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"treating the cause of your problem, not just the symptoms"

Some Healthcare Cuts Won't Save Money

A few weeks ago, I described how the baby boomer generation is aging and the financial burden this is having on the healthcare system. The cost of maintaining our existing healthcare system is increasing by billions of dollars every few years. If the current services are left as they are, the budget for provincial healthcare would almost double in ten years. As a practitioner partially funded by the Medical Services Plan, I agree that changes must be made. I just hope that these changes are made based on good research and not political influence. The general public and the British Columbia Chiropractic Association are presently attempting to make the government understand three important points.

- 1) Research has proven that Chiropractors can treat acute low back pain the fastest, the cheapest, and with the greatest personal satisfaction for the patient when compared to any form of medical or non-medical treatment. When eighty percent of the population aged thirty to fifty will be unfortunate enough to experience this disabling low back pain at least once, this is a huge cost to the healthcare system. The Ontario Ministry of Health, Worker's Compensation Board, and Private Health Management Organizations in the U.S. have researched and concluded that having Chiropractors in the healthcare system SAVES MONEY! Even with having this information presented to them continually, the provincial government is still considering cutting Chiropractors from the Medical Services Plan.
- 2) If the government will no longer pay a portion of the fees for Chiropractic treatment, then the patients will have to pay the full fee themselves. This will prevent people on fixed incomes (social assistance, welfare, pensioners) from seeing a Chiropractor. Instead, they will have to see their Medical Doctor and likely receive another form of treatment that is less effective, take longer, require more time off work, and cost the Medical Services Plan a lot more money.
- 3) For those of you that have an extended health plan over and above your provincial health care plan, you will not be hit as hard. You can still send your receipts from Chiropractic treatments to your extended health and be reimbursed a portion. But, did you know that the PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT ALSO LIMITS HOW MUCH YOU

CAN GET BACK? Normally, your extended health policy reimburses 80% of the overall costs you incur from the Dentist, Chiropractor, Massage Therapist, medications, etc. But, when you see a Chiropractor, the provincial government limits how much you can get back to \$10.00 per treatment for the first twelve treatments per calendar year. This is regardless of the fact that your extended health plan that you pay for each month off of your paycheck is perfectly willing to reimburse you much more.

To summarize, if the Medical Services Plan no longer covers Chiropractic services, the cost to the government to treat acute low back pain will definitely INCREASE! If you cannot afford to pay the private fees for Chiropractic treatment, you will be forced to receive another form of treatment that is less effective. If you have extended health through your employer, the provincial government will restrict how much you will be reimbursed. Keep in mind that Chiropractors are not the only healthcare practitioners that the Liberal Government is considering cutting. Other potential professions on the chopping block are Massage Therapists, Physiotherapists, Podiatrists, and Dermatologists. This will effect you personally at some time. For more information, call your local MLA (Mr. David Chutter), as he will be discussing this topic further this week with the Ministers of Health.