

## Opioid Awareness: It's Time We Do Our Part

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Recently, we decided enough was enough. We were tired of watching the opioid epidemic unfold while standing on the sidelines, knowing full well that as chiropractors, we could play a pivotal role in the solution.

If you don't know, about 80 percent<sup>1</sup> of heroin addicts report first getting hooked on prescription pain pills. I'm sure you've seen it over and over again with your own patients: someone gets injured, they're prescribed narcotics, and from there they begin down the all-to-common path of addiction.

Heroin is cheaper and sometimes easier to get than the pills, so they start using that when the meds run out. It's a perfect prescription for an opioid crisis.

So, we decided to do something about it. For the months of October and November, HealthSource clinics are engaging in a national campaign. New patients receive their first visit for only \$20, which we're then donating to the Salvation Army to help fight opioid addiction. Not many people know that the Salvation Army is on the front lines in this fight and has addiction centers in nearly every major metropolitan area.

We're doing this for two reasons: 1) We're trying to bring people in the door who otherwise might not know that chiropractic can help them (and who might otherwise turn to pain pills because they think it's their only option); and 2) We're raising money for an issue that is near and dear to our hearts as chiropractors.

The way we see it, if more people knew chiropractic could actually help them with their pain, they wouldn't turn to narcotics out of desperation. For as long as I can remember, chiropractic has had an education problem, not a care problem. The reason why only [14 percent](#) of the population<sup>2</sup> has used chiropractic is because they don't know it can help them.

This campaign is something you can do, too! Raise awareness in your community about what chiropractic is and what it does. Offer a similar special. People can't be helped if they don't know what you do, so get them in the door and wow them with your care. At the end of the day, you're saving lives.

[In 2014](#), 245 million prescriptions for opioids were filled.<sup>3</sup> That is not the solution to the acute and chronic pain many Americans are using these meds for. I would love to see chiropractors everywhere stand up and address this issue. Be that voice for alternative care!

There's a lot of blame to be thrown around for how this opioid crisis has spiraled out of control. Many leading organizations have failed us. I don't need to name names, nor do I feel the need to. Instead, I want chiropractors to be the leading voice in turning this around. People are in pain, and they're

looking for solutions. We, as chiropractors, are in the best position to provide that solution ... without pills or surgery. And it's about time we picked up that mantle.

### *References*

1. Drug Facts: Prescription Opioids and Heroin. National Institute on Drug Abuse, revised July 2017.
2. Gallup-Palmer College of Chiropractic Annual Report: Americans Perceptions of Chiropractic.
3. Volkow ND, et al. Opioid abuse in chronic pain - misconceptions and mitigation strategies. *N Engl J Med*, 2016;374:1253-63.

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