

Finally! Common Sense Treatment for Low Back Injuries

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By Dr. Joseph Siragusa

Your employee bends over at work and lets out a loud “ouch” and grabs his back. It’s common in the workforce and in society at large. Immediately (after expressing concern for your employee) you think of the impending doctor bills and the time lost from work.

Since you are a business owner or manager, and not a doctor, you have already decided that the insurance company or the case manager is best suited to direct the employee’s care. Surely they will get the best and most effective care for your employee. After all, you have a business to run. But wait just a minute....

Here is what your employee will likely face. If they go to an urgent care, they might see a M.D. (medical doctor) but more likely will see a P.A. (physician’s assistant). That P.A. has training in infections, suturing, poison ivy and ear infections. How well do they know the low back or spine? And even if they see an M.D., what tools are available to help your employee?

The truth is there are few things that can be offered your employee in such a scenario. The patient inevitably will walk out with one or

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more prescriptions. If the prescriptions are for anti-inflammatories they will likely provide little relief. If the prescriptions are for opiates, the patient may feel relief but risks addiction and likely won't be able to function or work.

In this scenario it seems no one is happy or satisfied.

An alternative scenario is to develop a relationship with a local chiropractor and send your employee to be examined and treated there. Yes - a chiropractor. It's at this point that I often hear the story of how a company used chiropractors in the past and they got frustrated with what appeared to be runaway costs or unlimited visits. While there have been excesses in healthcare in the past (in all professions), the current environment is so cost-conscious that overutilization by any professional would be difficult. Chiropractic care is often the less expensive alternative.

If you develop a relationship with a local chiropractor and direct injured employees to that office, the scenario looks much different. The doctor of chiropractic is an expert in the biomechanics of the spine. He/she will apply therapies that will alleviate pain, but they also have the ability to correct the biomechanics of the spine to restore function to the employee while healing takes place. This is unique to chiropractic and generally not available at a medical office. The chiropractor will also educate the employee on injury prevention and strengthening.

In this scenario the patient is more satisfied. They are not on opiates. They are able to drive and possibly return to work.

Chiropractic care is effective; there is no question about that. Chiropractic care results in high patient satisfaction. That is how the profession has thrived for over one hundred years. And most importantly to

a business owner or manager, chiropractic is cost-effective.

Become involved in directing the health care for your employees. In North Carolina you have the right to select the physicians to treat and examine the injured or ill employee. You also have the right to obtain medical treatment records from physicians providing treatment in workers' compensation cases without having to obtain the permission of the employee receiving the treatment. Click here for more information [05_N.C. Workers' Compensation Law](#).

Develop a relationship with a local chiropractor. Have the discussion about utilization concerns, and invite the doctor to come tour your workplace. You may get ergonomic advice that can prevent injuries. And I encourage you to stop delegating your authority to the insurance company. You can direct care to the most effective, cost effective, and highest satisfaction option- your local doctor of chiropractic.

Siragusa is the CEO of the NC Chiropractic Association. He can be reached at drjoe@ncchiro.org and is happy to help any company find a local doctor of chiropractic.