical about advertising, and this kind of ad does not help. Advertising consistently ranks low when people are asked to rate their most credible source of information.
- Such advertising is seen as defensive. A common reaction to this type of advertising is, “Nobody would believe them so they had to take out an ad.”
- The best defence is a good offence. Positive advertising about health issues that positions chiropractic as a professional, credible treatment option does more to influence public opinion than trying to “correct” negatives.

Talking about subluxation

Discussing subluxation is simple for chiropractors but can be confusing for the public. In 1999, the Ontario Chiropractic Association (OCA) tested a subluxation message using a television commercial developed in consultation with local chiropractors and the Communication Committees of the OCA and CCA. Focus groups were conducted with randomly selected members of the public during development of the ad, before its month-long airing and afterward. The results indicated that not only was the average viewer confused and disturbed by the term “subluxation,” but those who had previously seen a chiropractor responded negatively to the message as well.

Here are a few tips to take into consideration when presenting this concept to the public:

- Mention the concept of subluxation only in situations in which you have adequate time to explain it, for example, in a one-on-one discussion with an existing or potential patient, or in a brochure.
- Do not use this term to attempt to scare people into getting treatment.
- Keep your words simple. Terminology can be confusing to the public, so use plain, understandable language.

WHERE TO ADVERTISE

The term “advertising” encompasses a great many different vehicles and tools. What will work for you depends primarily on what you want to say and to whom. As a starting point, you need to establish why you want to advertise. This will clarify what tactics you should use and what you should expect from the advertising.

For example, you might want to advertise to:

- Inform people that your office has just opened in the neighbourhood, and invite people to an open house.
- Maintain awareness of an existing practice.
- Publicize a one-time educational event.

The following are some of the most relevant advertising opportunities for practice building.

Yellow Pages	Yearly	Build awareness of your practice and services
Community newspaper	Weekly, bi-weekly, monthly	Build awareness of your practice and services Publicize an event
Daily newspaper	Daily	Build awareness of your practice and services Publicize an event
Flyers	Left in community centres, gyms, seniors residences, offices, etc.	Publicize an event
Posters	Posted in parks, community centres, gyms, seniors residences, etc.	Publicize an event
Local magazines	Local health, tourism or business publications	Build awareness of your practice and services

Here are some key questions to ask yourself once you have narrowed down your list.

What size will the ad be?

Bigger is not always better, but “page dominant” is good. A general rule for newspaper ads is that they be no smaller than one-quarter of a page; Yellow Pages ads should be one-eighth of a page or larger. Colour can increase the impact of an ad but usually costs more than a black-and-white ad.

Where should the ad be placed?

Ads placed in the top half of the page are most effective. If the newspaper is divided into sections, consider placing your ad in the one that is most appropriate (e.g., sports section, gardening section, women’s section). Avoid the classified section.

How much will the ad cost?

Costs vary depending on location, publication, ad size and so on. Always compare costs before you select the publication. Investigate how many people get it and who they are (e.g., people over 50 years, athletes, business people) to ensure that you reach your intended audience. Most publications will negotiate a better rate if you run an ad more than once.

How long and how often should the ad run?

Usually, the results of advertising once are unsatisfactory. A sustained presence — every month or every other month for four to six months in a local monthly magazine — is more effective. For a weekly community newspaper, advertising once a week for several weeks would be a good way to start.

It is important that you know where you are going to advertise before you start to develop content or design an ad. You will need to know how much space you have to work with so you know how much content can fit into the ad. After all, there is no point in spending money for colour pictures if the ad is in black and white or if the content will not fit into a small ad.

HOW TO WRITE AN EFFECTIVE AD

A great deal of research has gone into what makes advertising effective — what works and what doesn't. Here are a few general principles that apply to creating effective advertising.

Focus on one idea

People are bombarded hourly with unsolicited advertising messages. To break through the clutter of information and loud retail advertising in a Yellow Pages directory or community newspaper, an ad should deliver one idea in a compelling manner, with an easy-to-grasp message. Here's an example: "Back Pain? Consider Chiropractic." Period. Remember that

an ad is not a textbook on a subject, nor is it a catalogue of services. Look back to the work you did in the "Positioning Your Practice" chapter and build on your strengths.

Focus on the receiver of the message, not the sender.

Good advertising focuses on what the receiver of the message is interested in, not what the sender thinks is important. Chiropractors have a wealth of information they would like to convey, but people are more interested in their own health and wellness and in finding a safe, effective solution to their problems.

For example, people are less likely to read an ad declaring, "Introducing Chiropractic Treatment" but are more likely to read one that says, "Suffering from Back Pain?" or "Back Pain? We Can Help."

Pick an area on which to focus, and try to turn your idea into a "heading." Remember: this is the core idea that your ad is going to convey, and you want it to capture the attention of your audience. So make it about your readers.

Identify and prioritize your services

Before you do anything else, create a checklist of the unique or compelling features and benefits your practice has to offer, and organize them by type of offering and order of priority.

Features are the details (e.g., services, hours) and benefits are "what those details mean to me" (i.e., the reader). Benefit-oriented advertising is generally more effective than other types because it appeals to the reader's self-interest. For example, "Come in early before work" is more likely to get someone's attention than "Extended hours." Remember the "brand" and "unique proposition" that you created for your clinic in the "Positioning Your Practice" section of this guide, and incorporate that positioning into your advertising.

Here are some examples of features that could be included in an ad:

- Specialized staff (e.g., massage therapist, naturopath, acupuncturist)
- Multipractitioner clinic
- Rehab facilities
- Extended hours
- House visits
- Expertise in whiplash/repetitive strain/sports injuries/arthritis etc.

Here are some examples of benefits to include:

- Get back to doing what you love (golf/sports/family activities)
- Get care before going to work
- Get back to work
- Relieve pain
- Increase mobility/flexibility

Next, think about the ad from the reader's point of view, and identify any contact or identity-related information that must appear in your ad:

- Clinic name
- Telephone number
- Website URL
- Directions/map
- Your logo if you have one
- The CCA logo or provincial association logo (Note: Use of either logo must be accompanied by the word "Member.")

Now come the tough decisions. What will fit? What won't? If you choose to work with one, a professional designer will help you understand how much content is appropriate and design your ad for maximum readability and impact.

