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GOVERNOR SIGNS CHIROPRACTIC CO-PAY BILL INTO LAW

Vermont Chiropractic Association applauds VT legislators for making chiropractic care more accessible.

(Montpelier, VT, September 2018) As Vermonters look to select health insurance plans from the Vermont Health Exchange for 2019, they will notice a sharp decrease in chiropractic co-payments for the silver and bronze level plans. During the special session this past June, Legislators passed S.1, an act limiting the co-payment requirement for chiropractic care visits to that of a co-payment for primary care visits. Governor Scott signed the bill into law on June 25, 2018.

The Vermont Chiropractic Association (VCA) worked tirelessly alongside policy makers to ensure Vermonters can afford safe, effective, opioid-free treatments for musculoskeletal injuries. Rather than \$75 and \$90 co-payments on the silver and bronze health exchange plans, chiropractic visits will cost the same as primary care visits. The VCA applauds legislators for taking necessary steps to combat the opioid epidemic VT faces by making chiropractic care- a drug-free treatment option- more accessible.

Senator Michael Sirotkin of Chittenden County, who championed the legislation stated: " I was very proud to sponsor S.1, which has the dual benefit of: 1) correcting the injustice of chiropractic patients having to pay too much out of pocket for their care, and 2) encouraging treatments which provide healthy alternatives to potential dependency on opioids."

According to VCA president Dr. Julia McDaniel, the current exorbitantly high co-payment amounts for chiropractic services create a financial barrier for many patients seeking conservative, non-pharmacologic care for back and neck pain. Many cases of opioid addiction – and eventual heroin use – can be traced back to the epidemic of chronic pain that has for too long been improperly treated in this country. Back pain has been identified as one of the most common reasons why physicians prescribe opioids, despite a 2016 review and meta-analysis of relevant research published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* reveals that these drugs are essentially ineffective for treating chronic low-back pain.

Dr. McDaniel feels primary care providers in Vermont have been stuck between a rock and a hard place. They know that non-pharmacologic care, such as chiropractic, should be the front-line choice for back pain but they are also aware of the financial disincentives patients face. The reduction in co-pays will go a long way in improving access to safe an effective drug-free care for Vermonters.



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