



Chiropractic Economics has released its Annual Salary and Expense Survey

Every year, Chiropractic Economics releases its Annual Salary and Expense Survey — a snapshot of the profession for chiropractors nationwide. This year, the results paint an exciting picture: chiropractic isn't just holding steady, it's thriving, diversifying, and expanding its role in healthcare.

The work, titled, *Evolution in progress: The 28th Annual Salary and Expense Survey (2025)* by Gloria N. Hall and Allison M. Payne, can be [read in full here](#).

In the survey introduction, Hall and Payne note: "The chiropractic profession isn't just surviving — it's evolving, expanding and showing up in more places than ever before. And that's a certainty. From multidisciplinary and integrative teamwork to rising minority representation in both the chiropractic patient and practitioner populations, our annual survey suggests chiropractic is no longer an asterisk in the

healthcare system, something "alternative" preferred by a small subset of patients. Chiropractic has become business as usual, one of the options available in a market defined by both its huge size and dizzying number of choices, thanks to patient demand, data-driven practice models, evidence-based approaches and sheer persistence."

The also report that laws surrounding chiropractic care have slowly begun to shift in a beneficial direction. This is happening mostly at the state level, because that's where licensing requirements are hammered out, but federally, too. State chiropractic associations, like the Idaho Association of Chiropractic Physicians, are working diligently and leading the effort to bring chiropractic care forward.

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SCU study finds chiropractic care is safer for older adults with neck pain

A new [study](#) (DOI: [10.1016/j.jmpt.2025.07.002](#)) led by Dr. James Whedon from Southern California University of Health Sciences (SCU) has determined that chiropractic care is likely the safer option than traditional medical care for older adults with new-onset neck pain.

The research, published this year and funded by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) is titled, *Observational Study of the Safety of Chiropractic vs Medical Care Among Older Adults With Neck Pain*.

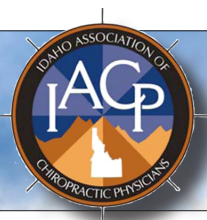
The Abstract stated: "The purpose of this study was to evaluate the risk of selected adverse outcomes for older adults with a new episode

of neck pain (NP) receiving chiropractic care compared to those receiving primary medical care with Prescription Drug Therapy (PDT) or primary care without medication."

The work analyzed Medicare claims data from 291,604 beneficiaries aged 65–99 who experienced a new episode of neck pain in 2019. Patients were grouped into three treatment approaches:

- Chiropractic Manipulative Therapy (CMT)
- Primary Medical Care with Prescription Drug Therapy
- Primary Medical Care Only (without chiropractic or prescription drugs)

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IACP

The mission of the Idaho Association of Chiropractic Physicians (IACP) is to act as the unified voice, leader and stalwart supporter of the individual licensed doctors of chiropractic and supporting associates who provide exceptional health care and wellness to the patients and communities of Idaho. In supporting our Idaho chiropractic physicians, the IACP will work diligently to protect, enhance and build opportunities for the chiropractic industry and increase public access to chiropractic care.

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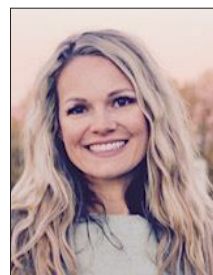
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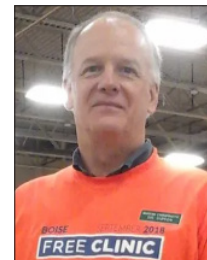
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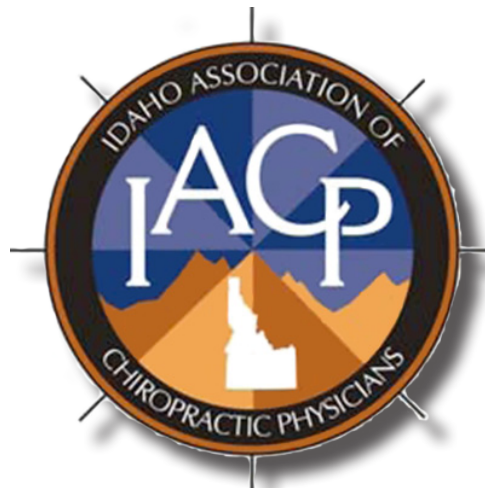
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The Chiropractic Medicare Coverage Modernization Act, which would bring more chiropractic services under Medicare's coverage umbrella and allow seniors to see their DC for a wider range of health issues, failed in 2023, but returned to the forefront for a new legislative push in January 2025. Some states have been pushing for scope-of-practice updates, too. New York has such a bill in the works, and in Montana, where a bill expanding DCs' scope of practice has been knocked down several times but keeps rising again due to the efforts of a state representative from Billings who, himself a DC, seems to be persistence personified.

The 28th Annual Salary and Expense Survey had 107 participants responding to an anonymous, confidential, web-based questionnaire. During this past February and March, Chiropractic Economics invited practicing DCs (and CAs on their behalf) to complete the survey.

What the Numbers Really Say

- Six-figure averages: \$106,586 in salary; \$141,600 total compensation. That's on par with other healthcare careers, but with lower overhead and shorter hours.
 - Experience matters: Doctors in their 50s average nearly double the salaries of those in their 30s, proving chiropractic is a career that builds and rewards over time.
- ### Hours in Patient Care
- Flexibility = power: Most DCs fall into the 21–40 hour/week range, far fewer than many healthcare fields require.
 - Gender gap in context: Women earn less on average, but they also report working fewer hours — often reflecting intentional choices around balance and lifestyle, not just inequality.
 - Entrepreneurial freedom: 57% of chiropractors still operate solo practices — rare in medicine today, and proof of chiropractic's independent spirit.
 - Diverse reach: One-third of patients are people of color, highlighting growing accessibility.
 - Women rising: While only 25% of current practitioners are women, nearly half of new grads are female — a demographic shift is underway.
 - Lean overhead: Malpractice insurance averages ~\$3,100/year — among the lowest in healthcare. Overall overhead remains modest relative to revenue.

- Marketing push: Chiropractors are doubling down on digital marketing, reflecting confidence in future growth.

Chiropractic Income: Six-Figure Averages and Growth Potential

Chiropractors are doing fairly well financially, with average salaries solidly in the six figures. The typical Doctor of Chiropractic earns about \$106,586 per year, with total compensation (including bonuses/profit) around \$141,600. Many experienced chiropractors earn well above that, especially as they build their practices over time.

