

# The drug-free approach to pain reduction



The opioid epidemic continues to rise in America, and a 2017 report from the National Initiative for the Care of the Elderly suggests the crisis now affects more older adults. Chronic pain in this country is commonly treated by prescription opioids. We have more than quadrupled our death rate from overdose which parallels the prescription rate.

A main reason for the growing addiction to pain medicine is the ease with which it is often prescribed, according to Dr. Robert Jamison, a professor of anesthesia and psychiatry with Harvard-affiliated Brigham and Women's Hospital.

"Primary care doctors often don't have much time to go over the various options available that may help relieve a person's specific pain, and it's easier and faster to write a prescription," he says. "Also, doctors don't always know enough about other therapies to feel confident enough to suggest them."

Research has documented drug-free and effective evidence-based treatments.

"The American College of Physicians Clinical Practice Guideline recommends that for acute, subacute, or chronic low back pain, physicians and patients initially utilize spinal manipulation and delay pharmacologic management."

The Bone & Joint Decade Task Force reported, "Evidence suggests that manual therapy and exercise are more effective than alternative strategies for patients with neck pain."

*The Spine Journal* recommends chiropractic care for back pain, "manipulation provides greater short-term reductions in self-reported disability and pain compared with usual medical care. 94% of the manipulation group achieved greater than 30% reduction in pain compared with 69% of usual medical care."

**See your chiropractor before taking addictive medications.** The rate of opioid use was lower for recipients of chiropractic services (19%) as compared to non-recipients (35%). The likelihood of filling a prescription for opioids was 55% lower in the chiropractic recipient cohort. Average annual per-person charges for opioid prescription fills were 78% lower for recipients of chiropractic services as compared to non-recipients. Average per person charges for clinical services for low back pain were also significantly lower for recipients of chiropractic services. (Avg. \$1,513 for chiropractic management vs. \$6,766 for medical management).



*This healthy living information is provided by  
your Doctor of Chiropractic and the  
Idaho Association of Chiropractic Physicians (IACP) .*