



Maitri Health Care for Women
Obstetrics, Gynecology and Midwifery

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Rep. Mitzi Johnson
Chair House Appropriations Committee

Friday, March 06, 2015

Dear Representative Johnson,

We are writing in support of Vermont Medicaid coverage for chiropractic services.

We frequently and confidently refer our prenatal patients for chiropractic treatment of neck and back pain, which are quite common and often debilitating in pregnancy. We also refer our patients with breech fetuses to undergo a chiropractic treatment called the Webster technique, which helps fetuses turn into the head down position. Postnatally we refer for treatment of delivery related back pain, tailbone pain, pain with sex, urinary incontinence, and pelvic floor dysfunction. Without chiropractic as a treatment option these patients would needlessly suffer and/or in some postnatal cases need to seek out drug-therapy to control their symptoms. For our prenatal patients, drug-therapy is often not even an option, is quite limited in terms of what we can offer, or worse case places women on drugs that have some risks associated with them.

Over the years, we have seen women who have been treated for pregnancy related neck and back pain with chiropractic care be able to maintain their mobility, continue working, and avoid being sedentary-without needing to go on medicine. We know that women who continue to exercise in pregnancy have better pregnancy outcomes than women who are sedentary. We have also seen women avoid cesarean sections for breech presentation after undergoing the Webster technique. Postnatally, we have seen women resume their pain free, normal functioning lives after just 1-3 visits for chiropractic care- without needing medicine.

As you may know, in pregnancy, women aren't allowed to take NSAIDs, which are powerful anti-inflammatory drugs. Recently, an April 2014 JAMA Pediatrics study concluded that **“Maternal acetaminophen use during pregnancy is associated with a higher risk for HKDs (Hyperkinetic Disorders) and ADHD-like behaviors in children. Because the exposure and outcome are frequent, these results are of public health relevance but further investigations are needed.”**

With this report, our ability to treat pregnant women's pain became even more limited. We try to limit narcotic use in pregnancy, as this can lead to addiction problems for both the mother and the fetus. Chiropractic care not only works to treat pain, it is 100% safe. Unfortunately, Medicaid coverage of chiropractic care is limited and now is in jeopardy of being removed.

Rather than taking away the very limited chiropractic Medicaid benefit of spinal manipulation only coverage, we recommend that you expand the benefit to include examinations, exercises and stretching, the Webster technique, and postnatal pelvic floor rehab so that our Medicaid patients do not have so many financial barriers to access of conservative chiropractic care. We would like to see our Medicaid patients have the same coverage that most of our private insurance carriers offer because these women deserve to have the same access to safe, effective, low risk treatments. As an aside, we believe full coverage will actually save the Medicaid system money by reducing cesareans, cost of filled prescriptions, lost work time, extra doctor visits, emergency room visits, etc.

If you would like to discuss this further, please contact us. We can give you specific examples of women benefited from chiropractic care.

Sincerely,

Amy Thibault, MD



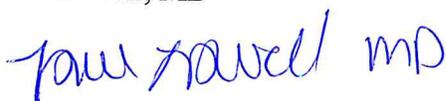
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