Use simple, accessible language

Your potential customers talk about back pain, joint pain and headaches, not musculoskeletal disorders. They talk about what hurts, not about subluxations. Using technical terms confuses people, which can lead to skepticism.

Keep the message short and simple

A good ad has one message that it delivers in a succinct, simple manner. If your one idea is "back pain," focus on it alone. Inform people about your other offerings when they visit your practice. In advertising, wordiness works against effectiveness. An ad crammed with type is often uninviting to read.

Make your ad factual

Health services communication must conform to a standard different from that for advertising for other products and services. Health services communication should have a professional tone and not make unsubstantiated claims. For example, "Chiropractic helps relieve back pain" is a factual statement that can be backed up with scientific evidence and resonates with users and non-users alike. Avoid stating that it cures or that it is the 'only' cure or that it is the best. Familiarize yourself with the regulations and guidelines that pertain to advertising chiropractic in your province before running an ad.

Make it professional

It is important that all chiropractic communications maintain a professional tone and approach. The language you use plays a big role in accomplishing this. When in doubt, err on the side of caution: overly friendly or “cute” language, and gimmicks such as coupons hurt the credibility of the profession and fail to convey the professional tone appropriate to your education and knowledge.

HOW TO DESIGN AN EFFECTIVE AD

Now that you have a sense of what you want to say, design your ad and ensure that it has an impact. Here are a few general principles that apply to most advertising.

Think about the reader

This tip bears repeating. For every piece of information, image or even colour you select, think about what it will mean to the reader. Run your ideas by people whose opinions you value to make sure that you are not “talking to yourself” or to those who already know a lot about chiropractic. Since your advertising is aimed at building your practice and attracting new users, it is important that your ad use images and headings that clarify chiropractic and help newcomers connect their need to your offering.

Use a professional designer

We can all recognize a good ad, but that does not mean we can all design one. Using a professional designer is the best way to ensure that you have a quality ad. You or your friend’s child may be a whiz on the computer, but that person may not know how to use white space to its best advantage, or the rules for legibility, readability and flow. If you are going to spend money to advertise, make the investment count and invest up front in the services of a professional designer.

Use a readable, professional typeface

Select one that is easy to read but looks professional. Typefaces vary dramatically in legibility and size, so selecting the one that will work the best is difficult. Where your ad will appear — on a poster or in a newspaper, for example — will affect the selection of the typeface and its size.

Here are some examples of poor choices and professional choices, all 12 point in size.

- **Comic sans** looks friendly, but is not very professional.
- **BERMUDA IP SQUIGGLE** is noticeable but hard to read.
- *French Script* may feel elegant but is hard to read and old-fashioned.
- **Verdana** is a readable, professional font.
- **Times New Roman** is too.
- **Arial** is a good choice.

As was mentioned in the “Positioning Your Practice” chapter, it is important to be consistent in your communications so that they all have the same “feel” and work together to build your business. You will want to use the same typeface in all your communications. Selecting a font requires careful consideration, so getting the advice of a professional designer is worthwhile. Keep the following guidelines in mind:

- Avoid using too many typefaces. Choose two at most, one for headings and other important information, and one for body copy.
- Avoid superimposing type over images, as doing so can inhibit the legibility of the piece.

Select appropriate images

Any image (or word or idea, for that matter) that is not going to resonate with the reader should not be in your ad. Effective imagery emphasizes the benefits of chiropractic. While a realistic image of a spine may communicate “chiropractic,” many people may find such an image disturbing and intimidating. An image of someone walking pain-free or receiving treatment is probably more persuasive.

Design the content to attract readers. Today, many people skim or scan ads rather than read them through, and if your ad does not get the reader’s attention immediately, he or she moves on. Ads with confusing content or dense type are often seen as requiring excessive effort. A simple, straightforward layout that emphasizes one idea and is easy to read is key. Here are some guidelines for making your ad effective:

- If the copy is longer than one paragraph, organize the information in groups and use subheadings to indicate the content of each.
- Make the main heading bigger than other content, and place it near the top so that it is the first thing the reader sees.
- Ensure that the ad contains enough white space so that the content is easy to read.

Below is an example of headings that could be used to organize the content:

Focus of Treatment	Clinic Services
Arthritis Back and Neck Pain Headaches Sports Injuries	Chiropractic Massage Therapy Orthotics

HOW IT ALL COMES TOGETHER: EXAMPLES OF EFFECTIVE AND INEFFECTIVE ADVERTISING

You can learn a great deal by studying bad and good ads; doing so will help you start to understand what works and what does not.

The next section contains some concrete examples of weak ads and effective ones that will help you design more effective practice-building advertising materials. Turn the page for some advertising makeovers.

"BEFORE" AND "AFTER" ADVERTISING EXAMPLES

BEFORE

Chiropractic Plus - Community Newspaper/Yellow Pages - ¼ page

Imagery lacks meaning for lay readers

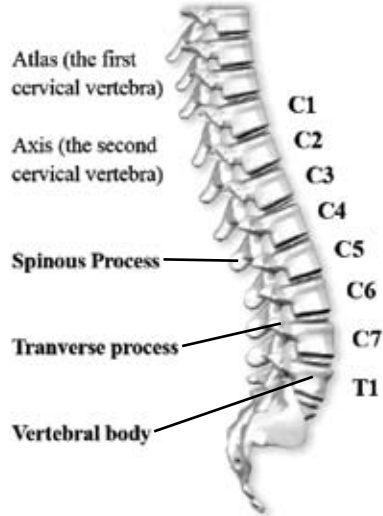


Type face is too small and difficult to read

Your spine is the highway for your central nervous system. A chiropractor is trained to use a variety of diagnostic methods to examine and treat your spine. Since your nervous system determines how well you feel physically, mentally, and emotionally, many problems you are experiencing may be related to a problem with your spine and nervous system. Chiropractic corrects spinal subluxations that interfere with your health. After chiropractic care your body will be better able to heal itself. This, in turn, aids your body in maintaining optimum health and contributes to your overall wellness. Chiropractors believe in a holistic approach to health and healing, and have spearheaded this powerful health care trend in North America. Chiropractic Plus also offers massage therapy, naturopathy and acupuncture.

