

## **Brits Release Complementary Medicine - Explains to GPs the Benefits of Chiropractic and Making Referrals**

Editorial Staff

Britain's Department of Health, in collaboration with the Foundation for Integrated Medicine, the National Health Alliance and the National Association of Primary Care, has published *Complementary Medicine*, a document that explains: the benefits of the top six complementary therapies provided by Britain's National Health Service (NHS); making referrals to CAM practitioners; employing CAM practitioners; and who to contact to find a CAM practitioner.

The six complementary therapies outlined in *Complementary Medicine* are:

- acupuncture
- osteopathy
- homeopathy
- chiropractic
- aromatherapy
- hypnosis

The National Health Service estimates that 11 percent of the adult population in the United Kingdom visits complementary therapist for one of the six therapies.

There are two versions of *Complementary Medicine*: one for primary care groups (CPGs); the other for primary care physicians. The guides are aimed to help doctors and PCGs make informed decisions when it comes to referring patients to complementary physicians. Every GP in the country will receive a copy of *Complementary Medicine*.

The section on chiropractic in *Complementary Medicine* explains that clinical guidelines on the management of acute low back pain have been produced by the Royal College of General Practitioners, and that the guidelines were subjected to extensive professional review. The report then details the effectiveness of manipulation for acute low back pain, neck pain, and other conditions:

- "Manipulation provides better short-term improvement in pain and activity levels and higher patient satisfaction than the treatments to which it has been compared.
- "Manipulation is probably slightly more effective than mobilization or physical therapy for some patients with subacute or chronic neck pain.
- "There is some evidence of the effectiveness of manipulative treatment in other conditions including: low back pain associated with dysmenorrhea; and headaches."

The qualifications of UK trained chiropractors is explained, as is the statutory body responsible for the chiropractic practice (General Chiropractic Council, established by the Chiropractors' Act of 1994). The registration of chiropractors in the UK began June 15, 1999, and will close on June 14, 2001. After that time, it will be a criminal offense to claim to be a chiropractor in the UK without being registered with the GCC.

After providing the background on the six complementary therapies, there are sections on "Making Referrals to CAM Practitioners," "Employing CAM Practitioners," and a listing of health centers and what CAM therapies they offer. The document notes: "To date, no claims or cases have been sustained against doctors who have delegated care to complementary practitioners."

The acknowledgements in Complementary medicine to the people who helped put it together include Dr. Alan Breen, research director of the Anglo-European College of Chiropractic, and Margaret Coats, chief executive and registrar of the General Chiropractic Council.

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