



By Dr. David Flether D.C., FCCSS(C)
**Adjusting to the Practice
of the Future**

Just imagine a practice that was organized around the principles of chiropractic and had developed efficient patient flow. Now, imagine that this same practice inspired its patients to choose ongoing wellness care and provided the necessary information and services to support this process. The uniqueness of the chiropractic message allows each practitioner to meet the needs of the patient as they enter into the practice and to support their overall health and healing with individualized services and products. The key to this ideal setting is to create an organized and efficient template that can be adapted to each patient.

The foundation for all chiropractic care is the adjustment. This is the distinctive procedure that highlights our message and style of care from the other health disciplines and allows the patients to see beyond their symptoms. All efficient procedures can be based upon the delivery of the adjustment and the ancillary services that support the changes associated with this care. Each procedure, service or product needs to be congruent with the philosophy of care within the office and they must be utilized in an orderly manner. A practice will quickly meet its capacity if systems are inefficient or poorly thought out. Sadly, this capacity can fall short of the doctors and staff's ideal practice situation. The solution begins with a clear understanding of the unique nature of chiropractic and a passion for service and productivity.



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The chiropractic model and philosophy of care is based upon the understanding of natural healing and restoration of function. The adjustment is the centerpiece of the chiropractic protocol and in itself awakens new potential within the individual. The

goal of success in patient care and in practice success is to provide value and congruency to each procedure, service and product.

Chiropractic uses the structural balance of the spine and its components to reset the tone of the entire nervous system. Evaluating and rebuilding the structural alignments will alter the tension at a neurological level. The importance of maintaining this natural balance is paramount in the success of long term postural and tonal retraining.

Orthotic usage has long been an adjunctive procedure in practice. Again, the chiropractic goal is to use these devices to assist in the alteration of postural control. Better dynamic balance, beginning at the foot and ankle level reduces the noxious stress into the structure and the nervous system. The purpose of the

adjustment is to arouse the inner wisdom and control of the bodily systems while helping to restore better tone to the structure and nervous system. The goal of orthotic placement is to supplement this chiropractic approach and to enlist a passive device that can challenge the structure and nervous system to hold a healthier pattern.

To many doctors and patients, orthotics are used in a reactive manner. If the patient begins to exhibit foot or back pain symptoms, there is a need to examine the foot and ankle posture. However, the chiropractic paradigm is a proactive one. When posture is viewed from a tonal perspective, orthotic placement is a part of the hygienic regimen in addressing forces that can affect and damage the integrity of neural input and outflow.

The Value Added Service

If adjustments arouse and reset the tone of the spine and nervous system, then orthotics support and challenge this process. Orthotics become a value-added service from your office. In the alignment of community health services, chiropractors are viewed as the natural alternative to the medical model. The patients look to the chiropractor as their portal to natural health services. As doctors we operate under "Vis Medacatrix Naturae". The extensive education and training in human health and wellness allows us to extend the scope of practice far beyond the confines of being a spinal technician. We can become the patients' gateway into a wellness model that not only maintains good spinal health but also encourages them to explore their potential and creativity. As such, practice members look for congruent advice and services to be discussed or provided by the office. Typically, these wellness-based services range from exercise protocols and hygienic nutrition to postural support devices.

Whole communities are searching for a wellness provider. There is a shift in the realization that medical services are not designed to support performance and well-being. Medical management and the insurances that fund them are primarily directed to addressing and treating disease states. Tissue pathology is the end stage of the adaptation and dis-ease process. A gradual awakening and acceptance of a more responsible approach to healthcare has occurred. People are making wellness choices outside of their insurance coverages as this realization settles in. The use of fitness centers is skyrocketing. Bottled water is the common beverage. Organic produce is the

hottest item in grocery stores. Each of these services promotes better health and is not covered by a health insurance policy. Given access and opportunity, the public has demonstrated that they will shift toward making healthier choices.

The importance of the adjustment within the office can never be diminished. Releasing subluxations is the starting point to feeling alive and being well. Subluxations represent a persistent disturbance along the central neuraxis, which interferes with the interpretation and response to environmental challenges. This maladaptive process impedes the free flowing, organizing impulses that are known as innate intelligence. The adjustments "arouse innate" while other procedures support the healing process. The challenge for the chiropractic team then, is to be clear of their mission and to have a system that allows a timely application of congruent services.

Patient care plans are traditionally based upon a spinal rehabilitation model. After assessment

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and diagnosis a three-step protocol is usually advised. This transits the patient from acute to corrective care and finally maintenance check ups are recommended. This style of patient treatment is ultimately short sighted as it focuses on the management of symptoms and the restoration of function. A missing dimension is the lifelong exploration of potential and well-being. These stages of living far exceed the parameters of this rehabilitation model.

A more natural method of guiding and leading the patient is known as the Path to Wellness©. This patient care and scheduling continuum can be used in any style of practice with any technique. Instead of a rehabilitative, three step model, this is a wellness orientation for the chiropractic team and the practice member. The Path to Wellness© follows three stages that are referred to as Release, Rebuild and Revitalize. The stages represent a seamless flow that supports the release of persistent subluxations with the rebuilding of newer lifestyle habits. Finally, it offers the opportunity to choose chiropractic care with the goal constantly revitalizing the natural flow of innate intelligence.

On the practical side, The Path to Wellness© is an orderly method of delivering watchful and progressive care. Strategies for managing each stage of care can be discussed with the patient. A "roadmap" can be displayed that clearly defines when other services, beyond the adjustment, are to be applied. For instance, the Rebuilding stage is an ideal time to provide restorative exercises and to explore the use of orthotics to enhance stability and motion. Structural integrity and balance are an integral component in this stage of care. The Rebuilding phase is a time to create more flexible and stable support in the spinal system. This will enhance the effectiveness of the adjustments and empower the patient toward more personal control of their health. This time in care is typically longer in duration than the Release stage and provides a focus for the patient to address long-standing health and postural habits.

Conversely, the early release stage has different goals as it represents the initial unwinding of the subluxation process. Here, the practitioner may choose to use simple movement strategies rather than rehabilitative exercises to begin the process. Progressive strategies can easily be layered in as healing evolves. By dividing the care into different stages, the chiropractic team and the patient can be focused on their immediate needs while continuing to look toward the future. The intent of the chiropractic paradigm is imbedded in the communication and the procedures every step of the way. Wherever the patient is along this continuum, the central theme of adjusting the subluxation and supporting the process is never diminished.

The Path to Wellness© represents a dynamic new opportunity for offices to present a wellness program and to manage the delivery of adjustments and support services in an organized, flowing manner. Orthotic appliances are a natural adjunct to the chiropractic adjustment. They can be easily dispensed at the appropriate time in this patient care system. Imagine a thoroughly trained team that focuses on the providing watchful and progressive wellness care for each patient and their family in the community. Hundreds of offices have chosen to practice using this new protocol and are reporting great value in its ease of patient care and management. Now, imagine how you could be this practitioner.

Dr. David Fletcher is an accomplished practitioner and lecturer who blends the essence of principled chiropractic with practical, leadership-styled coaching. His fresh approach in communicating the subluxation inspires his colleagues, patients and audiences. He shares his expertise as a D.C. coach with Chiro Advance Services. Dr. Fletcher can be reached via email at dfletcher@chiroadvance.com.