

# Fulcrum Health

*Providers and patients under the same umbrella*

**D**ull aching back pain takes the fun out of a dream vacation while sciatic nerve pain keeps the best sleeper awake. Certainly a primary care appointment could be the first option to either rule out or diagnose a significant underlying health issue; however, carrying home a prescription for pain management versus a referral to a chiropractor may be considered old school in some circles.

Today, we first seek assurance that our pain is not due to a significant underlying medical condition. Once cleared, we have the option of searching for ways to avoid consuming medications or surgery.

Imagine a network of services under one umbrella – supported by insurance companies. It could look like this: a primary care appointment rules out underlying medical conditions, then the primary care physician provides the patient with their options including a referral to a chiropractor or acupuncturist within the same healthcare facility. When a relationship is established between a physician

and a chiropractor, pain is managed differently. Spinal adjustment along with active care is one component, as are more pointed conversations about overall health and pain management, potentially without the use of opioids and surgery.

Fulcrum provides insurance companies with quality, credentialed providers so they can offer their members more options including conservative care.

“We are now expanding our footprint into North Dakota and other Midwestern states, providing high quality, patient-centered care – using conservative care,” Fulcrum CEO Tabatha Erck said. “Our legacy product, ChiroCare, is a chiropractic network that is over 30 years old. Fulcrum also offers products for acupuncture, physical, occupational and speech therapies.”

Further, Erck said Fulcrum strives for affordable, quality care where clinic needs are met with care designed to deliver the Triple Aim. The Triple Aim is a component of the Affordable

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# TOP 10 BENEFITS

with **In-Home Healthcare**

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**1 RECOVERING MORE QUICKLY FROM ILLNESS**

**2 ENJOYING THE COMFORT OF YOUR HOME**

**3 DECREASING THE RISK OF INFECTION**

**4 SAVING MONEY**

**5 DEVELOPING ONGOING QUALITY-OF-LIFE STRATEGIES**

**6 PROVIDING PATIENTS WITH PRIVACY, DIGNITY AND MORE PERSONAL CHOICES**

**7 EXTENDING LONGEVITY**

**8 REDUCING STRESS ON LOVED ONES THROUGH PARTICIPATION**

**9 IMPROVING MANY PATIENTS' ABILITY TO MOVE AROUND**

**10 FREEING UP FAMILY MEMBERS FOR OTHER PRIORITIES**

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BY TINA DING / FOR BOOMERS & BEYOND

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Care Act (ACA) focused on reducing medical costs while providing high levels of patient satisfaction and positive patient outcomes. “We ask the question: ‘How can we work best with other programs designed to improve the patient’s quality of life without using opioids or raising the cost of healthcare?’”, she said.

Fourteen years ago, Essentia Health Chiropractor Dr. Allen Hager entered a primary care setting as a chiropractor. As a conservative care provider, he was equipped to provide wellness options to patients without the use of opioids. “I wanted to integrate into the network of health care providers. At the time, I became part of ChiroCare, the chiropractic network managed by Fulcrum,” Dr. Hager said. “They understood the needs of patients and understood physical medicine.”

Dr. Hager said he has treated many of the current population afflicted with musculoskeletal injuries. Aggressive treatments for back pain coupled with the risk of addiction with opioid use provides an opportunity for physical medicine providers like Dr. Hager to provide high quality patient centered care through a more conservative approach. More primary care providers are aligned and leverage chiropractic care with physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech therapy and acupuncture than ever before.

“It’s an exciting time for chiropractors right now!” Dr. Hager

said. “With primary care providers learning more about us, understanding our practice and a willingness to work with us, we are ready to serve this population that can benefit from our services. Fulcrum brought occupational therapy, physical therapy, acupuncture, speech therapy and chiropractic care together.”

**“We want to treat patients so they can get back to what they need to do; to get out of bed; to improve their overall quality of life.”**

Essentia Health Chiropractor Dr. Allen Hager

Dr. Hager’s practice is positioned on the same floor as his internal medicine colleagues. He has seen feeble patients enter his rooms – and leave with a smile. Physicians notice.

