

ebnViews Why chiropractic services could be the next big thing in wellness

By

- [Daniel Lord](#)

Published

- January 25 2019, 12:32pm EST

More in

The next popular wellness perk could be offering chiropractic services at on-site medical centers.

On-site or near-site clinics typically offer services to employees including first aid, occupational health, condition management, wellness and ancillary services — and increasingly chiropractic care.

Employees, healthcare administrators and physicians are recognizing the health and employee satisfaction benefits of integrating chiropractic care into multidisciplinary settings, research suggests. Care guidelines from the American College of Physicians recommend the conservative, non-pharmacologic treatment chiropractors provide. Employers are finding that adding chiropractic care to their worksite health center teams reduces direct costs of care, decreases

opioid prescriptions for neuro-musculoskeletal episodes and improves health outcomes.

Healthcare costs for employers are expected to reach \$15,000 per employee in 2019, according to the National Business Group on Health. The direct and indirect costs associated with low back pain are estimated between \$85 billion and \$238 billion, and expenditures for back pain are rising more quickly than overall health expenditures. To help stem that growth, as many as 65% of large companies are expected to offer on-site or near-site care by 2020, NBGH reports.



Employer focus on improving workers' health and wellness has gained momentum in recent years, as evidenced by [last year's announcement from Amazon, Berkshire Hathaway and JPMorgan Chase](#) that they would form an independent healthcare company for their U.S. employees. Another example is employers with [self-funded health plans](#) contracting with narrow, high-quality provider networks and even negotiating directly with local hospitals on their prices.

Clinics offer similar cost control and oversight benefits. More importantly, they offer faster and easier access to care that keeps employees healthy, motivated and engaged — and out of the emergency room or hospital. As such, 54% of large employers currently offer on-site or near-site clinics, while another survey showed that [94%](#) of employers reported their clinics improved employee health and 95% said they contributed to increased employee productivity.

Each clinic's services, cost-sharing, use privileges and staffing can be customized to meet the needs of a specific organization and employer benefit plans. These decisions should be reflective of the objectives of the sponsoring employer and the healthcare needs of the population.

While most healthcare clinics are located on-site or close to the workplace, a growing number are near-site or shared clinic locations, serving populations from multiple locations of the same employer or various employers. Additionally, more care is being delivered virtually. The objective is to provide easy access and immediate attention for employees, at little or no cost, for a host of services and products that an employee would normally have to leave the work site to obtain.

Employee benefits

According to a recent survey by the National Association of Worksite Health Centers, the majority of employers reported their workers had expressed interest in chiropractic services at their clinics. **The nationwide cost for treatment and management of low back pain and arthritis has reached \$200 billion annually.** Another study attributes two-thirds of these costs to lost wages and reduced productivity.

The fact that chiropractors deliver drug-free therapies should be particularly meaningful to employers in light of the country's opioid abuse epidemic. The good news is a recent study published in "The Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine" concludes that for adults receiving treatment for low back pain, the likelihood of filling a prescription for an opioid was 55% lower for those receiving chiropractic care than for adults not receiving chiropractic care.

In particular, chiropractors follow evidence-based and value-based guidelines to promote safety and effectiveness. Findings like these and many others show that by adding chiropractic care, employers will strengthen the opportunity for cost savings, improved outcomes, greater worker productivity and stronger employee retention.

Daniel Lord

Daniel Lord, DC, CCSP is the physical medicine senior program manager at Crossover Health and an ambassador for the Foundation for Chiropractic Progress.

<https://www.benefitnews.com/opinion/why-chiropractic-services-could-be-the-next-big-thing-in-wellness>