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| **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****DATE** | **Contact: Dr. Xxxx Xxxxxx****Phone: (XXX) XXX-XXXX** |

**September is Drug-Free Pain Management Awareness Month**

*Chiropractic and Other Conservative Forms of Pain Management*

*Are an Effective First Line of Defense Against Opioids*

CITY, MICHIGAN – Michigan Governor Gretchen Whitmer has declared September to be “Drug-Free Pain Management Awareness Month” in Michigan, and Dr. **Xxxxx Xxxxx** of CITY and the Michigan Association of Chiropractors (MAC) want patients across the state to be aware of conservative, non-drug alternatives to safely and effectively relieve pain. A report from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s (CDC) National Center for Health Statistics estimates that in 2023 more than 24 percent of American adults had chronic pain. More than 8 percent suffered from “high-impact chronic pain” – pain severe enough that it frequently limits life or work activities.

Unfortunately, to combat their pain, many of these Americans turn to prescription opioid pain medications. Drug-Free Pain Management Awareness Month highlights non-drug options like chiropractic care that can act as a first line of defense against opioid overuse and abuse, an epidemic dramatically affecting Michigan and the nation.

“My administration and the Michigan Legislature have made it a high priority to combat this health care crisis and save lives by addressing prescription drug misuse and opioid use disorder,” Governor Whitmer writes in her proclamation. “Recognizing the diverse needs of people across our state, Michiganders have access to numerous avenues for effective pain management beyond traditional prescription drugs, ensuring that Michiganders can explore a range of comprehensive and holistic approaches to alleviate pain and enhance their overall well-being.”

“Drug-free forms of health care, including chiropractic… play(s) an important role in helping to ease the immense burden of pain management facing our state,” the Proclamation concludes.

“Data from the CDC shows that in 2023, Michigan health care providers wrote 47.9 opioid prescriptions for every 100 Michiganders, compared to the national average of 37.5 opioid prescriptions for every 100 Americans,” said Dr. Xxxxx. “Overdose deaths from such painkillers as OxyContin, Vicodin, and Fentanyl remain higher than the national average in our state. An important drug-free approach to ease this statewide crisis is safe, effective chiropractic care.”

Drug addiction often begins with opioid prescriptions for pain. In August 2017, President Trump’s Commission on Combating Drug Addiction and the Opioid Crisis released a report that largely blames the health care system as the root of the opioid problem, stating: “We have an enormous problem that is often not beginning on street corners; it is starting in doctor’s offices and hospitals in every state in our nation.”

Chiropractic is a non-drug alternative to the prescription of opioid painkillers for the treatment of

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painful musculoskeletal conditions, including back and neck pain. Conservative forms of pain management – including spinal manipulation as performed by chiropractic physicians – must be the first option in the treatment of musculoskeletal disorders, which cost billions of dollars each year in health care costs. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), low back pain is the single leading cause of disability worldwide. Additionally, back pain is a common reason for missed work, visits to the doctor’s office, and opioid prescriptions.

“Conservative options must be exhausted prior to initiating higher-risk care such as opioids, surgery, and other invasive procedures,” Dr. Xxxxxx said. “Effective, conservative care such as chiropractic can help patients suffering from chronic musculoskeletal pain lessen reliance on painkillers and get back to their normal activities.”

**Opioid Abuse Continues to Hit State Hard**

A KFF analysis of CDC data found that 2,305 Michiganders died from opioid overdose in 2023. While Michigan overdose deaths were projected to decline for the third consecutive year in 2024, the opioid epidemic continues to devastate communities across the Mitten State. Provisional data from the CDC shows that approximately 1,355 Michiganders – nearly four per day, or almost one every six hours – died from an opioid overdose in 2024.

Beyond the human toll, opioids cost the state more than $38 billion in economic impact last year, the result of increased costs to the judicial system and lost productivity, according to a study from Avalere Health. If such factors as lost quality of life and years of life are factored into the equation, Michigan’s costs would balloon to nearly $162 billion.

**Research Proves It: More Chiropractic = Fewer Opioids**

Studies have quantitatively shown that access to drug-free chiropractic care as a front-line treatment ahead of opioid medication dramatically decreases the use of opioid prescriptions among musculoskeletal pain patients. A recent study published in *Pain Medicine*, “Association Between Chiropractic Use and Opioid Receipt Among Patients with Spinal Pain: A Systematic Review and Meta-analysis,” conducted by researchers at the Yale Center for Medical Informatics, reveals that chiropractic users had 64% lower odds of receiving an opioid prescription than nonusers and that the proportion of patients receiving an opioid prescription was lower for chiropractic users.

Another recent study published in the *Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine* (Volume 24, Number 6, 2018, pp. 552–556) quantified the association between utilization of chiropractic services for low back pain and the use of prescription opioids. The study authors employed a retrospective cohort design for analysis of the New Hampshire All-payer Claims Database. The study population was comprised of patients aged 18-99 years with office visits for low back pain at least twice within 90 days. Subjects diagnosed with cancer were excluded from the cohort. The authors found that the adjusted likelihood of filling a prescription for an opioid was 55% lower among chiropractic recipients as compared to non-recipients. Average per-person charges for clinical services for low back pain and for prescription opioids were also significantly lower for recipients of chiropractic services.

“Given the increased importance of providing Americans with drug-free pain management options, chiropractors are front-line providers for spinal health and well-being, specifically as it relates to the management of back, neck, and headache pain,” said Dr. Xxxxx.

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