- Strong earnings overall: Chiropractors billed about \$723,000 in 2025 and collected roughly \$450,000 after insurance adjustments — a reimbursement rate of about 62%.
- Healthy compensation: Average total income came in around \$141,601, showing steady rebound post-pandemic.
- Experience pays off: Doctors in their 50s averaged ~\$148k annually, compared to \$75k for those in their 30s.
- The gender gap persists: Women reported ~\$64k compared to ~\$124k for men — a gap that may shift as chiropractic schools now graduate nearly 50% women.

Hours in Patient Care: A Balanced Career Path

The 2025 Chiropractic Economics survey also asked DCs how much time they spend in direct patient care, and the results show chiropractic is often a balanced profession compared to other healthcare fields.

- Female chiropractors: 31% reported working 31–40 hours per week, 38% worked 21–30 hours, and 15% worked 11–20 hours. Notably, 12% of women said they spent only 1–10 hours per week in patient care.
- Male chiropractors: 38% worked 31–40 hours, 25% worked 21–30 hours, and 19% reported 41 or more hours per week.

Bottom line: The 2025 survey paints a positive picture of a profession on the rise. Incomes are strong, practice models are diversifying, and chiropractors are increasingly being recognized as essential healthcare providers.

SCU study finds chiropractic care is safer for older adults with neck pain

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Key Findings

- Patients who received chiropractic care had a 20% lower rate of adverse outcomes compared to those receiving prescription drug therapy.
- Chiropractic care was also linked to a 14% lower rate of complications than primary medical care without drugs.
- By contrast, patients treated with prescription drugs had a 6% higher risk of adverse events compared to primary medical care only.

The study specifically tracked outcomes such as adverse drug events, vertebrobasilar insufficiency, and other complications over a 24-month period. Among 291 604 patients, 182 596 (63%) received chiropractic care. For CMT vs PDT, the rate for any measured adverse outcome was 20% lower; for CMT vs PCO, the rate was 14% lower, and for PDT vs PCO, the rate was 6% higher. PDT had the highest risk of any measured adverse outcome.

“These results clearly indicate that for Medicare beneficiaries with new-onset neck pain, chiropractic care offers a significantly lower risk of adverse events compared to primary medical care with prescription drugs,” said Dr.

Whedon, lead researcher. “This is particularly important as older adults are often more vulnerable to the side effects of medications.”

Why It Matters

Neck pain is common among older adults, and national clinical practice guidelines already recommend non-drug treatments as a first-line approach. The findings from this NIH-funded SCU study provide large-scale evidence that chiropractic care aligns with those guidelines and can reduce risks tied to prescription drug use.

The Conclusion clearly states: “For Medicare Part B beneficiaries with new onset NP, management with chiropractic care was associated with lower rates of adverse events than primary medical care. The PDT group had the highest risk of any measured adverse outcome.”

The research adds to a growing body of evidence supporting non-pharmacological approaches such as chiropractic care, exercise, and patient education in managing musculoskeletal conditions. It also highlights SCU’s role in advancing safe, evidence-based alternatives to medication for pain management.

Join the Pack

The IACP acts as a resource, representative and leading advocate for the chiropractic industry in Idaho. We cannot continue to properly serve the chiropractic profession without the commitment and support of exceptional industry leaders, such as yourself. The IACP Board and its members believe that membership in the Association is and should be mutually beneficial to both the Doctor and the IACP, which makes it a perfect cooperative relationship. As a member, you will have multiple opportunities to obtain learning and marketing opportunities, at a discounted rate, through membership, as well as, have an opportunity to utilize the services of the IACP team and its Board. You will also have an opportunity to get involved in important issues, from the center, along with other industry leaders and spokespeople. At the same time, the Association continues to grow and provide broader services to the industry with your support. Join now and be a part of the “pack” that will lead us into the future!

Dr. Mara Alayón Rullán's Chiropractic Fellowship journey

This story was first published by Logan University on October 20, 2025, and can be [read in full here](#).

From the sunshine in Puerto Rico to the Wisconsin winters, and all the St. Louis seasons in between, Mara Alayón Rullán, DC ('25) has carried one goal with her: helping others.

Dr. Alayón's journey in healthcare began while pursuing her bachelor's degree in environmental microbiology at the Universidad de Puerto Rico en Arecibo. As a member of a neurological association that regularly hosted healthcare professionals from various professions, she was introduced to chiropractic care.

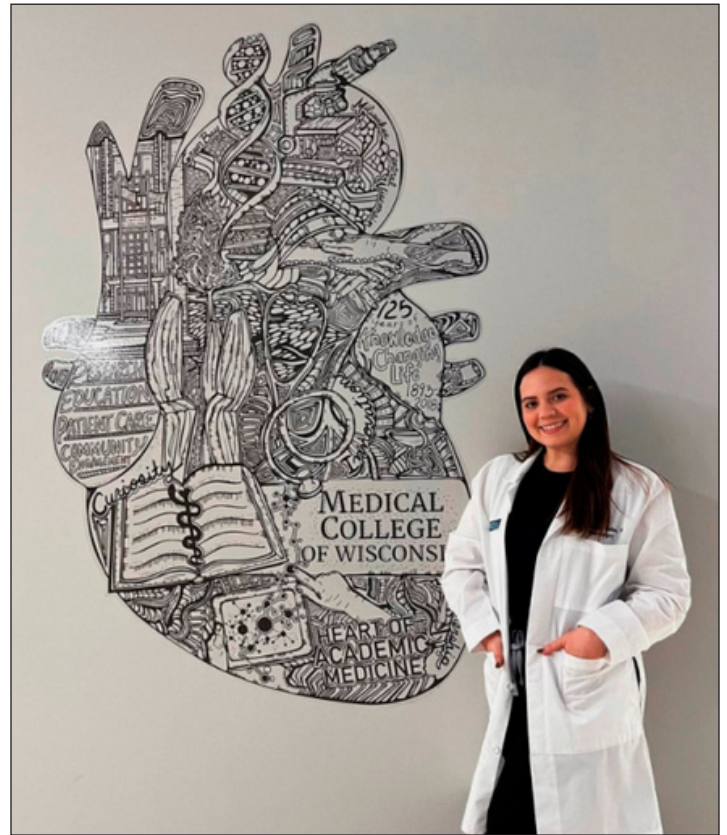
"I was really drawn to the hands-on approach of chiropractic," Dr. Alayón said. "When Logan University hosted an open house to talk about its Doctor of Chiropractic (DC) program, I liked the emphasis on evidence-based practices."

After graduating with her bachelor's degree in 2021, Dr. Alayón moved to Missouri to pursue a chiropractic degree from Logan. The highlight of the program for her was during the clinical phase at the Stephen A. Orthwein Center at Paraquod and at Affinia Healthcare.

"I was really drawn to the hands-on approach of chiropractic," Dr. Alayón said. "When Logan University hosted an open house to talk about its Doctor of Chiropractic (DC) program, I liked the emphasis on evidence-based practices."