Dense copy is not inviting to readers

Use chiropractic to correct subluxations and achieve optimal health for life!



Spine image is off-putting



Member

Chiropractic Plus

111 Main St. 3rd Floor
Toronto, ON A1A 2B2
(111)111-1111

Telephone number is hard to read

- Three different typefaces are used
- Terminology is difficult to understand
- Ad fails to provide information about the benefits of services or relate them to the reader's problems

AFTER

Chiropractic Plus - Community Newspaper/Yellow Pages - ¼ page

Logo is good



Chiropractic Plus



Bad Back? Feel Better.

Chiropractic can help. Chiropractic is a specialized health science that focuses on back pain as well as muscle and joint conditions. We provide tailored treatment to get you back on your feet and to help contribute to your overall health.



Treatment for:

- back pain
- stiff joints
- injuries
- foot pain
- arthritis

Chiropractic Plus offers chiropractic, massage therapy, naturopathy and acupuncture.

Jane Smith, DC

Licensed chiropractor since 1991

Located right beside the Main St. subway station with convenient, extended clinic hours.

Chiropractic Plus 111 Main St. 3rd floor Toronto, ON A1A 2B2
(111) 111-1111 www.chiropracticplus.ca

Headlines and bullets organize content

Language is accessible and meaningful to readers with "bad backs"

Type treatment is consistent and legible

- Easy to read
- Clinic identity is clear — name, logo, heading descriptions and services are integrated
- Conveys a distinct image

BEFORE

Chiropractic Sport and Rehab Centre - Community Newspaper/Yellow Pages - 1/4 page

Heading is not about reader's interests and does not relate to the clinic name or core offering

Chiropractic is a lifestyle choice that helps you feel better every day.



Logo takes up a lot of page

First treatment free* • Treats sports injuries • Orthotics • Neck pain • Back pain • Massage • Individualized programs

Multiple messages mean the reader does not know where to look first

Image of building has little purpose

Testimonials

"I love chiropractic, it is part of my training regime and it helps my performance."

"Chiropractic care made a significant difference in my recovery. One day I could not walk and the day after my first chiropractic treatment I was up and moving"

Testimonials do not add credibility; devalues and alienates GPs

Superimposing content over image makes content hard to read

Extended hours - open late!
Call Dr. John!!
222.222.2222
222 Doe St., 2nd floor
Fredericton, NB B1B 2B2

"I am back playing golf thanks to Dr. John."

(*when you sign up for 20 pre-paid sessions)

- "Sales" tone is unprofessional
- Busyness of ad detracts from message

AFTER


Chiropractic Sport and Rehab Centre - Community Newspaper/Yellow Pages - ¼ page

Heading is strong, short and to the point

Wordmark is good

Content speaks to the reader's interests

Single font communicates activity and professionalism



Recover from sports injuries faster.

Chiropractic is successfully used by many professional athletes for injury prevention and treatment – it can help you too.

CHIROPRACTIC
SPORT & REHAB CENTER

DR. JOHN SABINSKI brings over 20 years of expertise in:

- **SPORT INJURIES**
- **ORTHOTICS**
- **OPTIMIZING JOINT/MUSCLE FUNCTION**
- **REHABILITATION**

Chiropractic Sport & Rehab Center
222 Doe St. 2nd Floor Fredericton, NB B1B 2B2
222-222-2222
Open evenings and Saturday mornings

- Layout increases readability
- Clinic identity is clear — name, logo, heading descriptions and services are integrated
- Conveys a professional, straightforward image

FLYER EXAMPLES

FLYER 1 Full 8 1/2 x 11 page

Logo is good



Chiropractic Plus



Bad Back? Feel Better.

Free Public Health Seminar

123 Main St. Community Centre
2:00 - 2:30 PM Saturday July 25th, 2007



Learn how to take care of your back for life in an informative session by **Jane Smith**, Chiropractor and manager of **Chiropractic Plus** since 1991.

“ I find Jane’s seminars to be fascinating. They are fun, factual and give me concrete things to do to improve my health. ”

Chiropractic Plus can help. Chiropractic is a specialized health science that focuses on back pain as well as muscle and joint conditions. We provide tailored treatment to get you back on your feet and help contribute to your overall health.

Chiropractic Plus offers chiropractic, massage therapy, naturopathy and acupuncture, all available in-clinic.

Language is professional yet accessible

Content speaks to the reader’s interests

Chiropractic Plus 111 Main St. 3rd floor Toronto, ON A1A 2B2
111 111-1111 www.chiropracticplus.ca

Jane Smith, D.C.
Licensed chiropractor since 1991

Located right beside the Main St. subway station with convenient, extended hours.

- Focus on self-help and public education is good
- Photo conveys benefits

FLYER 2
Full 8 1/2 x 11 page

Heading is strong, short and to the point

Learn how to recover from sports injuries faster.

Chiropractic is successfully used by many professional athletes for injury prevention and treatment – it can help you too.



CALL US NOW
to book your spot
222-222-2222

30 minute seminar

Tuesday July 21st
Fitness Land 123 Doe St.
6:40-7:10 PM

no admission fee
Coffee, tea and snacks will be served.

Single font communicates activity and professionalism

DR. JOHN SABINSKI
brings over 20 years of expertise in:

- **SPORT INJURIES**
- **ORTHOTICS**
- **OPTIMIZING JOINT/ MUSCLE FUNCTION**
- **REHABILITATION**

Whether you are an athlete, weekend warrior, coach, or just considering getting more active, this seminar is for you! You will learn the:

- 5 top stretching errors
- 4 top causes of injuries
- 3 essential treatments for any injury
- 2 signs that it is time to see a health-care professional and more...

Content speaks to the reader's interests

BROUGHT TO YOU BY THE
CHIROPRACTIC
SPORT & REHAB CENTER

Dr. John Sabinski 222-222-2222
222 Doe St, 2nd Floor Fredericton, NB B1B 2B2

- Focus on education, not sales, is clear
- Language is inclusive and inviting, while maintaining a confident, professional tone
- Layout increases readability

Do's and Don'ts of Advertising

Following the guidelines below will help you improve your advertising materials.

