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Setting the Record Straight

Letter to Health

July 26, 2005

Talk Back, Health
2100 Lakeshore Drive
Birmingham, AL 35209

To the Editor:

I read with keen interest the "Do You Need Your Back Cracked?" column in your July/August 2005 issue. Foremost, I would like to commend your publication for suggesting a non-drug, non-surgical approach to treating back pain.

However, there is important information relating to your publication's advice that I feel you and your readers should be aware of. Currently, several states specifically do not allow physical therapists to perform spinal manipulation. Readers who reside in Alaska, Arkansas, California, Florida, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Minnesota, and Washington should take note that spinal manipulation provided by a physical therapist does not fall within their state's legal scope of practice. Consequently, it may be beneficial for your readers to be informed of other alternatives.

Preliminary information shows that there is a wide range in the educational levels of health care professionals who can perform manipulation -- with doctors of chiropractic receiving by far the most formal education. In fact, doctors of chiropractic are specifically and uniquely qualified to diagnose and treat many health problems -- especially of the musculoskeletal system -- with an education that includes an average of 4,800 hours of in-classroom instruction, laboratory diagnosis and hands-on clinical experience.

This extensive education prepares doctors of chiropractic to diagnose health care problems and expertly treat those problems within their scope of practice. Doctors of chiropractic are the most common providers of spinal manipulation, delivering more than 90 percent of the manipulations reimbursed by health insurance.

Please consider this information as you advise your readers about options for back pain prevention and relief. I hope that you will consider the American Chiropractic Association as an information resource for future publications. If you wish to discuss any of these issues further, or if you have any questions about the information I've provided, feel free to contact the ACA office at 800-986-4636.

Sincerely,

Donald J. Krippendorf, DC
President, American Chiropractic Association