"I truly enjoy helping every patient – from someone with a minor ache, like knee pain after a long walk, to more complex cases such as patients with spinal cord injuries. Being part of their care team and supporting their recovery was incredibly rewarding," Dr. Alayón said. "Logan does a great job of incorporating evidence-based thinking into its program, and if you want to help people, the DC program is a great way to start."

While at Affinia Healthcare, she learned about a chiropractic



fellowship at the Medical College of Wisconsin (MCW). The fellowship is a one-year, full-time faculty position housed in the Department of Neurosurgery and is designed to provide fellows with advanced training as a spine and musculoskeletal-focused member of an interdisciplinary healthcare team.

"I talked about the fellowship with Logan Health Center clinicians Kelsey Lewis, DC ('17); Leslie Reece, DC, MS ('19), DACBSP; and Jevinne Khan, DC ('20), and they encouraged me to apply," she said. "I really liked the collaborative approach I experienced during clinicals and after additional research into the fellowship, I realized the two were very similar."

Dr. Alayón is the second chiropractic fellow and Logan graduate to hold the position at the MCW. Aubrianna Jones, DC ('23) was the first during the 2024-25 academic year and provided guidance and mentorship during the program transition — support that Dr. Alayón says she's deeply grateful to have had.

"My role consists of taking patient histories, performing

physical examinations, providing hands-on treatments, obtaining imaging, and reaching a diagnosis,” Dr. Alayón explained. “Another important part is guiding patients to the right resources — connecting them with the providers and services that best fit their needs. Being part of an integrated team allows me to learn how to ensure every patient receives comprehensive, evidence-based care.”

For Dr. Alayón, the highlight so far has been the opportunity to continue learning.

“Logan graduates receive a great education, but there’s always something new to learn and room to grow,” Dr. Alayón said. “If there’s an opportunity where I feel like I’ll learn something, I’m taking it.”

“I’m deeply grateful for the team at MCW,” Dr. Alayón said. “They’ve been incredibly supportive and truly created a positive and encouraging learning environment from day one.”

Dr. Alayón offers one piece of advice to chiropractic students: keep an open mind.

“Always keep an open mind — not just in your clinical approach, but in understanding each patient’s unique circumstances. Take into consideration their specific needs, lifestyle, accessibility and limitations to provide care that truly fits the individual.”



Ransomware, HIPAA, and a \$175K Lesson in Compliance

In August 2025, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) announced that its Office for Civil Rights (OCR) had resolved with BST & Co. CPAs, LLP (“BST”) regarding a HIPAA Security Rule violation tied to a ransomware incident (HHS, 2025). This settlement highlights the importance of conducting a thorough HIPAA risk analysis—and the risks associated with inadequate or incomplete compliance programs.

The Incident and Findings

BST was acting as a HIPAA business associate for a covered entity, handling financial data that also included protected health information (PHI). In December 2019, BST detected a ransomware infiltration into parts of its network that impacted its covered entity client (HHS, 2025). BST reported the breach in early 2020, triggering an investigation by the OCR.

OCR’s findings were clear: BST had neglected to conduct an accurate and thorough risk analysis to assess vulnerabilities to the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of its electronic PHI (ePHI). Without that foundational assessment, BST lacked the insight to implement sufficient safeguards (HHS, 2025). Due to this deficiency, BST effectively left gaping vulnerabilities unaddressed.

Terms of the Settlement and Corrective Requirements

Under the terms of the resolution agreement, BST agreed to a multi-year corrective action plan and a monetary payment of \$175,000 to OCR (HHS, 2025). The corrective action plan is to be monitored for two years, and steps BST must take include:

- Conducting an accurate, comprehensive risk analysis
- Developing and implementing a risk management plan to mitigate identified risks
- Establishing, maintaining, and updating written policies and procedures to adhere to the HIPAA Privacy and Security Rules
- Enhancing its HIPAA/security training programs and ensuring annual workforce training for all staff with access to PHI (HHS, 2025)

OCR also published recommended best practices for covered entities and business associates, including:

- Locating and mapping where ePHI resides, how it enters, flows through, and exits the systems



- Periodically updating risk analyses and applying risk mitigation measures
- Ensuring audit controls and activity review mechanisms are in place
- Implementing user authentication and encrypting ePHI both in transit and at rest
- Using lessons learned from prior incidents to continually strengthen security
- Tailoring workforce HIPAA training to respective roles and responsibilities (HHS, 2025)

Takeaways for Practices and Business Associates in the Health Space

This settlement serves as a sobering reminder: a risk analysis is not just a compliance checkbox—it’s the linchpin of a defensible, security-minded HIPAA program.

Organizations that fail to understand where their ePHI resides, how it can be compromised, or what controls are necessary, are far more vulnerable to ransomware, breaches, and enforcement exposure.

Here are a few lessons every health provider, partner, or business associate should internalize:

1. **Risk analysis must be comprehensive and repeated to ensure accuracy.** It is not a one-and-done task. As systems, workflows, and threats change, so must your assessments.
2. **Translate findings into action.** Identifying risks without mitigating them is just an intellectual exercise. The plan to manage those risks must be concrete and enforced.
3. **Documentation is essential.** Written policies, procedures, and logs help demonstrate that your organization took compliance seriously—and can be key in an enforcement review.
4. **Workforce training tailored to roles is non-negotiable.** People are often the weakest link; role-based training prevents “one size fits all” approaches.
5. Don’t wait for a breach to test your program. Using lessons from other incidents (internal or external) helps you proactively harden your defenses.

Final Word & Action Step

The HHS/BST settlement marks OCR's 15th ransomware enforcement and its 10th under OCR's "Risk Analysis Initiative" (HHS, 2025). If a well-resourced accounting firm with specialized expertise can fall short, so too could any practice or vendor that doesn't rigorously test its compliance program.

Is your compliance program truly robust—or are you vulnerable to the same exposure? If you aren't confident in your risk analysis, documentation, or security posture, now is the time to act. Make sure your compliance program is not falling short. Get your [free Gap Analysis](#) from ChiroArmor today.

Dr. Ray Foxworth, DC, FICC, is the visionary behind ChiroHealthUSA, serving as its esteemed founder and CEO. With over 39 years of dedicated service in chiropractic care, Dr. Foxworth has navigated the complexities of billing,

coding, documentation, and compliance firsthand. His rich experience includes roles as the former Staff Chiropractor at the G.V. Sonny Montgomery VA Medical Center and past chairman of the Chiropractic Summit and Mississippi Department of Health.

Dr. Foxworth is deeply committed to advancing the chiropractic profession, which is evident through his leadership roles. He is an at-large board member of the Chiropractic Future Strategic Plan and holds an executive board position with the Foundation for Chiropractic Progress.