DO

- Develop clear, simple headings such as “Back pain? Chiropractic can help.”
- Communicate your services clearly, especially the ones that are unique to your practice or that people find the most helpful.
- Provide contact information.
- Use a consistent font and colour palette.
- Keep content factual.
- Use a professional tone.

DON'T

- Use confusing technical language or “jargon.”
- Try to educate your audience with too much information.
- Superimpose type over images.
- Use a font that is hard to read.
- Make your content so cluttered that it is hard to read.
- Exaggerate treatment claims (e.g., “Immediate results!”)

TESTING YOUR ADVERTISEMENT

Once you have developed your advertising piece, it is a good idea to check what people think of it before you have it printed. Ask patients, friends, family, The CCA or your provincial association to review your advertisement. Here are a few good questions to ask:

- What is the main message?
- What do people notice or remember from the ad; what stands out?
- What does the ad want the reader to do?
- Is the language understandable to the ordinary person?
- Is the content accurate?
- Is it professional?

CONCLUSION

Used correctly, advertising can be a powerful tool in building your practice, but it will not magically make patients appear. Advertising needs to be part of a larger marketing and communication plan that uses a variety of tools and tactics, as outlined in this guide.

If you decide to use advertising as one of your communication tactics, remember that The CCA and your provincial association are here to help.

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER: A PLANNING TEMPLATE

08

Use this template to map out your practice positioning and communications strategy

PRACTICE POSITIONING
Clinic Name
Key Message
Supporting Messages 1. 2. 3.
Benefits 1. 2. 3.
Additional Features
CREATING SUPERIOR PATIENT VALUE
Reception Protocols 1. 2. 3.
Patient Education Materials 1. 2. 3.

PATIENT RETENTION, REACTIVATION AND REFERRALS

- Welcome note
- First visit follow-up phone call
- Referral thank you
- Annual checkup reminder
- Birthday card

MD RELATIONSHIPS

DC-MD Relationship-Building Toolkit:

- Part 1
- Part 2

COMMUNITY RELATIONS

Target Audience	Communications Activity
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	

ADVERTISING PLAN

Publication Name	Size	How Often	When	Cost	Core Content

PRACTITIONERS SHARE THEIR TIPS

09

In this section, five practitioners from across the country share what worked for them in building their practices.

Dr. Cam Potter practises in Cambridge, Ont., with his father and brother. The practice includes a massage therapist and a reflexologist. Dr. Potter has a satellite practice with three massage therapists and an acupuncturist in nearby Ayr.

I'm a second-generation chiropractor who graduated in 1996 from New York Chiropractic College. I practise with my father and my brother in a large town that has a "small town, blue collar, everyone-knows-everyone" atmosphere. Here are a few tips that have worked well for me in building my practice over the past 10 years.

BE CONFIDENT

Your patients need to know that you can help them. I always go into the reception area to greet patients, introduce myself and bring them into the exam room. I usually engage in some general banter to try to establish some common ground and gain further insight into the patient's health. I ask questions to guide the patient's narrative and have found that most of the time patients have a good idea what their problem is, just no clue on how to fix it. Once we have a diagnosis for their problem, we discuss our plan of management. In my experience, patients

are very happy and relieved to know what the problem is, how it will be corrected and how long it will take to do so. I never discuss ongoing, long-term care in the first few visits, and I encourage my patients to take an active role in the management of their health. This often leads to patients who keep returning and who refer others.

TAKE YOUR TIME

Many large patient surveys report that patients are highly satisfied with their chiropractic care because it works; we take our time with them and actively listen. This is your patients' time, and they are choosing to spend their hard-earned money on your services. If you rush them through and treat them like a number, you will notice that your numbers will not grow. People's health issues often stem from a combination of emotional, chemical and physical factors, and they are ever changing. Taking your time allows you to address your patients' changing health dynamic. Respect your patients' time by seeing them on time. If you expect them to make appointments, schedule your time appropriately so your patients do not have to wait. Everyone's time is valuable.

MAKE YOURSELF AVAILABLE

I have an on-call number that my patients rarely use, but they really appreciate knowing that I am there for them. I also have regular office hours in the evenings, early mornings and Saturdays. Patients' health issues are not confined to Monday to Friday, 9 to 5, and their own work schedules are long and hectic. Establishing office hours that meet your patients' needs adds another level of service that may set you above the rest and make your clinic a destination.

COMMUNICATE WITH OTHER HEALTH PROFESSIONALS

I always send a brief note (with patients' permission) to their MD, physiotherapist or registered massage therapist and have found the "CCA Guide to Building DC-MD Relationships" a very helpful template in that regard. When I send a note about a co-patient to a health care provider who has not referred patients to me before, I also include a referral pad the provider can use for future referrals. Communication with other professionals has given me a broader point of view, allowing me to see chiropractic from a perspective other than mine. It has been valuable learning.

KEEP ON LEARNING

Through courses and seminars, I have been able to keep my practice fresh and energetic and to remain focused. Patients love to know that you are constantly improving and learning more. One of the most important things I have learned is to recognize my strengths and weaknesses and to refer the patient to another provider when needed. This means putting aside your ego in the best interest of your patient.

SHOP WHERE YOU WORK

It stands to reason that most people choose their chiropractor on the basis of location, convenience and direct referral. I am always amazed by the number of referrals I receive from the staff at the local bank, the doughnut shop and so on, and often from people who are not patients but just know me. I go out of my way to introduce myself, but I never try to solicit business. If I am in need of a plumber or mechanic, for example, I always use the services of one of my patients. If you support local businesses and patients, they will support you. When involved in events outside of my office, I have had the most success by educating and providing information, not by promoting myself. Spending all your time handing out business cards and trying to book appointments counteracts all the good that you may have done. You may attract a few patients right now, but in the long run you drive many more away.

REMEMBER: YOUR REPUTATION IS EVERYTHING

Treat your patients and staff with respect, professionalism and compassion, and they will tell their friends, family and co-workers what a great chiropractor you are. It is a slow process to develop a good reputation and foster the confidence and respect of your community. As these grow, so does your practice, creating a strong foundation of referring patients. Getting involved in cheesy, unprofessional business practices makes you look like the used car salesman of the health care industry. If your focus becomes selling chiropractic to the masses and closing the deal, you will find that you will have to work harder and employ more gimmicks to get bodies in the door. Let the results of an adjustment speak for you, and great things will happen. We have to realize that we are health

care professionals first and business owners a distant second. When I first started in practice I was told “we are in the business of helping people, referrals are the greatest compliment, and money is just the by-product.”

