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Minnesota's Elimination of Chiropractic Benefits Threatens Access to Safe, Cost-Effective Pain Care

Bloomington, MN – 10/3/2025 – The Minnesota Legislature's decision to eliminate chiropractic services from Medical Assistance and MinnesotaCare is a troubling step backwards for public health, pain care, and equity, according to the Minnesota Chiropractic Association (MCA). This policy change will restrict access to safe, cost-effective, non-drug treatments for vulnerable Minnesotans, especially those in rural and underserved communities.

The MCA urges state leaders to reconsider this harmful decision by reinstating chiropractic coverage or delaying elimination by one full year. It notes that while neighboring states such as Wisconsin are expanding chiropractic benefits, Minnesota is ignoring proven strategies and clinical guidelines for pain care by cutting them, placing vulnerable patients at greater risk.

"This change creates a two-tiered system," said MCA President Dr. Adam Millsop. "Those with private insurance will continue to have access to safe, evidence-based, non-drug care, while low-income Minnesotans are left with fewer and more dangerous options."

While the state seeks to address projected budget deficits, cutting chiropractic care undermines state and federal priorities to reduce opioid use, lower healthcare costs, and improve equitable access to non-drug pain management. Federal agencies, such as the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), now emphasize the importance of access to and use of conservative care options to reduce opioid dependence.

The evidence is clear:

- National clinical guidelines recommend non-drug therapies, such as spinal manipulation, as first-line treatment for back and musculoskeletal pain.
- Research shows that patients who begin care with chiropractors are significantly less likely to receive an opioid prescription.
- Access to chiropractic care is associated with lower healthcare spending and fewer costly interventions, such as advanced imaging and surgery.

Who will be most affected:

- Rural communities where chiropractors are often the only local providers of non-drug pain care.
- Low-income Minnesotans who cannot afford to pay out-of-pocket for essential services.
- Federally Qualified Health Centers, Rural Health Clinics, and Indian Health Service clinics that currently employ chiropractors and rely on Medicaid reimbursement.

- Small, independent chiropractic clinics that serve local communities and could face closures or job losses.

By eliminating its chiropractic benefits, Minnesota is moving in the opposite direction of healthcare best practices and putting patients at risk.

For more information on research and guidelines supporting chiropractic's non-drug approach to pain management, contact MCA at info@mnchiro.com.

Patient Perspectives

Below are remarks from two Medical Assistance (MA) patients who are affected by the Minnesota Legislature's decision.

"Prior to going to the chiropractor, I had to have infusions for migraines every week. I also had to have a pain management doctor that I had to see monthly. By using the chiropractor twice a week, this has eliminated the need for a pain management doctor and the need for infusions. This was saving MA hundreds of thousands of dollars monthly. By cutting this, I will have to go back to pain management and infusions for migraines and ultimately will increase the cost of MA-related expenses." – *Medical Assistance patient testimonial (Area code 56601).*

"I won't be able to function, raise my three kids. My pain will be too excruciating in my neck and back. I broke my C1 & C2 vertebrae in 2014, and I go to the chiropractor twice per week to prevent and to treat pain, kinks in my neck, radiating pain down my spine and into my shoulders and arms. I have arthritis in my spine and low back. I am terrified of losing chiropractic coverage. Chiropractic prevents me from being dependent on lots of costly prescription medications and prevents me from losing my mobility and other health issues from developing. I'm also battling breast cancer and would be devastated to add more pain and physical stress to my body and situation. I'm a single parent. I do not have help to do daily activities and maintain my basic functioning, so I depend on chiropractor visits to keep me mobile and limit my chronic pain." - *Medical Assistance patient testimonial (Area code 55118).*

About the Minnesota Chiropractic Association

Our Mission Through unity, strength and advocacy, the MCA creates a community for Doctors of Chiropractic (DCs) in the state of Minnesota. **Our Vision** The MCA envisions a future of strong unity and community among DCs so that they may practice to the full extent of their education and training, are treated fairly in Minnesota's healthcare system, and their value fully known to patients.