Reference

HHS. (2025, August 18). *HHS' Office for Civil Rights settles HIPAA ransomware security rule investigation with BST & Co. CPAs, LLP*. U.S. Department of Health & Human Services. <https://www.hhs.gov/press-room/hhs-ocr-bst-hipaa-settlement.html>

Go ahead, make your day.



New Research:

Research finds lead in some protein powers

It is not uncommon for Doctors of Chiropractic to be asked general medical and health related questions by their patients. This article discusses a concerning new study, conducted by the respected Consumer Reports, about powder and ready-to-drink protein shakes.

Increasingly, consumers are using these protein sources daily, and sales have exploded, reaching over \$32 billion globally from 2024 to 2025.

The new [study](#) by Consumer Reports, published this October, claims that some such protein products contain dangerously high levels of lead, as well as other heavy metals such as cadmium and arsenic. At high levels, these substances have serious, well-documented health risks. The report states:

“Over the past 15 years, Americans’ obsession with protein has transformed what had been a niche product into the centerpiece of a multibillion-dollar wellness craze, driving booming supplement sales and spawning a new crop of protein-fortified foods that now saturate supermarket shelves and social media feeds.”

Yet for all the industry’s growth and rebranding, one thing hasn’t changed: Protein powders still carry troubling levels of toxic heavy metals, according to the Consumer Reports investigation. The latest tests of 23 protein powders and ready-to-drink shakes from popular brands found that heavy metal contamination has become even more common among protein products, raising concerns that the risks are growing right alongside the industry itself.

For more than two-thirds of the products analyzed, a single serving contained more lead than CR’s food safety experts say is safe to consume in a day—some by more than 10 times.

“It’s concerning that these results are even worse than the last time we tested,” said Tunde Akinleye, the CR food safety researcher who led the testing project. This time, in addition to the average level of lead being higher than

what we found 15 years ago, there were also fewer products with undetectable amounts of it. The outliers also packed a heavier punch. Naked Nutrition’s Vegan Mass Gainer powder, the product with the highest lead levels, had nearly twice as much lead per serving as the worst product analyzed in 2010.

“Protein supplements are wildly popular, but CR’s tests of 23 products found that more than two-thirds of them contain more lead in a single serving than our experts say is safe to have in a day.”

Nearly all the plant-based products tested had elevated lead levels, but some were particularly concerning. Two had so much lead that CR’s experts caution against using them at all. A single serving of these protein powders contained between 1,200 and 1,600 percent of CR’s level of concern for lead, which

is 0.5 micrograms per day. Two others had between 400 and 600 percent of that level per daily serving. CR experts recommend limiting these to once a week.

The lead levels in plant-based products were, on average, nine times the amount found in those made with dairy proteins like whey, and twice as great as beef-based ones. Dairy-based protein powders and shakes generally had the lowest amounts of lead, but half of the products we tested still had high enough levels of contamination that CR’s experts advise against daily use.

However, Consumer Reports was quick to say that there’s no reason to panic if you’ve been using any of the products tested, or if you take protein supplements generally. Many of these powders are fine to have occasionally, and even those with the highest lead levels are far below the concentration needed to cause immediate harm. That said, because most people don’t actually need protein supplements—nutrition experts say the average American already gets plenty—it makes sense to ask whether these products are worth the added exposure.

While no amount of lead is technically safe, the greatest danger comes from repeated or continuous exposure, particularly at high doses, says Rose Goldman, MD, an associate professor of medicine and physician at Cambridge Health Alliance in Medford, Mass. Children and pregnant people are most vulnerable because lead can damage

the developing brain and nervous system, which has the potential to cause neurological issues, learning delays, and behavioral problems. But chronic lead exposure has also been linked to immune suppression, reproductive problems, kidney damage, and high blood pressure in adults.

Lead lingers in the body, so even small amounts can add up over time and contribute to health risks, Goldman says. And unlike some other foods CR has tested for heavy metals, such as chocolate and bubble tea, protein powder isn't usually treated as an occasional indulgence. For many people, it's part of their daily routine. Some products are even marketed as complete meal replacements, with superfans bragging in online forums about surviving on nothing but these powders for weeks or months at a time. Compounding the problem is the exploding popularity of protein-fortified foods, snacks, and beverages, which are designed to supplant conventional foods in American diets but are frequently made with the same problematic ingredients as the supplements.

What CR's Tests Found

Consumer Reports selected a range of bestselling dairy-, beef-, and plant-based protein supplements, including chocolate- and vanilla-flavored protein powders and ready-to-drink protein shakes. They purchased multiple samples of each product, including two to four distinct lots, over a three-month period beginning last November. CR bought the products anonymously from a variety of sources, including popular online retailers, and at supermarkets and health food stores.

CR tested samples from multiple lots of each product for total protein, arsenic, cadmium, lead, and other elements. Because the results are based on an average of these samples, which were collected over a specific period of time, they may not mirror current contaminant levels in every product. Even so, the findings highlight why consumers should carefully consider the role of protein powders and shakes in their diet. For more details on our testing methods and results, see the [methodology sheet](#) (PDF).

All products met or exceeded their label claim of protein in our tests, offering between 20 to 60 grams of protein per serving. Lead was the main heavy metal that emerged as an issue. About 70 percent of products we tested contained over 120 percent of CR's level of concern for lead, which is 0.5 micrograms per day. Three products also exceeded the level of concern for cadmium and inorganic arsenic, toxic heavy metals that have been classified as a probable human carcinogen and known human carcinogen.

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The Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR), reports on their [website](#):

The neurological effects in an adult exposed to lead as an adult can be neuropathy, and may be different from those of an adult exposed to lead as a child when the brain was developing (more information for adults in following sections).

Childhood neurological effects, including attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), may persist into adulthood.

Lead-exposed adults may also experience many of the neurological symptoms experienced by children, but shown at higher blood lead levels.

Other effects are reduced sperm count and hypertension [NTP 2012]. However, sufficient evidence shows that BLLs <5 µg/dL are associated with decreased renal function and that BLLs <10 µg/dL are associated with increased blood pressure and hypertension [NTP 2012].

Blood lead concentrations have decreased dramatically in U.S. children over the past 4 decades. However, too many children still live in housing with deteriorated lead-based paint and are at risk for lead exposure with resulting lead-associated cognitive impairment and behavioral problems [AAP 2016; ACCLPP 2012]. The nervous system is the most sensitive organ system for lead exposure in children.