HAVE FUN!

The road to a successful practice is long with a lot of bumps. Try not to focus on the difficulties because they will wear you down. Focus on the successes, no matter how small. The successes in your practice should not be limited to your personal or professional goals but, rather, should include the successes of your patients. Success is contagious. If you act, think and appreciate success, there will be no shortage of it in your life.

Dr. Hugh Armstrong practises in Estevan, Sask., and is an associate with two other practitioners, having recently sold his practice after 33 years. During his career, Dr. Armstrong has served the profession on numerous boards, committees and task forces. He is currently vice-chair of the Canadian Chiropractic Examining Board.

I was influenced to enter the profession by a very positive experience with a chiropractor in small town Saskatchewan. This was my introduction to 33 years of having fun at work. Recently, I sold my practice and am now the associate of two very fine practitioners. I have cut back on clinic hours but fill my time with continued involvement in the profession at both a provincial and national level.

As a veteran practitioner on the prairie in a smaller town setting, I am sometimes asked what it is that has made what one calls a “success” in my practice.

There are no secrets to establishing a successful practice. It takes time, hard work and integrity. I think the first three years of a practice are the most critical to a new practitioner. Increased competition for the health care dollar, increased numbers of chiropractors, increased start-up costs and heavy educational debts make it very difficult for new practitioners to pay the expenses, let alone have anything left over.

Add to this the fact that new chiropractors do not have the benefit of the many sources of patient referral that new medical doctors have. And we lack the guidance and mentoring that medical interns receive, such as the clinical experience and business skill development they receive in their residencies and various group practices. Consequently, I recommend going into practice with an established DC for the first couple of years. You will have a mentor to give you some help when you mess up, as you most certainly will in some form or other, and you will learn a lot about running and building a practice.

BE ECONOMICAL

One cardinal rule of starting practice is, be as economical as possible. Start small; you can always expand once you have a steady patient base.

Time is required to develop a practice and establish financial stability. There are some practice management gurus and some unscrupulous field practitioners who will prey on new graduates. Having a good understanding of the basics in finances and economics can prevent a lot of problems and costly mistakes.

BE HONEST WITH YOURSELF

Success is relative. Does one measure it in dollars or satisfaction in life? Certainly a respectable income makes for more satisfaction, but enjoying what you are doing and balancing your practice with family and personal interests is also very important. I am often guided by this quote, which is pasted on my desk at work: "There is little difference in people. But that little difference makes a big difference. That little difference is attitude. The big difference is whether it is positive or negative." W.C. Stone helps to keep me balanced and determine my approach to everyday matters.

Success in practice requires that you must be honest — with your patients, with your profession and with yourself. Don't sell your ethics and morals for a fast buck!

CONSIDER YOUR FRONT OFFICE AN ASSET

Within the practice your most valuable asset is a good front office. You cannot have grumpy, discourteous people answering your phone, moving patients through the waiting room and billing process or escorting them to your treatment rooms. We have been fortunate enough always to have had very loyal and pleasant front office personnel. Turnover in the part-time staff seems to be unavoidable, but the main office manager and full-time staff have been with us for years. They get to know the patients and their families, and this makes for pleasant, smooth initial contact and good patient relations.

VALUE COMMUNICATION

Communication with your patients is more important than the quality of the treatment provided. You may have the best procedures for treatment but, if you fail to establish a good rapport with your patients, you will not see them back in your office for a new complaint. Besides, a good communicator will pick up many of the psychosocial issues that may be affecting the response to treatment. This takes time and cannot be done if you try to pack patients into a few hours a day so that you can go golfing.

BUILD RELATIONSHIPS

There are times when you are not the answer to a patient's needs. Recognizing this and referring these patients to another health professional will insure a happy, loyal patient. It is neither ethical nor honest to keep these people returning when results are ineffective. You will get more referrals from patients who have been treated successfully, or from other health professionals you have referred them to, than you will from patients who quit coming because they were not getting help from you and had to seek that referral themselves. Besides, a sign of success is repeat patients, not necessarily the number of new patients. Over my 33 years in practice, the patients with whom I have had the least success and referred out, or have seen only once and in whom I have diagnosed a condition previously missed, have often been my best advertisements and sources of new patients. I now commonly see the third or fourth generation of these families, as well as the grandparents who first came to me.

Establish a good relationship with other health professionals—MDs, physiotherapists, dentists, optometrists and so on. You will need these relationships if you are doing proper diagnostic workups on your patients. Regardless of your treatment philosophy, you can never be all things to all people. Drugs are a part of modern-day health care. You cannot help someone get over an acute osteomyelitis without the use of antibiotics. You will get a quicker diagnosis if you suspect a detached retina and can get that patient to an optometrist who has the equipment to diagnose this and fast track that person to the appropriate care. Your patients will recognize this collaboration and feel reassured by it.

KEEP GROWING

Stay current by attending CE sessions, reading and learning as you practise. Rarely a day goes by that I don't reference some text or article that may refresh me on a specific diagnosis or treatment approach. Hours spent on CE do not necessarily mean clinical competency, but it is one way to access some of the recent updates in care. Patients are much more knowledgeable today. They have access to the Internet and will often have questions that, if not answered correctly, can prove embarrassing.

Learn some pharmacology. Drugs are prescribed now more than ever. There are numerous side effects and interactions that present as musculoskeletal problems (i.e., statins). By recognizing these, you can help your patient more than all the chiropractic treatments you can give.

So, to sum it up, hard work, a good financial grounding, honesty to your patients, your profession and yourself, good communication

skills, good front office people, a good network of health professionals to assist you and continuing to learn every day should help you to succeed in practice. Plus a little luck!

David Millar practises in Regina, Sask. He began his career 28 years ago in Saskatoon. He has worked in private practice, as a consultant chiropractor to a multidisciplinary team in a large rehabilitation hospital in Regina, as a consultant chiropractor at a physiotherapy clinic and as the chiropractic consultant to the Medical Services Branch of the Department of Health, Government of Saskatchewan.

