

# #VoteSpineHealth

## Canadian Chiropractic Association (CCA) Election Priorities 2019

### CANADA'S BURDEN OF MSK PAIN & DISEASE

Over 11 million Canadians suffer from musculoskeletal (MSK) conditions every year. MSK conditions such as back pain, headaches, arm or neck strain and diseases of the muscle and joints are having a devastating impact on Canadians' health, quality of life, workforce participation and our economy.

### THE SOLUTION: CHIROPRACTORS ARE CANADA'S MSK EXPERTS

Chiropractors are a critical part of the solution to address this growing epidemic. Every year, 4.5 million Canadians rely on services offered by chiropractors to prevent and manage the serious burden of MSK pain and diseases. **Why? Because chiropractic services are drug free, non-invasive, and preventative.**

Chiropractic care has significant long-term benefits, from increasing the quality of life for patients and helping employees return to work faster, to reducing public healthcare costs and pressures. Chiropractic care is a regulated health profession in all provinces and remains one of Canada's largest and fastest growing primary care professions.

#### The High Cost of Musculoskeletal Pain in Canada

- The economic burden of MSK disorders in Canada is \$22 billion annually.
- MSK conditions are the second highest causes of both short term and long-term disability claims in Canada, mental health is the first.
- MSK pain is a key driver of the initial prescribing of opioids.
- 1 in 8 Canadians have reported being diagnosed with chronic back pain.
- 85% of workers in Canada will suffer back pain in their lifetime.
- 1/3 of all time lost at work is caused by back pain.
- MSK injury is responsible for 42% of medical releases in the military - the leading cause of a military career ending as a result of a medical condition.

### We are asking you to take two steps to help reduce the burden of MSK pain & disease for Canadians who are suffering:

- 1) **A NO-COST FIX TO HELP PATIENTS. Allow chiropractors to be assessors for the Disability Tax Credit (DTC).** Chiropractic patients living with disabilities face an unfair obstacle in accessing the DTC benefit. Currently, chiropractors are not authorized by the federal government to assess their patients for this important benefit, forcing a visit to another healthcare professional who may not be aware of their medical history. Chiropractors are authorized to diagnose disability in every province and are recognized as assessors under similar provincial programs. It's time to streamline access and close this gap at the federal level. There is **NO COST** to government to do this as eligibility criteria would remain the same.
- 2) **REMOVING BARRIERS FOR SERVICEPEOPLE. Allow members of the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) to receive the chiropractic care they need without barriers to access.** MSK conditions among CAF members are double that of the general Canadian population due to the physical demands put on active military personnel. MSK injury is a major occupational risk of a military career, and the leading cause of medical release. Problematically, the current chiropractic benefit available to members of the CAF requires a physician referral to off-base care. **This delays timely care and places an unnecessary burden on members seeking help.**

### Did you know CCA is engaged in tackling serious public health issues affecting Canadians?

- Since 2015, CCA has been working tirelessly to contribute to research, advocacy, and frontline community initiatives across Canada to **improve Canada's approach to pain management and reduce the impact of the opioid crisis.**
- An alarming **210,000 concussions occur every year in Canada.** Chiropractors, who have the scope to assess, diagnose, and manage concussions, are seeking to help respond to this major public health concern.