

## **The Chiropractic Wellness Generation**

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'Wellness' is a regular term in the chiropractic lexicon. It's commonly used by today's chiropractor in naming clinics, advertising services and the theme of countless chiropractic websites, many of which are templates for chiropractors to plug-in their pedigree information.

### **So, what exactly is wellness?**

Wikipedia defines wellness as being generally used to mean a healthy balance of the mind, body and spirit that results in an overall feeling of well-being, and has been used in the context of *alternative medicine* since Halbert L. Dunn, M.D. began using the phrase 'high level wellness' in the 1950s. The modern concept of wellness (becoming popular in the 1970s) is a view of health emphasizing the state of the entire being and its ongoing development, and the constant, conscious pursuit of living life to its fullest potential. Alternative approaches to wellness are often denoted by the use of two different phrases - health & wellness and wellness programs. *Whether these techniques actually improve physical health is controversial and is an unsettled subject.*

D.D. Palmer, the founder of chiropractic, believed that spinal misalignments ('vertebral subluxations') were the cause of most health problems, ailments and diseases that were corrected by adjusting misaligned spinal bones to alleviate disturbances of nerve supplies to tissues and organs to allow 'Innate Intelligence' (*inborn within the body*) to act by way of the nervous system to heal disease within the body. Early chiropractic included palpation, a heat-sensing device ('neurocalometer') and x-rays to help diagnose subluxations. Today, palpation and x-rays are still used. Many chiropractors, primarily in spinal screenings, also use computerized testing devices incorporating Thermography and surface EMG to generate reports that purportedly show the locations of subluxations. *The allied health sciences, and many chiropractors, contend Palmer's vertebral subluxation theory is not supported by scientific and clinical evidence.*

### **Whose wellness is it? Is it the patient's health or the chiropractor's wealth that is the goal of the treatment?**

Many chiropractors turn to practice building consultants for assistance with practice development and growth. Doctors find consultants waiting in line, proclaiming to have the answers for practice success. These consultants include individuals who purport to be specialist in multi-disciplinary practices, marketing whizzes, rehab specialists, as well as those gurus promoting "wellness practices." One may simply Google the term "chiropractic wellness" to observe the pervasiveness of this phenomenon.

*On 10/9/09, a Department of Justice, Northern District of Georgia, press release announced the health care fraud indictment of **Chiropractors Andrew Sokol and Julie Weisberg** (owner - operators of "**WellnessOne**" clinics in Marietta, Buckhead, Duluth, Vinings, and other Atlanta locations) for allegedly billing insurers over \$11 million in fraudulent services. ([.justice.gov/usao/gan/press/2009/10-09-09.pdf](http://justice.gov/usao/gan/press/2009/10-09-09.pdf))*

### **Guess which wellness guru these doctors used**

- **Wellness Guru 1 (WG1)** Reports that subluxations are not structural (spinal misalignments) but neurologically based. Coaches' chiropractors on using a subluxation based wellness practice model to arouse the innate and build high volume wellness based practices. Offers the 'Million Dollar Report-of-Findings' course, which instructs on; Scripting for shifting back pain patients to wellness patients; Getting yearly commitments for care; Motivating new patients to choose lifetime care. Declares the very best marketing tool on the planet - Community Lectures & Wellness Screenings with the Insight Subluxation Station that allegedly results in new patients making appointments to have a nervous system check for unhealthy neurological patterns.

**Midwest Clinic** applying **WG1** protocols claims 525-770 patient visits per week; and over 90% of new patients come for care of unhealthy neurological patterns.

- **Wellness Guru 2 (WG2)** Reports to have the tools to create a system of wellness from the inside out, a total revolution in mind and body wellness, combining the latest scientific technology with the most advanced measurement and motivational program ever developed. Offers a never before achieved multi-dimensional (physical, bio-chemical and psychological) assessment of the positive and negative stresses in daily life.

**Southeast & Midwest Clinics** applying **WG2** protocols purports to be a modern boutique offering spinal adjustments, personal wellness programs, surface EMG and thermal scans to monitor the nervous system, computer postural assessments of spinal stress, custom orthotics, and pillows. **On-line certificates for \$175.00 off price of a health screening (consultation, x-rays and surface EMG/thermal scan) and aqua massage, reportedly valued at \$250.00.**

- **Wellness Guru 3 (WG3)** Reports the easiest, most cost effective solution to transform a chiropractor's identity from a (back) specialist to a wellness doctor, and a practice's identity from one patients go to for relief into a wellness center they go to for life.

**Southeast Clinic** applying **WG3** protocols alleges better health by teaching and practicing the true principles of chiropractic wellness care; the finest quality of care through modern chiropractic equipment and technology, including bio-impedance analysis, neuro and orthopedic exam and total health scan.

- **Wellness Guru 4 (WG4)** Reports to have a team of 12 coaches with a mission to maximize the lives of millions of people by helping them achieve god-given potential through health centers, chiropractic coaching, wellness programs, wellness products and foundation.

**Midwest Clinics** applying **WG4** protocols use a whole person approach to wellness looking for underlying causes of neurological disturbances. Internet users get initial consult, exam & x-rays for \$20 – standard fee is \$250 to \$300. Claim better exam than a traditional medical doctor through use of latest technology, best scientific research and proven methods to help restore body to a state of vitality and wellness. Remove obstacles to wellness rather than treat symptoms. Free comprehensive wellness inventory (valued at over \$200) that includes a biostructural evaluation, thermography neuro assessment, cellular nutrition consult, and radiological screen.

- **Wellness Guru 5 (WG5)** Reports to have an all-inclusive, upscale program to provide tools, expertise and coaching for building a **chain of million-dollar offices**. Claims superiority over traditional medical community by offering Real Healthcare and not Sicknesscare. Provides patients points to reward them for visits to and purchases from member clinics, which can be redeemed for merchandise, services and more, even travel.

**Clinics throughout the U.S.** applying **WG5** protocols claim: Free Consult / Exam / X-rays and spinal & posture screenings. Treat ADHD, allergies, asthma, auto accidents, back/neck pain, bedwetting, carpal tunnel, colic, ear infections, Fibromyalgia, headaches, pinched nerve, PMS, pregnancy, sciatica, scoliosis, slipped disc, stress, whiplash, wellness. Provide DRX9000, chiropractic, physiotherapy, massage.

One might conclude, from researching chiropractic wellness offerings that **some** chiropractors, in their quest to build the million dollar practice, participate in the chiropractic wellness generation by following a blueprint:

1. Combine chiropractic with wellness services & products into business plan for accessing healthcare dollars from healthcare consumers;
2. Repackage chiropractor from a 'back doctor' to a 'wellness doctor';
3. Redefine subluxations from *spinal misalignments* to *unhealthy neurological patterns* to facilitate apparent care for every condition under-the-sun;
4. Use dubious marketing, spinal screenings and workshops to identify consumers with a ready payment-source (e.g., insurance or cash) for future chiropractic services;
5. Offer free exams and other free services (e.g., massage) to get consumers in clinic for patient conversion;
6. Incorporate putative diagnostic devices intended to persuade consumers to participate as by providing printouts depicting the elusive chiropractic subluxation;

7. Emphasize that “wellness” chiropractors enhance quality of life, eliminate pain, lower stress, make one feel good, make one more active, enables the brain to communicate with the body to fight sickness and disease...;
8. Attack non-participating peers and other healthcare disciplines by alleging that they don't provide real healthcare or use latest technological advances; and
9. Increase patient retention by offering incentives (e.g., redeemable rewards) for continuing care, and by having patients sign-on for year-long care plans, and commit to lifetime chiropractic care.

***So, what say you?***