

NBCE Releases Latest Practice Analysis and Report

Editorial Staff

The National Board of Chiropractic Examiners (NBCE) has released its 2010 *Practice Analysis of Chiropractic*. In completing the survey, the NBCE contacted nearly 10,000 DCs from all 50 states; 2,371 chiropractors practicing at least 20 hours per week responded, providing data on 2009 practice trends.

The fourth such survey conducted by the NBCE, *Practice Analysis* includes data on various aspects of professional practice in the U.S., such as years in practice and average number of hours practiced per week; level of non-chiropractic education attained, including specialties; CE hours taken in the previous year; provision of adjunctive care; participation in hospitals and military health facilities; and frequency of patient referrals. Here are some of the other notable findings, particularly as they compare to survey results from previous years.

Patient Age

- 5 years or younger: 7.7%
- 6-17 years: 9.4%
- 18-30 years: 15.7%
- 31-50 years: 29.0%
- 51-64 years: 22.8%
- 65 years or older: 15.4%

These figures are similar overall to the previous survey, conducted in 2003, except that as of 2009, DCs tend to see a slightly higher percentage of older (51 years and older) patients as compared to younger (30 years or younger) patients.

Referrals to Chiropractors

Compared to 2003, chiropractors reported receiving less referrals from other health care providers in several fields, such as physical therapy, family practice, nutrition and podiatry. However, they reported slightly more referrals from the acupuncture, massage therapy and pediatric communities. In both cases, changes were slight compared to 2003, and none of the referral patterns exceeded a description of "sometimes," meaning 1-3 referrals per month, except in the case of massage therapy.

Practice Components

Fairly significant differences are seen when comparing 2003 with 2009, particularly with regard to increased emphasis on business management and documentation. In 2009, 17.4% of practice focused on business management (compared to only 13.2% in 2003), while 25.2% focused on documentation (compared to 18.9% in 2003). These two areas of practice focus took time from direct patient care and

patient education: 57.4% of practice in 2009 compared with 68.0% in 2003.

Practice Hours Per Week

Half of all chiropractors surveyed (49.8%) practice 30-39 hours a week, with another 20.9% working 20-29 hours and 24.4% working 40-49 hours. A small percentage (1.4%) work 60-plus hours a week. These figures are essentially the same as what was reported in 2003.

JULY 2010