



**MEDIA RELEASE**  
For immediate release

**Alberta seniors to benefit from government-funded chiropractic care**

**Edmonton, AB, June 7, 2012**—Effective July 1, 2012, Alberta seniors will receive coverage for chiropractic services as part of the *Coverage for Seniors* health benefit plan, sponsored by Alberta Health and administered by Alberta Blue Cross. Seniors enrolled in the plan will receive coverage up to a limit of \$25 per visit, to a maximum of \$200 per benefit year (July 1 – June 30).

“This is a definite win for Albertans,” says Dr. Clark Mills, president of the Alberta College and Association of Chiropractors (ACAC). “All Albertans, including those with limited or no extended health care coverage, deserve a choice of accessible and effective health care options.”

Improved access to chiropractic care supports seniors in their desire to lead healthy and independent lives. “One of the issues that impacts seniors the most is decreased mobility,” says Dr. Mills, who practices in Stony Plain. “Chiropractic has been proven to be very effective in improving mobility.”

The discontinuation of chiropractic funding in 2009 had a particularly hard-hitting effect on seniors, many of whom have minimal if any extended health care coverage. The ACAC strongly felt it was important for government to support seniors in their health care needs and we have continued to lobby for chiropractic coverage for this population.

The reinstatement of chiropractic coverage for seniors is a fulfillment of a promise made by Alison Redford during her run for PC party leadership and subsequently announced in the 2012/13 provincial budget. The government estimates this new benefit will positively impact more than 450,000 Alberta seniors.

“On behalf of our patients, we appreciate the government’s commitment to choice for Albertans in their efforts to achieve a healthy lifestyle,” says Dr. Mills.

The ACAC regulates the chiropractic profession in Alberta under the *Health Professions Act* and is firmly committed to its mandate of protecting the public, ensuring accountability and improving Albertans' health and well-being. Our more than 900 licensed members are specially educated and trained to diagnose, treat and help prevent disorders and conditions related to the spine, nervous system and musculoskeletal system, including back, neck and head pain. For more information, visit [www.albertachiro.com](http://www.albertachiro.com).

-30-

**For media inquiries, please contact:**

Tara Madden, ACAC Public Relations  
780.420.0932/780.999.8047 (cell)  
[tmadden@albertachiro.com](mailto:tmadden@albertachiro.com)



## Media Backgrounder and Facts Sheet

### Public funding for chiropractic in Alberta

- Public funding for chiropractic services was discontinued in 2009
- The then Minister of Health and Wellness publicly stated the discontinuation of this funding was solely a budgetary issue, done to reallocate an estimated \$50 million annually in support of medically-required physician and hospital services, as prescribed by the *Canada Health Act*
- Discontinuation of funding had hard-hitting effect on seniors, particularly low-income seniors who generally have minimal if any extended health care insurance
- In fall 2011, Alison Redford publicly stated she planned to reinstate chiropractic funding for seniors should she win the PC leadership race
- On behalf of our patients, the Alberta College and Association of Chiropractors is appreciative of Premier Redford, the Minister of Health and Wellness and the Alberta government's commitment to choice for Albertans in their efforts to achieve a healthy lifestyle

### Seniors in Alberta

- There are an estimated 425,000 seniors in Alberta; more than 51 per cent live in Edmonton or Calgary
- Population projections suggest that number will increase to 642,100 by 2021; by 2031, approximately one in five Albertans will be over the age of 65
- In 2010, there were 58,900 seniors in the Alberta labour force
- Alberta's employment needs will require seniors to remain active and vital in the labour market; it is essential to keep them active, mobile and healthy
- Government of Alberta has very publicly committed to keeping seniors living independently and in their own homes for as long as possible; currently, 70 per cent of seniors live in their own homes
- Approximately 150,000 Alberta seniors (38 per cent of seniors population) are considered low income

- When chiropractic received public funding, Alberta seniors accounted for less than 10 per cent of the entire budget for chiropractic services, costing less than \$5 million per year; on average, seniors visited a chiropractor seven times per year

*[Source: Government of Alberta]*

### **Facts about back pain and chiropractic**

- Low-back pain affects 85 per cent of the population; Health Canada estimates that musculoskeletal disorders, including back pain, cost \$16.4 billion in combined direct (treatment and rehabilitation) and indirect (lost productivity) costs *[Source: Health Canada]*
- Back pain is the second most common reason for seeing a medical doctor *[Source: Health Canada]*
- Back pain is a significant cost driver for health care as it is the leading cause of prescription and non-prescription drug use, medical visits, costly and specialized diagnostic procedures, hospitalizations and restricted physical activity *[Source: WCB Alberta]*
- Chiropractic care has been demonstrated to be the most clinically and cost-effective treatment for back injuries and related conditions, occupational and non-occupational
- Chiropractors receive the highest patient satisfaction ratings for treatment of back and neck pain according to Consumer Reports, the Health Quality Council of Alberta and a nation-wide Environics study
- Research and studies have concluded chiropractic care can reduce health care costs and contribute to improved productivity
- More than half of Albertans have been treated by a chiropractor *[Source: Ipsos Reid]*
- Almost one million Albertans visit a chiropractor each year
- Alberta has the highest chiropractic utilization rate in North America *[Source: Wikipedia]*

### **The Alberta College and Association of Chiropractors (ACAC)**

The ACAC regulates the chiropractic profession in Alberta under the *Health Professions Act* and is firmly committed to its mandate of protecting the public, ensuring accountability and improving Albertans' health and well-being. Our more than 900 licensed members are specially educated and trained to diagnose, treat and help prevent disorders and conditions related to the spine, nervous system and musculoskeletal system, including back, neck and head pain. For more information, visit [www.albertachiro.com](http://www.albertachiro.com).