“Chiropractors are educated in a holistic model. We are trained to stand on the fact that our bodies have an innate ability to be healthy on its own. Without allowing that to happen,” he said, “the body becomes ‘dis-eased’. We have to eat well; we need regular exercise. We need to safely stress our bodies for our bones to repair and to allow our muscles to be healthy and strong. We need a healthy mind.”

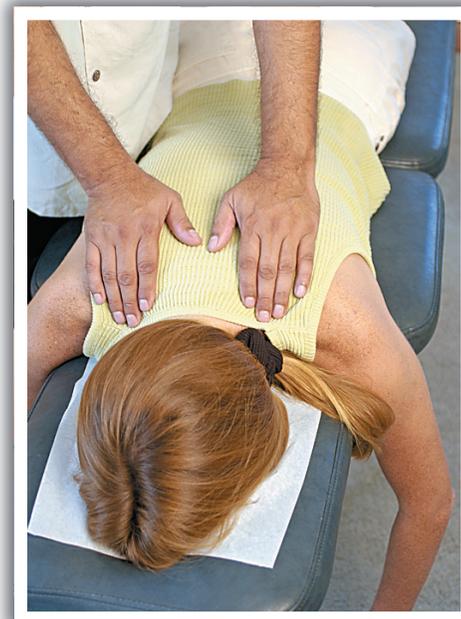
Although conservative care and prevention can have a positive impact on many health concerns, there are still areas in which the best results require the use of medications. “There are times when our body is in need of particular medications or antibiotics, such as when a patient has diabetes,” he said.

Dr. Hager’s work setting is an example of an integrated system, where a spine center combines the expertise of physical medicine doctors, primary care doctors, physical therapists, neurologists, pediatricians, nurses and occupational therapists. Working together, they can contribute to an improvement in the quality of life for most patients.

“Research helped me to see the depth and breadth of knowledge integrated care could have in health and wellness. By bringing all practitioners together to focus on the patient, we can together

achieve results while managing an overall cost reduction in healthcare in our nation,” Erck said.

Fulcrum describes their influence as a non-profit organization; they are not an insurance company, nor are they a healthcare facility. Instead,



Fulcrum is hired by the insurance companies to align services between the healthcare facility and conservative care, such as chiropractic, acupuncture and physical therapy.

“The expectation is collaboration ensures patients are not falling through the cracks,” Erck said. “When a patient is seen for back pain, our goal is a back and forth communication and sharing of information between the primary provider and the conservative care provider; it provides better outcomes and improves ongoing dialogue between the care providers and the patient. Our conservative care providers document medical concerns, for example a high blood pressure reading, and communicate these results back to primary care. This integration and collaboration between primary care and physical medicine providers have been shown to improve outcomes and the quality of care patients receive,” Erck said.

To encourage this coordination of care and a relationship between primary care and conservative care providers, Fulcrum looked at the successes of ChiroCare and developed ways to bring that to other professions. Today, Fulcrum offers a variety of credentialed networks focused on delivering the Triple Aim.

Fulcrum provides each provider within its networks a report card to see how they measure against their peers. The report cards may show a provider an opportunity to improve their patient care experiences as well as their collaborative efforts. Their reports also point back to the clinical guidelines to

ensure network providers provide care utilizing high quality outcomes.

“Within Fulcrum’s networks, we developed the Chiropractic Care Centers of Excellence for those providers who strive to meet stringent standards. These providers are currently part of a study called ChiroFirst in which they are a portal of entry for those seeking care for back pain in a program designed to be affordable while providing high satisfaction and great outcome,” Erck said. A list of these providers can be found on their ChiroCare website.

ChiroCare Centers of Excellence provide high quality, patient-centered care through regular use of outcome measurements. “We have learned that by measuring outcomes, we are changing healthcare,” Dr. Hager said. “We are no longer simply asking how patients feel or about their pain level. Instead, we are asking, ‘What did you do today?’ We are talking about functional presence and our treatment plans focus on improving function. We want to treat patients so they can get back to what they need to do; to get out of bed; to improve their overall quality of life.”

Further, he said, “Our mantra is to ‘take back your health’. The only person to take care of you is you. You get to make the decisions. No one will be there to take care of your health other than you. At the end of the day, you make a conscious decision based on good evidence. Your chiropractic care is a part of that.”

