

Spinecare Introduction

The Doctor of Chiropractic

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Chiropractic is a branch of the healing arts which is concerned with human health and disease processes. Doctors of Chiropractic are physicians who consider man as an integrated being and give special attention to the physiological and biochemical aspects including structural, spinal, musculoskeletal, neurological, vascular, nutritional, emotional and environmental relationships.

The practice and procedures which may be employed by Doctors of Chiropractic are based on the academic and clinical training received in and through accredited chiropractic colleges and include, but are not limited to, the use of current diagnostic and therapeutic procedures. Such procedures specifically include the adjustment and manipulation of the articulations and adjacent tissues of the human body, particularly of the spinal column. Included is the treatment of intersegmental aberrations for alleviation of related functional disorders.

Chiropractic is a drug-free, non-surgical science and, as such, does not include pharmaceuticals or incise surgery. Due regard shall be given to the fact that state laws, as well as the nation's antitrust laws, may allow Doctors of Chiropractic to utilize ancillary health care procedures commonly referred to as being in the common domain.

What is Chiropractic?

To quote the American Chiropractic Association, "chiropractic is a drug-free, non-surgical science and as such does not include pharmaceuticals or invasive surgery. An individual who is studying to become a doctor of chiropractic receives an education in both basic and clinical sciences, as well as in related health care subjects. The chiropractic curriculum provides in-depth training of the structure and function of the human body in health and disease. The educational training includes course work in the basic medical sciences, including anatomy of human dissection, physiology, pathology and biochemistry. Thorough training is also received in the areas of differential diagnosis, cardiology, gastroenterology, orthopedics, neurology, hematology, internal disorders, radiology, advanced imaging techniques and therapeutic approaches. This comprehensive education renders a doctor of chiropractic competent to both diagnose and treat patients. According to the Council of Chiropractic Education (CCE), chiropractic physicians are trained as primary care providers. Chiropractic physicians may choose to focus in specialty areas in practice along with providing primary care or in place of providing primary care.

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The Doctor of Chiropractic has extensive education and training. They must complete a minimum of four to five years (10 semesters) of education and training in an accredited chiropractic college after a two to four year college prerequisite. The complete curriculum includes over 4,200 class hours of classroom, laboratory and clinical experience. Between 500 and 600 hours are devoted to learning about physical medicine approaches including adjustment techniques and spinal evaluation. According to the definition of the American Chiropractic Association (ACA), chiropractic is the branch of the healing arts that is concerned with human health and disease. Doctors of chiropractic are physicians who consider each individual as an intricate being and give special attention to the physiological and biochemical aspects, including structural, spinal, musculoskeletal, neurological, vascular,

nutritional, emotional and environmental relationships.

The Council on Chiropractic Education (CCE) requires that students of chiropractic have a minimum of 90 hours of undergraduate course work with science as the focus. Many of the colleges require a bachelor's degree as a prerequisite to chiropractic training. Individuals intending to become doctors of chiropractic must also pass national board examinations and all exams required by the state in which they plan to practice. The individual must also meet all individual state licensing requirements in order to have an active license as a doctor of chiropractic.

The proper title for a doctor of chiropractic is "doctor" as they are considered physicians under Medicare and in the majority of states. The professional credentials D.C. listed after their name refers to Doctor of Chiropractic. The American Chiropractic Association (ACA) advocates in its Policies on Public Health that DCs may be referred to as chiropractic physicians.

The Scope of Practice

Doctors of Chiropractic frequently treat individuals with neuromusculoskeletal complaints, such as headaches, joint pain, neck pain, low back pain and sciatica. They are specialists in non-operative and rehabilitative neuromusculoskeletal care. Chiropractors commonly care for patients with spinal and extremity osteoarthritis, spinal disc conditions, carpal tunnel syndrome, tendonitis, sprains, and strains. The scope of conditions that Doctors of Chiropractic evaluate and treat is not limited to neuromusculoskeletal disorders. They are well trained to treat a variety of non-neuromusculoskeletal conditions.

The Scope of Practice

Doctors of chiropractic are licensed and recognized in all states, including the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico. Doctors of chiropractic are recognized by government healthcare programs, such as Medicare, Medicaid, Federal Worker's Compensation, federal employees healthcare benefits programs and all state worker's compensation programs.

The scope of chiropractic practice varies from state to state. In many states the chiropractor is licensed as a physician and is able to diagnose and treat human ailments with the only limitation being that they cannot prescribe drugs or perform operative surgery. In these states the chiropractor is a physician and is able to use the descriptor chiropractic physician.

Doctors of chiropractic are particularly experienced in the evaluation and care of individuals with spine and neuromusculoskeletal disorders such as headaches, back pain, extremity joint pain, neck pain, sciatica, carpal tunnel syndrome and shoulder syndromes. Chiropractic physicians also are well trained to care for patients who have degenerative diseases/disorders, such as osteoarthritis, degenerative disc disease, as well as post-traumatic syndromes such as tendonitis and muscular strains and sprains.