



Testimony on the 2014-2015 New York State Health/Medicaid Budget  
 Presented by Dr. Bryan Ludwig  
 On behalf of the  
**New York Chiropractic Council**  
 Before the 2014 Joint Legislative Committee on the 2014-2015 NYS Health/Medicaid Budget  
 February 3, 2014  
 Legislative Office Building  
 Albany, New York

Good afternoon. My name is Dr. Bryan Ludwig. I am a Doctor of Chiropractic, practicing in Cobleskill, NY, and I also serve as a District President for the New York Chiropractic Council, which is a professional trade association representing Doctors of Chiropractic throughout New York State. The New York Chiropractic Council's mission is to direct people to the realization that healing comes from within and that ultimately the promotion of *health and wellness* is superior to the treatment of disease. Accordingly, the purpose of the New York Chiropractic Council is to promote the basic philosophy, science and art of chiropractic; to protect the welfare of the *practicing Doctor of Chiropractic* without compromise, and with parity and respect; to protect the public's ability to receive chiropractic care without prejudice or financial penalty; and to keep the practice of chiropractic separate and distinct from all other healing professions. On behalf of the New York Chiropractic Council, thank you for allowing me to appear before your important committee today and offer this testimony on the 2014-2015 Health/Medicaid budget.

The New York Chiropractic Council wishes to thank and commend the Department of Health for including safe, natural and cost-effective chiropractic care as a covered service under the "Essential Health Benefits"/Benchmark Health Plan selected by New York State under the Health Benefits Exchange, as required under the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA). We are also pleased that two of our officers, New York Chiropractic Council Immediate Past President Dr. Robert Browne and President Dr. John LaMonica, served on the Department's Health Benefits Exchange Regional Advisory Committees.

In 2013 I had the privilege of testifying on behalf of the Council and listening to the other testimonies of many caring and effective organizations and professions in the health care world. Across the board they were scared that they would not have the necessary funding to properly care for their patient and clients. I could not help but think how their budgets (and NYS's budget) **would be helped if there were simply less sick people!** Common themes I heard repeatedly were: if we had more funding we could hire more help, have more beds, provide more drugs etc.

We need a better way, and chiropractic can be part of that solution. By keeping New Yorkers healthier in the first place, chiropractic will ultimately save money for New York State

It's simple common sense: by keeping people optimally healthy there would be less need for funding health care in New York to treat the consequences of poor health. On this point, my testimony includes information about studies that may help the state to achieve this goal. I referenced some of these studies last year and I do not intend to read the statistics and the studies again to you now. But I will tell you about one particularly relevant study: a large insurance company that wanted to find out if they could reduce the costs of caring for their subscribers by changing their utilization.

In 1999 a large Chicago Illinois HMO began for 7 years to test the effectiveness of drug A – versus treatment B. What they found was that over a 7-year period, **in-hospital admissions decreased 60.2%**, there were **59.0% less hospital days**, **62.0% less outpatient surgeries and procedures**, and **85% less pharmaceutical costs** when compared with conventional medicine performance for the same health maintenance organization product in the same geography and time frame, when treatment B was utilized instead of drug A.

So if we look at the 2012 expenditures for NYS Health and Medicaid budget for hospital inpatient, hospital outpatient, drugs and surgery we spent \$7 billion dollars last year. For these three line items alone – if NYS followed the lead of the insurance company Alternative Medicine, Inc. (AMI), it could conceivably reduce the state health care budget by as much as **\$4.5 Billion dollars**.

Let me repeat that: it could reduce the budget by \$4.5 Billion.

I know you want to know the name of treatment B, if you have not already guessed. Treatment B was chiropractic care. It was having a doctor of Chiropractic caring for the subscriber versus a medical doctor prescribing medication, costly surgeries and procedures.

Again a simple fact: when sick people become truly healthy they no longer need drugs, they no longer need surgery. When sick people become well our budgets balance. Again, the New York Chiropractic Council's mission is to direct people to the realization that healing comes from within and that ultimately the promotion of **health and wellness** is superior to the treatment of disease. We must prevent disease. This is what chiropractic does.

I have included in the testimony packet before you other studies that show the efficacy and cost effectiveness of chiropractic care. The New York Chiropractic Council welcomes requests for more information and we look forward to meeting you in person to assist with changing and improving the health of our citizens as well as changing and improving the health of our state budget.

So what is the lesson for New York and how is this relevant as you consider the 2014-15 state budget? Alternative and complementary healthcare providers, such as chiropractic, offer scientifically proven, effective alternatives to conventional medicine and will cost less, as they do not involve lengthy hospital stays, surgeries, or prescription medication. Encouraging patients to seek chiropractic care will save significant healthcare dollars and achieve impressive clinical outcomes, creating a win-win for both patients and the state. As policymakers, you should therefore be aware of and recognize the proven, cost-savings benefits of chiropractic care; support chiropractic as a distinct and valued healing profession; remove any barriers preventing patients from enjoying full access to quality chiropractic care in New York; and help us fight for reasonable and fair levels of insurance reimbursement for the services we provide, so that chiropractic can flourish in the Empire State and serve as a true partner in achieving real, meaningful healthcare reform.

On behalf of the New York Chiropractic Council, thank you again for the opportunity to offer this testimony today. I wish you the best of luck and the full support of the New York Chiropractic Council as you begin your important work on this year's state budget. Thank you.