- Lead toxicity can affect every organ system.
- On a molecular level, proposed mechanisms for toxicity involve fundamental biochemical processes. These include lead's ability to inhibit or mimic the actions of calcium (which can affect calcium-dependent or related processes) and to interact with proteins (including those with sulfhydryl, amine, phosphate, and carboxyl groups) [ATSDR 2010].
- Lead's high affinity for sulfhydryl groups makes it particularly toxic to multiple enzyme systems including heme biosynthesis.
- The National Toxicology Program [NTP 2012], and the American Academy of Pediatrics [AAP 2016] have concluded that there is sufficient evidence for adverse health effects in children and adults at blood lead levels (BLLs) <5 micrograms per deciliter (µg/dL). There is no identified threshold or safe level of lead in blood [AAP 2016].

Research finds lead in some protein powders

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Two plant-based protein powders contained enough lead that CR's experts advise against consuming them. Naked Nutrition's Mass Gainer powder contained 7.7 micrograms of lead per serving, which is roughly 1,570 percent of CR's level of concern for the heavy metal. One serving of Huel's Black Edition powder contained 6.3 micrograms of lead, or about 1,290 percent of CR's daily lead limit.

Two other powders contained lead between 400 and 600 percent of CR's level of concern: Garden of Life's Sport Organic Plant-Based Protein and Momentous' 100% Plant Protein. Consumers are strongly advised to limit these.

The only non-plant-based protein powder with lead detected at over 200 percent of CR's level of concern was MuscleMeds' Carnivor Mass powder. Six additional plant-based powders, five dairy-based powders and shakes, and one beef powder contained lead above CR's level of concern.

CR also found measurable levels of cadmium and inorganic arsenic in some products. One serving of Huel's Black Edition plant-based protein powder contained 9.2 micrograms of cadmium, more than double the level that public health authorities and CR's experts say may be harmful to have daily, which is 4.1 micrograms.

Another plant-based option, Vega's Premium Sport powder, had enough cadmium that one serving would also put you just over that level. In one dairy-based product, Optimum Nutrition's Serious Mass whey protein powder, we also detected 8.5 micrograms per serving of inorganic arsenic, which is twice the limit of what scientists say is safe to consume daily.

The research found no meaningful difference between the average detectable lead level of the vanilla-flavored products and the average detectable lead level of the chocolate-flavored products, though previous tests by CR and others have identified chocolate as a notable source of heavy metal contamination. The average concentration of lead in the chocolate- and vanilla-flavored products we tested was 17.3 parts per billion and 15.4 ppb, respectively.

Protein Companies Respond

CR contacted the manufacturers of all 23 products tested and shared results and methodology with them. Five companies have not responded to requests for comment:

BSN, Dymatize, Jocko Fuel, Muscle Milk, and Owyn. Optimum Nutrition declined to comment, and Huel did not respond to questions about the amount of cadmium found in its product. PlantFusion and Transparent Labs responded only after the test results were published.

Of those that responded, many say that lead is a naturally occurring element that is difficult to avoid, particularly in plant-based products. Nine companies—Equip Foods, Garden of Life, KOS, Momentous, Muscle Meds, Muscle Tech, Orgain, Transparent Labs, and Vega—say they test both their ingredients and finished products for heavy metals.

A spokesperson for Huel says that its ingredients undergo “rigorous testing” and that the company is “confident in the current formulation and safety of the products, which is well within the levels set out by NSF.” The National Sanitation Foundation is a nonprofit public health organization that evaluates dietary supplements against specific standards set by the group.

Naked Nutrition sources its ingredients from “select suppliers” that provide documentation attesting that they were checked for heavy metals, says James Clark, chief marketing officer. “We take our customers’ health very seriously,” he says, noting that Naked Nutrition has requested a third-party test of its Mass Gainer powder in response to CR's findings.

John Koval, a spokesperson for Abbott, which makes Ensure, says that the lead levels CR found in its shakes are low for a product made with plant protein and that “consumers can be assured the product is safe.” A spokesperson for Quest says that the levels of lead CR detected in its products are “evidence that our robust food safety programs are working effectively.”

Maribel Aloria, Vega's head of food science and regulatory, says the company “complies with all required safety standards and regulations” and that CR's cadmium findings are “inconsistent” with the company's regular testing results. She adds that the firm operates under California Proposition 65 consent decrees—legally binding settlement agreements that may allow companies to adhere to higher thresholds.

Such agreements are typically signed to resolve claims that a company violated a California law requiring that businesses warn consumers before exposing them to certain harmful chemicals. In total, Vega has paid about \$336,000

in penalties to resolve allegations made in 2013 and 2018 that its products contained high levels of lead, cadmium, or other heavy metals without appropriate warning. As part of the settlements, Vega admitted no wrongdoing.

Earlier this year, Vega renamed the plant-based protein powder CR analyzed and changed its sourcing practices for a key ingredient. The company now sources its pea protein—which is the first listed ingredient in the rebranded Vega Protein + Recovery—from North America instead of China. “Because naturally occurring heavy metal levels in plant proteins can reflect the soil in which crops are grown, this sourcing change is relevant to any testing considerations,” Aloria says.

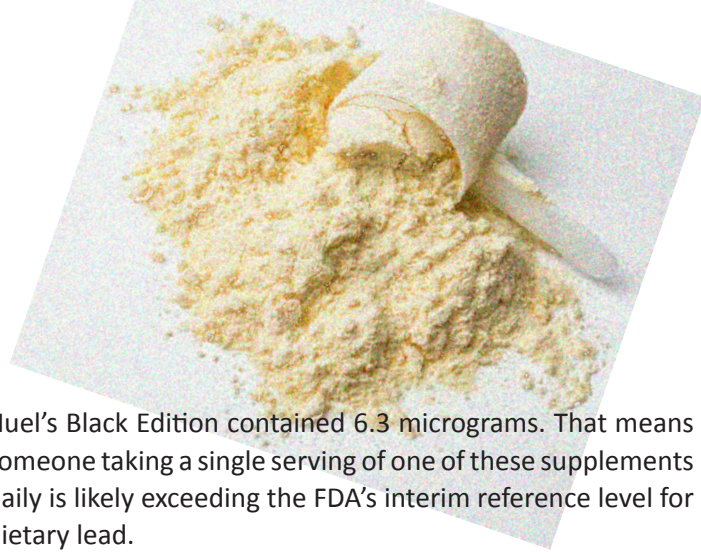
Momentous also recently conducted a “massive overhaul” of its products to improve sourcing and “clean up formulas” for its dairy and plant-based protein powders, says spokesperson Will McClaran. “The Momentous products [CR] tested have been discontinued and are no longer commercially available,” McClaran says.

Spokespeople for Garden of Life US and Orgain say their products are safe for daily use despite CR’s recommended limits. They also specified that the companies’ limits for heavy metals are determined by closely following the latest food safety guidance from the FDA, EPA, World Health Organization, and European Food Safety Authority.

