

Lower Costs and Risks with Non-Pharmacologic, Conservative Care for MSDs

Musculoskeletal Disorders (MSDs) Affect 1 in 2 Adults; Cost BILLIONS: In 2012, 126.6 million Americans reported a musculoskeletal injury or condition,¹ costing **over \$200 BILLION annually** in treatment and lost wages.²

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration estimates work-related MSDs account for over 600,000 injuries and illnesses, representing 34 percent of all lost workdays. These disorders account for one out of every three dollars spent on workers' compensation, costing employers as much as \$20 billion a year on direct costs for workers' compensation, and up to fivefold for indirect costs, such as those associated with hiring and training replacement workers.³

Non-Pharmacologic, Conservative Treatment Rendered Early in the Care Continuum Aligns with Current Guidelines: As published in the Annals of Internal Medicine, the American College of Physicians and the American Pain Society recommendations include: **1)** Eschewing diagnostic imaging (MRIs, CT scans, etc.) for patients with non-specific low back pain; and **2)** Consideration of NON-drug treatments such as rehabilitation, spinal manipulation, exercise therapy and acupuncture for patients who do not respond to self-care.⁴ Similarly, the Joint Commission has long held that non-pharmacologic approaches play a role in pain management, recently clarifying its position to add the latter may include: acupuncture, chiropractic care, physical therapy, massage therapy, exercise therapy and cognitive behavioral care to avoid drug abuse, dependency and addiction.⁵

- A 2008 meta-analysis of 40 randomized controlled trials between 1975 and 2007 found spinal manipulation for low back pain outperformed medical treatment;
- Physical therapy has been shown to be as effective as surgery in treating spinal stenosis⁶; and
- The incidence of adverse effects is substantially lower with acupuncture than that of many drugs or other accepted medical procedures traditionally used for musculoskeletal conditions.⁷

PMMA Call to Action for Treatment of MSDs: Facilitate access to and position primary-based musculoskeletal providers as the patient point-of-entry for back pain management through legislation (e.g. co-pay parity), regulation and patient education to:

- Eliminate/reduce risk of prescription drug abuse/addiction and other co-morbidities;
- Increase speed to evaluation;
- Minimize fragmentation; and
- Lower total episode costs.

About PMMA: The Physical Medicine Management Alliance (PMMA) consists of organizations representing care management companies who specialize in physical medicine/musculoskeletal care and wellness. PMMA members partner with provider specialists to facilitate care delivered via specialty services that include, but are not limited to, Physical and Occupational Therapy, Chiropractic Care, Acupuncture, and Complementary and Integrative Health.

¹ Global Burden of Diseases, Injuries, and Risk Factors Study 2013. *The Lancet*, July 22, 2014. Available at: <http://www.thelancet.com/themed/global-burden-of-disease> Accessed June 30, 2014.

² The Burden of Musculoskeletal Diseases in the United States. "The Big Picture: Health Care Utilization and Economic Cost." <http://www.boneandjointburden.org/2014-report/if0/health-care-utilization-and-economic-cost> Accessed June 9, 2015.

³ U.S. Department of Labor Occupational Safety and Health Administration Fall 2015 Unified Agenda. "Prevention of Work-Related Musculoskeletal Disorders." Available at:

https://www.osha.gov/pls/oshaweb/owadisp.show_document?p_table=UNIFIED_AGENDA&p_id=4481 Accessed May 5, 2016.

⁴ Chou R, Qaseem A, Snow V, Casey D, Cross JT, Shekelle P, et al. Diagnosis and Treatment of Low Back Pain: A Joint Clinical Practice Guideline from the American College of Physicians and the American Pain Society. *Ann Intern Med*. 2007;147:478-491. doi:10.7326/0003-4819-147-7-200710020-00006

⁵ Joint Commission Perspectives®, November 2014, Volume 34, Issue 11

⁶ *Annals of Internal Medicine*, 7 April 2015, Volume 162, No. 7. Available at: <http://annals.org/issue.aspx?journalid=90&issueid=933698>

⁷ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services National Institutes of Health Consensus Development Conference Statement, November 3-5, 1997. Available at: <https://consensus.nih.gov/1997/1997acupuncture107html.htm> Accessed May 6, 2016.