

HOSPITAL Relationships



IMPROVING PATIENT FLOW

Patients are best served by a team of the right health professionals providing high quality care at the right time. A recent study indicates that 78% of Canadian spine surgeons are interested in working with non-physician clinicians (including chiropractors) in screening low back pain (LBP) patients who are referred for elective surgical assessment.¹



In a survey of surgical members of the Canadian Spine Society, the overwhelming majority (>80%) indicated they would need to screen more than five patients to identify a single surgical candidate. 40% said they would find a single surgical candidate in five to ten referred patients. 42% said it would take more than ten patient consultations before a single surgical candidate would be identified.¹

Hospitals can help improve patient flow and reduce costs by referring musculoskeletal (MSK) patients to chiropractors for assessment when they present in hospitals and emergency departments (EDs). After assessment, chiropractors can either provide conservative care options including manual therapy, therapeutic exercise, patient education, self-management strategies and lifestyle modifications or recommend an appropriate health care professional or diagnostic tool.

PRE-SURGICAL ASSESSMENT AND TRIAGE

Funded by the MOHLTC and led by the University Health Network, Inter-professional Spine Assessment and Education Clinic (ISAEC) Pilots have been operating in Hamilton, Thunder Bay and Toronto since 2012. Primary care physicians refer MSK patients to ISAEC chiropractors and physiotherapists who provide assessment, patient education and evidence-based treatment plans and determine candidacy for diagnostic imaging and surgical consultation.

HOSPITAL-BASED CHIROPRACTIC CLINICS

The following are examples of chiropractors working collaboratively in hospitals in Ontario:

1. [St. Michael's Hospital's chiropractic program](#) has been operating out of the hospital's academic FHT since 2004. In this program, physicians, NPs or other members of the interprofessional team refer patients to the chiropractic clinic. Chiropractic services are available at two of the FHT clinic sites and are offered without economic barriers to all patients of the FHT.



MRI ordering by ISAEC MDs fell 27% compared to their pre-ISAEC baseline.”²

2. [St. John's Rehab at Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre](#) offers chiropractic services to patients and staff of the hospital and members of the community three days each week. Similar to chiropractic care delivered privately in the community, patients are required to either pay through extended health insurance or pay a nominal fee.
3. [Mount Sinai's Rehab and Well-Being Centre](#) features several chiropractors as part of the team, offering assessment, treatment and rehabilitation services. Notably, this same hospital also features a chiropractor-led spinal stenosis management program which is being actively evaluated through research.

EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT DIVERSION

Working two half-days per week, a chiropractor at a private clinic located in Oakville Trafalgar Memorial Hospital practices as an associate of the hospital, receiving referrals from the ED and fracture clinic. This chiropractor provides LBP patients with rapid access to comprehensive assessment and works with patients to develop a treatment plan.

Chiropractors are working alongside other health professionals and health system administrators to identify how we can be involved in the shared care of a range of MSK patients.

- 1 Busse, J., Riva, J., Nash, J., Hsu, S., Fisher, C., Wai, E., Brunarski, D., Drew, B., Quon J., Walter, S., Bishop, P., & Rampersaud, R. (2013). Surgeon attitudes toward nonphysician screening of low back or low back-related leg pain patients referred for surgical assessment. *Spine*, 38(7), E402-E408, 2013.
- 2 ISAEC Newsletter (August 2014): Retrieval from: http://www.isaec.org/uploads/1/3/1/2/13123559/____isaec_-_pcp_newsletter_-_august_2014_-_website.pdf



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