Most of those organizations do not have limits or guidelines for heavy metals in protein powders or dietary supplements, particularly with regard to lead. The EPA does not regulate lead levels in food but has set an action level of 10 parts per billion for lead in tap water. (The concentration of lead we found in the Garden of Life and Orgain products was 61 and 15 ppb, respectively.) The FDA has not set any action levels for lead in protein powders or shakes. The WHO has published no guidance on lead in supplements and, through its joint committee with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, has said there is no level of lead that is safe to consume weekly. The maximum amount of lead permitted in food supplements according to the EFSA is 3,000 ppb (3 mg/kg), a level that CR’s food safety experts say is far too high to be health protective.

Why This Is Important To Understand

The average American adult is exposed to up to 5.3 micrograms of lead each day through their diet, according to a 2019 analysis published by scientists at the FDA. For comparison, one serving of Naked Nutrition’s Mass Gainer contained 7.7 micrograms of lead, and a single serving of



Huel’s Black Edition contained 6.3 micrograms. That means someone taking a single serving of one of these supplements daily is likely exceeding the FDA’s interim reference level for dietary lead.

Food is not the only source of lead exposure. It can also be present in the air, soil, and household contaminants like dust or paint chips, pushing one’s daily exposure tally even higher.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO) [website](#): “Lead exposure causes a significant burden of disease. The Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME) estimates that more than 1.5 million deaths globally were attributed to lead exposure in 2021, primarily due to cardiovascular effects. Additionally, lead exposure was estimated to account for more than 33 million years lost to disability (disability-adjusted life years, or DALYs) worldwide in 2021.”

Once lead enters the body, it is distributed to organs including the brain, kidneys, liver and bones. Lead is stored in the teeth and bones, where it accumulates over time. Lead stored in bone may be released into the blood during pregnancy and expose the fetus. Malnourished children are more susceptible to lead as they absorb more lead if other nutrients are deficient, especially calcium or iron.

- There is no level of exposure to lead that is known to be without harmful effects.
- Lead exposure was attributed to more than 1.5 million deaths globally in 2021, primarily due to cardiovascular effects.
- Exposure to lead can affect multiple body systems and is particularly harmful to young children and women of child-bearing age.
- Lead is distributed to the brain, liver, kidney and bones. It is stored in the teeth and bones, where it can accumulate over time. Human exposure is assessed through the measurement of lead in blood.
- Lead in bone is released into blood during pregnancy and becomes a source of exposure to the developing fetus.
- The harmful impacts on health from lead exposure are entirely preventable.

Chiropractic News

The Wait is Over – Adjusted Reality is Officially Launched!

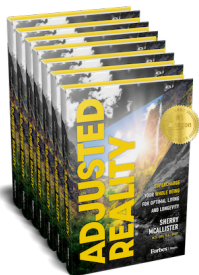
Adjusted Reality, a powerful new book that champions chiropractic as the movement behind whole-being health, resilience and living life with balance and purpose has been launched!

The Foundation for Chiropractic Progress (F4CP) thanks everyone who has already pre-ordered—your support has helped to build incredible momentum for the profession leading up to this day. If you haven't ordered your copy yet, now is the perfect time to do so and be part of this exciting movement from the very start.

This book isn't just a resource— it's a tool to help amplify patient conversations, elevate clinical impact and position yourself and chiropractic as a leader in the movement that is transforming healthcare. Together, we can make sure this message reaches far and wide.

Here's how you can help amplify the movement today:

- Order Your Copy (or a few extra to share with colleagues, medical professionals, friends, etc.)
- Join the Conversation on Social Media – Record yourself saying, "I'm Adjusted, [Name], [City, State or Country]" and share it on social media to show your support.
- Download the Free Toolkit – with ready-to-use graphics and resources to spread the word.



Every order, every share and every conversation helps move the profession forward. Thank you for standing with us and helping launch Adjusted Reality into the world.

[Click here](#) for more information or to place an order.

ACA Engage 2026 featured speakers to focus on leadership, AI

The American Chiropractic Association (ACA) is excited to announce that Dr. Bradley Beira of the World Federation of Chiropractic (WFC) and AI expert Dr. Brian Coleman will be featured speakers in January at ACA's annual conference,

Engage 2026, January 22-24, 2026. Engage 2026 will take place Jan. 22-24, 2026, at the Crystal Gateway Marriott Hotel in Arlington, Va. In addition to presentations from chiropractic thought leaders and clinical experts, the event features continuing education (CE) programs, professional and leadership development, networking opportunities and the profession's only federal lobbying day, Chiropractic's Day on the Hill.

Dr. Beira, who will deliver the McAndrew's Leadership Lecture, is WFC's recently appointed secretary-general as well as a director for World Spine Care Africa. He is a seasoned clinician, educator, and medico-legal advisor who has worked extensively across clinical practice, executive leadership, and global health strategy. His presentation, "Think Global, Act Local: The Politics of Health Systems," will include an overview of the global history of chiropractic and touch on its progression through education, regulation, and legislation. He will also discuss maintaining professional credentials in the evolving health system ecosystem and local leadership within practices, communities, and associations.

Dr. Coleman, who will give the Engage Closing Keynote address, is an assistant professor of emergency medicine, biomedical informatics and data science, and biostatistics (health informatics) at the Yale School of Medicine. He is a clinician-scientist with a primary interest in the application of clinical informatics in pain research. His presentation, "Artificial Intelligence in Chiropractic: Shaping the Future of Care," will explore the multifaceted integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) into chiropractic research, education, and practice – including the use of AI to streamline clinical documentation and optimize professional workflows.

For more information, visit acatoday.org/engage.

Dr. R. Taylor Myers named President of UVCA

Sherman College of Chiropractic proudly recognizes alumnus Dr. R. Taylor Myers (Class of 2018) for his recent appointment as President of the Unified Virginia Chiropractic Association (UVCA). His election was announced at the UVCA Fall Convention on October 4, 2025, in Virginia Beach, Virginia.



Dr. Myers brings a clear vision for advancing the profession throughout the Commonwealth. His leadership emphasizes open communication, member engagement, and professional growth.

“It’s truly an honor to serve as President for the Commonwealth of Virginia and for the UVCA,” Dr. Myers shared. “I look forward to growing chiropractic in the Commonwealth and ensuring members of the UVCA are fully informed, engaged, and are heard. Our goal is to increase membership. If any Sherman alumni are practicing in Virginia and aren’t members of the association, please reach out. I will personally talk with you to answer any and all questions.”

