

Getting an adjustment



Doctor of chiropractic Edward Reilly works on patient Richard Blalock at the Fairview Chiropractic Center. Blalock said chiropractic care has helped him deal with back problems that stretch back to a high school football injury.

More patients seeking chiropractic care as a mainstream option for pain relief

By Michael Flynn
STAFF WRITER
ASHEVILLE — Fairview's Richard Blalock injured his back years ago playing football at Andrews High School, but it took his son's recent middle school football injury for him to find relief.



Richard Blalock
"I was living with it and suffering with it for years," Blalock said about his back and leg pain. "Now I just pop out of my chair and go."
Blalock said his son's injury led him to Fairview Chiropractic Center, where he is a patient of doctor of chiropractic Edward Reilly.

An increasing number of people are seeking out chiropractic care, Reilly said, and clinics in North Carolina are in line for more growth in 2006.

As a result of a new state law, health insurance co-payment rates to see a chiropractor will not be able to exceed those for office visits to primary care physicians. Before the change, the charges could equal or exceed those for more expensive medical specialists.

"It's a legislative change we pushed hard for in order to increase access and make it more cost effective for people to use us," said Reilly, board member of the N.C. Chiropractic Association.

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specific pain and stay because their health improves through chiropractic care and the advice we give. We're fitting in today's model of health care."

Chiropractic care involves adjusting or realigning the spine and releasing pressure on discs, nerves and other spinal joints. The purpose of adjustments is often to improve mobility by manually applying a controlled force into joints that have lost flexibility.

"From the very first adjustment I could feel the difference," said Blalock, 53, a psychologist with the Buncombe County School System. "I'm the most comfortable I've been in years."

There are about 1,700 clinics in North Carolina, according to the state's licensing board, and about 70 in Buncombe County.

"More and more people are using chiropractors," Reilly said. "People come in for a

What is chiropractic?

Noninvasive, drug-free treatments centered on adjusting or realigning the spine and releasing pressure on discs, nerves and other spinal joints. The purpose of adjustments is often to improve mobility by manually applying a controlled force into joints that have lost flexibility.

What is the typical scope of practice?

Conditions such as lower back pain, neck pain, and headaches make up the majority of Fairview

chiropractor Edward Reilly's patients. Chiropractors also treat patients with osteoarthritis, sciatica, spinal disk conditions, carpal tunnel syndrome, tendonitis and other conditions.

What training do chiropractors receive?

Doctors of chiropractic are licensed to practice by state boards in all 50 states. In North Carolina, doctors of chiropractic are required to have a four-year baccalaureate degree and complete four years of graduate study at a

chiropractic college and pass a series of national and state licensing exams.

How many practitioners and patients are there?

There are about 70 practitioners in Buncombe County, said Asheville chiropractor Stuart Kordonow, president of the N.C. Chiropractic Association, and about 1,700 in North Carolina, according to the state's licensing board. The number of doctors of chiropractic will double by 2010 to more than 100,000, according to a 1995 study. About 11

percent of the U.S. population visited a doctor of chiropractic in 1997.

What is the upcoming change on co-payments?

Health insurance co-payment rates to see a chiropractor will not be able to exceed those for office visits to primary care physicians. The new law will apply to health insurance policies on their renewal or effective date after March 1, according to the N.C. Chiropractic Association.

Michael Flynn

CARE: More insurances covering chiropractic treatment for variety of conditions

Chiropractors take a holistic view of health, Reilly said. "We connect the posture picture to the condition that someone comes in with," he said. "We look at how the whole system is physically connected."
Once considered alternative medicine, in recent years chiropractic care has become more of a mainstream option for back pain.

A 2004 study found that chiropractic care reduced back surgeries by 32 percent and cut hospitalizations among back pain patients by 41 percent.
The pool of potential patients is huge, as about 80 percent of people have back pain at some point in their lives, and the condition is second only to cold and flu in the number of doctor visits it prompts.
Expanding access to chiropractic care can be cost effective, said Asheville chiropractor Stuart Kordonow. "Patients who

treat chiropractically for certain symptoms actually save money," he said.
Medicare and Medicaid cover certain chiropractic procedures, local practitioners noted, and insurance companies are covering the treatments for an increasing array of conditions.
Like other area practitioners, Kordonow said a growing number of his referrals come from medical doctors, and he also refers patients to orthopedic and other medical doctors.



Michelle Greenspan

Doctor of chiropractic Michelle Greenspan said about one-third of her practice comes from physician referrals, including regular referrals for women with pregnancy-related back pain.
Jim Moore of Penrose said chiropractic treatments have helped him address back pain that runs back to loading alfalfa



Jim Moore

The Tennessean contributed to this report.

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