When I was studying at the Canadian Memorial Chiropractic College, one of my favourite professors suggested that we maintain a "gem" book throughout our years in practice. Unfortunately, I did not heed his sage advice, but I have accumulated several gems that I think can help young chiropractors achieve some measure of success in their practices.

REMEMBER: EDUCATION IS A LIFE-LONG JOURNEY

Your education at chiropractic college is just the first step on a life-long quest for knowledge. If you ever feel that you have all the answers, I would suggest that you have stopped recognizing the questions. Begin to broaden your education as soon as you graduate and keep up the educational process throughout your professional career. Attend chiropractic seminars and conferences, but also attend multidisciplinary conferences that include your colleagues from the worlds of medicine and physiotherapy. These events can be illuminating and open your eyes to many new and varied treatment techniques.

BE CAUTIOUS

Do not feel compelled to manipulate or treat a patient on the first visit. It seems that chiropractors often have a compulsion to treat. I know I certainly felt that 25 or 30 years ago. However, the years have taught me to be more cautious with treatment. Be especially vigilant if the patient has a headache that is different from previous headaches or is described as very severe. Do not be afraid to monitor the patient for a day or two without treating. Also, never be afraid to refer a patient when you do not understand the source of a problem. The very best referring patient I have seen over my career was a woman I referred for an orthopedic appointment after my initial assessment. She was very grateful for this action and responded with many referrals over several years until her death.

BE PATIENT

One of the things I have learned doing team assessments of people who may or may not have had chiropractic care in the past is that the general public has a significant fear of cervical adjustment. It is important for chiropractors to recognize this fear and not be reticent to not adjust a cervical spine. I have introduced the mobilization techniques of Janda and others to my practice and have found that many people who are afraid of cervical adjustment respond very favourably to this type of treatment.

Be patient. If you do not get the result you want on the first visit, see the patient again. Things may go much better on a subsequent visit. Remember that you do not always need a "release" to achieve success with a patient. When I first began practising in Saskatoon, there was a chiropractor who had been practising for 62 years. At one of our monthly chiropractic society meetings, he related that it took him about 59 years in practice to learn that you did

not need a palpable or audible release to achieve your goals with a patient!

Another mentor suggested early on that you want "an iron fist in a velvet glove." Do what is necessary but be cautious to not treat patients too aggressively. Always remember the Hippocratic oath, "Above all, do no harm."

Another gem from a prof so many years ago: never assess or treat a patient if you are in a hurry. If you are running late and have an engagement outside of the office, do not see a patient who drops in to the office or that last new patient who calls late in the day. You must always give your full attention to each and every patient. Also be cautious when seeing new patients outside of your normal office hours.

ADOPT "HONESTY" AS A MANTRA

While "location, location, location" is the mantra in real estate, "honesty, honesty, honesty" should be the mantra of the chiropractic practice. Always be honest in your practice. Don't be afraid to say that you don't know something if that is the case. Always keep the patient's welfare in the forefront when making decisions. Treatment must always be recommended for the therapeutic benefit of the patient, not the financial benefit of the treating practitioner!

Be active in your community and remember that you are representing yourself and your profession in all of your activities in public. Community involvement will not only help build your practice but will enhance your personal well-being. The YMCA guiding principle of "Body, Mind, Spirit" should be the guiding principle of every chiropractor's life. It should provide direction for your own growth, development and well-being.

MEASURING SUCCESS

Success is not a destination, but rather a journey. Success can be measured in many ways: the number of patients one sees in a day, the number of cars in the driveway or the number of exotic vacations one takes in a year. The true measure of success is the legacy you leave behind. Steven Covey, author of *The Seven Habits of Highly Successful People* series, suggests that most people would want their eulogy to reflect a positive image of them. He goes as far as to suggest that people write their eulogy themselves the way they would like to be remembered, and then proceed to live their life in accordance with it. The way you live your personal and professional life is the only important legacy you have. It takes years to build a professional reputation but mere moments to shatter that reputation. It is very difficult to rebuild your professional reputation in the community. Always consider your professional reputation and integrity in the decisions you make every day.

Chiropractic is a very enjoyable career and provides many opportunities for positive interaction with your patients. Remember to have fun in practice!

Dr. Brian E. Lecker spreads his time between his three practices in Winnipeg, Niverville and the Churchill Regional Health Authority Hospital in Churchill, Man. He is a recipient of The CCA Award of Merit.

Coming from a family of optometrists, my journey into the health care field took a different twist, so to speak. Because I had no interest in following in the footsteps of my great-uncle, father, uncle and brother, and had had a positive experience with chiropractic treatment for a very sore neck, my goal was set. After entering

the Canadian Memorial Chiropractic College in the fall of 1974 and graduating in 1978, I began my journey to build an ethical and sustainable practice. When I look back on the past 27 years, I often wonder how I put things together. What does it take to succeed in practice? Here are some tips that have worked for me.

MENTORS

Prior to venturing out on my own, I associated with a well-respected chiropractor who had years of experience. I watched him with his patients, saw how he ran his practice and business, and, above all, listened to his words of wisdom. I remember being told that a good practice is not necessarily built on the number of new patients you see, but rather by retaining the patients you have. In essence, think of each patient as an investment. If it's a good investment, your practice will grow and new patients will enter your door in a natural progression.

OVERHEAD

What good is serving a growing group of patients if everything you earn goes toward your expenses? When I ventured out on my own 19 years ago with another practitioner, we purchased a house and converted it into an office. We run independent practices, share common overhead and cover for each other during vacations. Even with the escalating costs of running a practice, we are now mortgage free and each of us has managed to keep our overhead low by sharing the costs.

DIVERSIFICATION

Diversifying your practice will keep you fresh and enthusiastic. While associating with an established chiropractor during my initial seven years in practice, I set up a satellite office in a small town in the second year. I have maintained this practice two half-days a week, sharing an office with another health care practitioner. Five years ago, I added a third office (where I spend two to three days per month) in a hospital setting on the shores of Hudson Bay in Churchill. Aside from having a general neuro-musculoskeletal chiropractic practice, I took an interest in medico-legal work and became involved in doing third-party chiropractic examinations for the insurance and legal communities, along with case reviews for the Canadian Chiropractic Protective Association. Over the years I have also worked with numerous athletes, especially those involved in the sport of rhythmic gymnastics. In 2002, I received my certification in acupuncture, which has been a most helpful addition to my practice, especially since I have been able to broaden my knowledge by continuing with further courses. Essentially, if one area of practice or interest is slow, another is invariably busy.