ACA Engage January 22-24, 2026 to feature new education, social opportunities

Doctors of chiropractic and students attending the American Chiropractic Association (ACA) annual conference, ACA Engage, in January 2026 will have expanded opportunities to enhance their clinical knowledge and enjoy social time while in the nation’s capital.

Along with regularly planned education programs, [Engage 2026](#) will include a post-conference seminar, “Chiropractic Management of Common Infant Conditions.” The 2 CE course, presented by Jennifer Brocker, DC, DICCP, president of the ACA Council on Chiropractic Pediatrics, will dive into the three most common presenting conditions of infancy. Using clinical case examples and current evidence, Dr. Brocker will discuss the best management protocols for the conditions. She also brings her 17 years of specialized pediatric practice to the presentation, which is a must for any DC who treats young patients.

In addition to education, attendees can take part in new

social events in the form of two group tours: “Monuments by Night,” which takes participants around the nation’s capital to view storied monuments such as the Lincoln Memorial and the Washington Monument, and “Nightmares and Nightcaps Ghost Walk,” an entertaining stroll through Old Town Alexandria peppered with tales of ghostly encounters and featuring stops at local pubs.

“We know Engage attendees want to serve their patients better by continually expanding their knowledge and skills,” notes ACA President Marc Nynas, DC, “but they also enjoy simply being together and strengthening professional bonds through networking and shared social experiences. Engage 2026 hits both those marks in a big way.”

Engage 2026 will take place Jan. 22-24, 2026, at the Crystal Gateway Marriott Hotel in Arlington, Va. In addition to presentations from chiropractic thought leaders and clinical experts, the conference features continuing education (CE) programs, professional and leadership development, networking opportunities and the profession’s only federal lobbying day, Chiropractic’s Day on the Hill. For more information, visit acatoday.org/engage.

ICA issues statement on CEO resignation

The International Chiropractors Association (ICA) acknowledges the resignation of Dr. Edwin Cordero as Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and thanks him for his service to the organization and the chiropractic profession. We recognize his years of dedication to advancing principled chiropractic and wish him success in his future endeavors.

To ensure continuity and stability, current ICA Vice President Dr. Jon Stucky will serve as Interim Chief Executive Officer while the Executive Committee conducts a comprehensive search for a permanent successor. Dr. Stucky brings extensive experience in chiropractic leadership and a deep commitment to the ICA’s mission and values.

The ICA remains steadfast in serving its Vision, Mission, and Core Values. As we move forward, the ICA will continue to foster a culture of collaboration, inclusivity, respect and professional excellence. Our organization strives to represent the principles of its members while respecting the diversity that exists within the chiropractic profession worldwide. We have long defended chiropractic as a drug and surgery free profession and this dedication is as important now as it has ever been in its 130-year history. ICA will continue working to promote the profession with a foundational philosophy that is aimed at enhancing health and human potential, rather than merely preventing or treating disease.



Chiropractic College News

Sherman College and Spartanburg Methodist College strengthen partnership

Sherman College of Chiropractic and Spartanburg Methodist College (SMC) have renewed and expanded a long-standing partnership that enhances student learning while supporting Pioneer athletics.

Through this collaboration, Sherman Chiropractic Center interns—guided by Dr. Michael L. Tomasello, associate professor of clinical sciences and Sherman’s Case Doctor for Sports Outreach—visit SMC weekly to provide chiropractic care to student-athletes. Regular chiropractic care helps athletes perform at their best by improving overall function, improving mobility, and enhancing recovery from injuries.

The agreement was recently signed by Sherman College President, Dr. Jack Bourla, and Spartanburg Methodist College President, Scott Cochran, marking another step

forward in strengthening the connection between the two institutions.

“This partnership is a win-win,” said Dr. Bourla. “Our interns gain valuable hands-on experience, while SMC athletes receive the benefits of regular chiropractic care to support their performance and overall well-being.”

SMC President Scott Cochran echoed that sentiment. “At Spartanburg Methodist College, we are dedicated to providing every opportunity for our students to succeed on and off the field,” Cochran said. “This partnership gives our Pioneers another resource to maintain their health and wellness and be at their competitive best.”

SMC Athletic Director Megan Aiello works closely with Dr. Tomasello to ensure the program meets the needs of student-athletes. “We’re proud to collaborate with Sherman College,” Aiello said. “The chiropractic care provided through



Sherman College of Chiropractic and Spartanburg Methodist College (SMC) have renewed and expanded a long-standing partnership that enhances student learning while supporting Pioneer athletics. Through this collaboration, Sherman Chiropractic Center interns visit SMC weekly to provide chiropractic care to student-athletes. Regular chiropractic care helps athletes perform at their best by improving overall function, improving mobility, and enhancing recovery from injuries. Shown at the signing is, from left Dr. Michael L. Tomasello, Sherman associate professor of clinical sciences and case doctor for Sports Outreach; Dr. Jack Bourla, Sherman president; Scott Cochran, SMC president; and Megan Aiello, SMC athletic director.

this program is an important part of keeping our athletes strong, healthy, and ready to compete.”

Dr. Tomasello emphasized the educational value for Sherman students. “This partnership gives our interns the opportunity to apply their classroom knowledge in a real-world sports setting,” he explained. “The experiences they gain here are invaluable and will serve them well when operating their own practices as future doctors of chiropractic—all while helping athletes stay at the top of their game.”

The Sherman–SMC partnership reflects both colleges’ commitment to education, community collaboration, and student success.

Life West alumnus and Air Force veteran Zachary Bloom wins Pinnacle Future Phenom Award

Life Chiropractic College West proudly celebrates alumnus and U.S. Air Force veteran Dr. Zachary Bloom (Life West Class of 2020) for receiving the Future Phenom Award from Pinnacle Chiropractic System — the organization’s highest honor for doctors in practice five years or fewer.

The award was presented at the recent Pinnacle National Seminar, recognizing Dr. Bloom as an emerging leader whose career reflects the organization’s core values: First Class Service, Irrational Generosity, and Systems Driven Excellence. His recognition highlights both his rapid practice growth and his unwavering commitment to mentoring others while serving his community and country.



Pinnacle Executive Director Dr. John Nab commended Dr. Bloom for embodying the organization’s highest ideals of service, leadership, and humility — qualities that define the Future Phenom Award.

As part of his continued commitment to supporting future chiropractors, Dr. Bloom will host a Life West student and alumni gathering at the upcoming Pinnacle National Seminar in Phoenix, January 17–18, 2026. The event will connect students and doctors for mentorship, tools, and inspiration to build thriving practices grounded in service and excellence.

During the ceremony, Pinnacle leaders paid tribute to Dr. Bloom’s military service with a special moment that few expected: a ceremonial hooding to replace the graduation ceremony he missed while deployed with the U.S. Air Force. Life West was proud to donate his doctoral hood so the Pinnacle community could honor his journey — a fitting symbol of perseverance, purpose, and the mission of chiropractic.