PAPERWORK

While we all tend to get bogged down with paperwork, I recommend that you learn to hate it so much that you do it to get it out of the way. As one of my mentors stated to me early on, "Paperwork is money, it pays your bills. Do it!" Procrastination on your paperwork is directly proportional to not receiving payment from workers' compensation and other third-party payers. As well, doing paperwork promptly eliminates confrontation with patients who are depending on you to submit claims on their behalf. It is a stress that you do not need.

RESPECT

Always remember that a patient's time is as valuable and important as yours. I try to work as closely as possible to the schedule in my appointment book. Patients really appreciate it, and that builds loyalty. You know where that leads — to return appointments and new patient referrals.

SECOND OPINIONS

If patients want a second opinion, support them and initiate getting it. They are going to obtain that opinion regardless! By being proactive, you maintain your relationship with your patients. So, when in doubt, refer out. I usually refer patients, with a note, directly back to their family physician or to a group of sports medicine physicians with whom I have a good working relationship. You never lose a patient by referring. On the contrary, your image as a health care practitioner is only enhanced.

BEING YOURSELF

Let the tone of your office reflect your personality. Patients pick up on what is real and sincere and what is not.

EDUCATION

Continue to read and learn. Be familiar with the relevant journals and health topics. Your patients are reading more and more, so you need to keep up. Consider enhancing your skills by taking a fellowship or certification program such as in radiology, orthopedics, pediatrics, acupuncture, A.R.T. and so on.

THINGS TO AVOID

There are a number of tactics I have avoided in building my practice because I do not think that they are ethical or work over the long term. Hanging out in malls and performing unreliable tests on inquisitive shoppers is more consistent with the old snake-oil salesmen of yesteryear than a professional. Unfortunately, we have schools of thought that employ scare tactics and promote long-term prepayment contracts and unnecessary care, with no respect for the therapeutic effect offered by adjustment. Anyone can learn to do an adjustment. The skill is to not only know when to administer it and where to apply it, but, most important, to know when not to!

None of us like going to a car mechanic who cannot find what's wrong yet keeps us coming back and keeps charging for unnecessary parts and labour. This is no different from promoting long-term unnecessary care that seems to correspond to an inability to find the subluxation or fixation, failure to correct it and inability to leave it alone. This is a consumer's world. I want an honest mechanic who can pinpoint the problem and fix it with as little downtime as possible. Our patients expect the same. I have seen too many patients who were reluctant ever to see a chiropractor again because of questionable practice management tactics. This is not to say that all practice management firms are unethical. On the contrary; but, like anything, you must decide what is practical and ethical, and filter out what is not. The question to ask yourself in such situations is simple: is this in the best interest of my patient, my profession and my practice? It is helpful to periodically review the CCA Code of Conduct, which is an excellent guide.

In a nutshell, my message to those starting out in practice is this: learn from the profession's past, be current with the present and continue to study and learn into the future.

Dr. Shelley-Anne Sjonger-Appleton practises in Fall River, N.S. She has been in solo practice for seven years in a clinic she owns and operates. There are two massage therapists in her clinic, and she hired a new graduate as an associate. She is a past-president of the Council of the Nova Scotia College of Chiropractors.

There is no silver bullet, magic recipe or quick trick for developing a successful chiropractic practice, but, through trial and error I have established some principles that have worked for me. I am pleased to have the opportunity to share them. It has been my experience that all the rewards of a successful practice follow when your genuine concern is for your patient, when you treat each one as if he or she were your only patient and when your passion for chiropractic shines through your actions. Here are some of the practical things that have worked for me in my practice.

PATIENT COMMUNICATION

In my practice, communication starts with my initial contact with a new patient. I always introduce myself as Dr. Appleton and convey confidence when taking the patient's history and conducting the physical exam. Your self-assurance during a patient's first visit translates into comfort for the patient. If you are nervous, fumble through your exam or are tentative

when adjusting, the patient can sense your uneasiness. It is important that you reinforce patients' decision in choosing chiropractic for their health care by relaying your confidence through your behaviour.

As well as ensuring that patients respect you as doctor, it is equally important to make patients feel that they can relate to you on some level personally. In my experience, your ability to communicate on a common level (about the weather, children, pets, current events, sports, community involvement, the patient's job, etc.) helps to reduce patients' anxiety and often gives you insight into other potential issues regarding their health. One of my first questions to patients is, "Do you have any concerns about chiropractic?" or "Are you nervous about your visit today?" This is especially important with a patient who has never visited a chiropractor before, does not know what to expect and may have fears about adjustment. I also always ask, "What do you think is wrong with you?" It is amazing how these questions immediately break down barriers for patients.

PATIENT EDUCATION

Patient education is equally important to building a relationship. I use a variety of chiropractic educational tools in my office such as videos, plastic models (of spines, spinal degeneration, vertebral segments), and anatomical and nerve charts. I encourage patients to hold the models and help them understand what chiropractic care is and how it relates to them.

Education follows my patients out the door. They receive take-home information after the first and second visits, including an information sheet that contains frequently asked questions about what to expect after the first adjustment, do's and don'ts (this information has been set up in such a manner that I can circle the appropriate instructions depending on patients' circumstances), and some basic coping mechanisms to use at home (icing instructions, basic stretches, sleeping postures, etc.), as well as how to get in touch with me if necessary. I have found that this information answers many questions patients may have in advance and also helps to ease any anxiety or fears after they leave my office. I also ensure that patients have a good understanding of what my expectations are for them as a patient and what they can expect during their care.

PATIENT CHOICE

I always give my patients choices about how they wish to proceed through their care. Some patients are simply there for relief care and, although I express my recommendations regarding wellness care when appropriate, I never push or try to force my patients into a care regime they may not want, be ready for or need. In my experience, those who initially do not choose to receive care on a regular basis generally return following a second or third episode of the same problem. Chiropractic is an individual health care choice, and empowering the patient with information is much better, in my opinion, than a hard sell or fear tactics that create a negative impression of the profession. Focusing on each patient's needs and comfort

level (not my practice needs) has resulted in many faithful patients who continue to return when they need to do so. Their satisfaction has, in turn, led them to refer others. And so a practice builds, one patient at a time.

COMMUNICATION WITH MDS

In the spirit of interprofessional relationship building, with the patient's permission, I always correspond with every patient's MD (whether they have been referred or not) in the form of a brief letter. This has served as an effective practice-building tool for me, as I have formed many reciprocal relationships with other health professionals in my community.

To conclude, there is no question that the reality of daily practice can be frustrating and disheartening at times, and I certainly don't want to portray chiropractic as an easy street. I can tell you that one of the greatest discoveries in my life has been understanding the importance of inner success, which translates to outer success. To achieve this, I have worked on constant personal growth and development, stayed involved with the profession and live a healthy and balanced lifestyle. Your contentment and happiness radiate to your patients, and this is the true measure of success!

Dr. Denis Marcotte is a sole practitioner in Gatineau, Quebec. Dr. Marcotte has been in practice 22 years and is assisted in his clinic by his wife.

For me, success in practice is a matter of maintaining a balance on three fronts: professional, personal, and financial.

GIVE 100%

On the professional front, my advice is to give 100% to your patients at all times. That includes staying current with the latest in the chiropractic field. I take approximately four seminars a year to improve my skills, reposition myself and enjoy the camaraderie of fellow chiropractors. In my practice I have chosen to stick to what I know best – adjusting – and I refer patients when they need physiotherapy, acupuncture massage or medical care. As part of my goal to maintain a balanced life, I choose to work 30 hours a week, spread over four days.

EDUCATE

I have been in practice for 22 years, but I don't do any advertising. I do give educational health classes every two weeks to keep my patients better informed and current patients are a regular source of referral for new patients. I believe your enthusiasm for your profession and your patients is also an important factor in the success of your clinic. The right attitude is a big asset.

TEAMWORK

Teamwork with your assistants is also crucial to a smoothly operating office. Proper time management by the assistants leaves you free to focus on treating patients and building a relationship with them. Invest in training your assistants and expressing appreciation for their work. They are your best allies.

INSIDE OUT

On the personal front, I believe that what is on the inside shows on the outside. I take good care of my own health and I make time to enjoy my family and friends, and get the most of life. My wife and I work as a team. She runs the clinic for about eight hours a week, which gives her time to manage the family and contribute to everyone's success. We all play family sports and engage in a number of individual activities as well.

PAY DOWN DEBT

On the financial front, my approach has been simple. My advice is to eliminate debt as quickly as possible and to set aside 10% to 20% of your earnings for the future. After 15 years of practice, I managed to become financially independent in all aspects of my life. The end of the month is no longer a scary time. Get in the habit of setting a percentage aside to reduce your financial stress. Then, when you recommend care for your patients, you will be focused on their well-being — not their pocketbook.

SET GOALS

When working on the three fronts, remember that you need goals. Putting specific objectives in writing will help you attain them and stay on track. I set objectives every year for my clinic and for my family. And don't forget that having no goal is actually a goal in itself!

Lastly, be thankful — for your patients, your family, your friends, your staff and your colleagues in chiropractic. They are all part of your success.

COMMUNICATIONS SUPPORT

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The CCA and your provincial chiropractic association are available to assist you in making your communications initiatives a success. Whether you are looking for planning ideas, advice on effective presentations or a review of your advertisements, these organizations can help.

For full contact information, see the “Contact Information” section at the end of this guide.

GUIDANCE

The CCA can provide support for speaking engagements, advertising and other communications activities. The association’s communications staff can connect you with experts in particular areas of practice, and help identify research references and other helpful data if you are preparing speaking remarks, writing an article or planning an event. On the basis of The CCA’s consumer research, staff can help you understand the needs and wants of the marketplace and how to position your message to effectively reach your target audience.

REVIEWING SERVICE

Whether you are developing materials for a group activity or your practice, the staff of The CCA or your provincial association are available to review your work and provide constructive, useful feedback on how to make your communications as effective as possible.

RESOURCES

Listed below are various resources that you may find helpful:

Get Active. Be Healthy

Seven Olympic gold medalists endorse their chiropractic care in this colourful pamphlet containing tips for recreational athletes. Use it to build relationships with sports clubs, community centres and athletes in your community. Available at cost through the CMCC Bookstore and Supply Centre.

Your Guide to Building DC-MD Relationships

This two-part CD-ROM-based toolkit of practical advice and tools will help you build relationships and MD referrals at the grassroots level. The CDs contain valuable communication tools, which are downloadable from the CCA website (www.ccachiro.org):

- MD correspondence templates and sample letter.
- A PowerPoint presentation suitable for introducing chiropractic to audiences of other health professionals.
- Referenced condition papers on the efficacy of chiropractic for back pain, sports-related injuries, geriatric care and whiplash, plus an overview of indications for chiropractic care.
- A referenced handout on the safety of neck adjustment.

Prevent the Pain and Improve Your Game

A full-colour pamphlet illustrating stretches for golfers, this is a great tool for building relationships with the golf community. Available at cost through the CMCC Bookstore and Supply Centre.

Take 5!

This full-colour pamphlet for runners is similar to the one about golf stretches. Available at cost through the CMCC Bookstore and Supply Centre.

What's Holding You Back?

Great for use at health talks, this pamphlet poses two informal quizzes — one to assess risk for developing back pain from daily activities, the other to assess avoidance of dealing with back pain. This brochure has an interdisciplinary collaboration message to which the public responds well. The brochure is also good for use with other health professionals. Available on request at no cost from The CCA.

Your Health Matters

This is a series of articles containing tips for use in community newspapers or as handouts. Topics range from ergonomics and snow shovelling, to nutrition and use of backpacks. This resource is good for establishing a column in your local community newspaper. Tailor these articles for your own purposes. Downloadable from the CCA website (www.ccachiro.org) at no cost.

Chiropractic, Partners in Health Care

This excellent introduction to chiropractic in Canada covers the education, research, advocacy, public health and public education initiatives of the profession. Available at cost through the CMCC Bookstore and Supply Centre.

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