Reflecting on the experience, Dr. Bloom shared how both Life West and Pinnacle have shaped his professional path:

“It wasn’t just about receiving a hood — it was about honoring the service, the education, and the mission of chiropractic that Life West instilled in me, and that Pinnacle helped me live out in practice.”

Northeast College also announces partnership with Keystone College for chiropractic students

Northeast College of Health Sciences and Keystone College have announced a new academic partnership, creating articulation agreements that save students time and money while securing their admission to Northeast College. Chiropractic adjustments being made

The partnership allows Keystone students majoring in biology or a Program of Emphasis to pursue a graduate degree through either a 4+3 or 3+3 track with Northeast College’s Doctor of Chiropractic program.

“Collaborations like this are central to Northeast College’s mission to expand access to graduate healthcare education,” said Dr. Michael Mestan, president of Northeast College of Health Sciences. “We’re thrilled to partner with Keystone College and create new opportunities for students eager to pursue careers in chiropractic and the health sciences.”

Continued on next page

Chiropractic College News

Continued from last page

The 3+3 articulation option allows eligible Keystone students to complete three years of undergraduate study before transitioning to Northeast College to begin doctoral coursework. Upon successful completion of their first year at Northeast while maintaining a minimum 2.0 GPA, those credits transfer back to Keystone to fulfill bachelor's degree requirements, saving one full year of tuition.

The 4+3 articulation option enables students to complete their bachelor's degree at Keystone and then continue directly to Northeast College's Doctor of Chiropractic program, earning both degrees in less time than pursuing them separately.

Southern California University of Health Sciences students win the CalChiro Quiz Bowl

Northeast College and Ramapo College announce new 3+3 and 4+3 pathways

Northeast College of Health Sciences in the Finger Lakes region of New York and Ramapo College in New Jersey have announced a new partnership designed to give students a faster, more affordable path to a Doctor of Chiropractic degree.

Through the new articulation agreements, Ramapo College students pursuing a Program of Emphasis can choose either a 3+3 or 4+3 track to complete their undergraduate and graduate studies.

- The 3+3 option allows students to finish undergraduate requirements at Ramapo in three years, then transition directly into Northeast's Doctor of Chiropractic program. By meeting GPA requirements, students secure their spot in the program and save a full year of tuition.
- The 4+3 option enables students to complete their bachelor's degree at Ramapo and then gain automatic admission to Northeast's chiropractic program, provided all eligibility criteria are satisfied.

"Collaborating with Ramapo College reflects our shared commitment to academic excellence and expanding access to graduate healthcare education," said Dr. Michael Mestan,

president of Northeast College. "We're thrilled to offer Ramapo students a clear, supportive pathway to successful careers in chiropractic and can't wait to welcome them into our #NortheastBlue community."

The new articulation agreement was formally signed by leaders from both institutions, including Amie Redmond, M.S., C.A.S., vice president for enrollment management and student affairs at Northeast. With guided advising and support, participating students can streamline their studies, reduce costs and avoid unnecessary coursework by submitting a Letter of Intent signed by their undergraduate advisor.

Celebrating the Investiture of Dr. Peter J. Kevorkian

Dr. Peter is no stranger to the profession. For more than 40 years, he's inspired students, led with vision, and modeled excellence in chiropractic care. Together with his wife and chiropractic partner, Dr. Patti Giuliano, he built one of the most respected family chiropractic practices in the world.

Now, as President of Life West, Dr. Peter is bringing that same energy and service-driven philosophy to the institution's next chapter.

"We are the custodians of a sacred trust," he said during his inaugural address. "To keep chiropractic grounded in



its philosophy while evolving its delivery and reach. Life West is ready to lead that charge—and I'm honored to walk alongside each of you."

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"We are the custodians of a sacred trust," he said during his inaugural address. "To keep chiropractic grounded in its philosophy while evolving its delivery and reach. Life West is ready to lead that charge—and I'm honored to walk alongside each of you." On October 10, 2025, something powerful happened at Life Chiropractic College West. With energy, heart, and a standing ovation, Life West officially welcomed Dr. Peter J. Kevorkian as the fourth President of the College. What unfolded was more than a formal ceremony—it was a moment in time, steeped in tradition but fully focused on the future.

Held on campus in Hayward, California, the Investiture brought together students, faculty, staff, alumni, global chiropractic leaders, elected officials, and cherished guests. From the Board of Regents Meet & Greet to the closing

recessional, the event overflowed with love, inspiration, and a renewed sense of purpose. "An investiture is more than tradition—it's a declaration of vision," said Dr. Jimmy Nanda, Chairman of the Life West Board of Regents. "And Dr. Peter brings clarity, compassion, and an unshakable commitment to service to this role."

The ceremony featured reflections and greetings from chiropractic leaders around the globe, including the presidents of Life University, Texas Chiropractic College, Sherman College of Chiropractic, and the New Zealand College of Chiropractic, as well as esteemed organizational heads from the ICA, CCE, ICPA, and more.

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Walking helps with back pain

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Easy exercises to keep your neck healthy

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Walking now touted as "a wonder drug"

Four ways to avoid pain and injury when starting an exercise regime

Feel free to print out and use any or all of the flyers.

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Each has the following tagline:



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Idaho Association of Chiropractic Physicians (IACP).***

Walking helps with back pain

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- Control your blood pressure.
- Lose or maintain weight.
- Improve balance and coordination.
- Increase core strength.
- Manage stress and improve mood by releasing endorphins.
- Reduce the risk of a heart attack.
- Reduce the risk of developing Type 2 diabetes.
- Helps you stay strong and active.

Try these tips to begin walking:

- Start slowly with five to 10 minutes at a steady pace, and increase over time.
- Set realistic goals for yourself, such as 20 to 40 minutes of walking five days a week.
- Find ways to incorporate short walks into your day to keep your plan on track.
- If the weather isn't optimal, consider walking indoors.
- To keep you from getting bored, create several routes to choose from to add variety

***Once you take that first step,
you'll be on your way to an important destination: better health***



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Idaho Association of Chiropractic Physicians (IACP).*

The Idaho Association of Chiropractic Physicians

The IACP News

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The Idaho Association of Chiropractic Physician's *IACP News* is a full-color digital newsletter, published monthly and distributed to member doctors of chiropractic across Idaho as well as out-of-state members and student members.

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One Third (H)	8" wide by 3 1/8" tall	\$190	\$174	\$159	\$140
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One Sixth	3 5/8" wide by 2 7/8" tall	\$105	\$97	\$88	\$75

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