



Weight Loss As A Paradigm And Not A Product

Breakthrough Coaching has done an excellent job at leading the profession away from a Passive Care Paradigm and into an Active Care Paradigm. When Active Care/Rehab was first introduced to the chiropractic profession, it was in the form of an ancillary service. Rehab was the realm of those entrepreneurial chiropractors who perceived rehab as an additional source of revenue to supplement the diminishing return generated by passive care physiotherapy. The 1990s saw a boom in the Rehab equipment marketplace as chiropractors rushed to add \$2-3,000.00 pieces of high-tech resistance equipment, treadmills and ergometers to their practices. With reimbursement for the Active Care codes at between \$40-60.00 per unit, Active Care produced an excellent return on investment. Then came Managed Care and it became very challenging to recoup an investment of between \$10,000-30,000.00 in high tech equipment.

The profession needed low cost, low tech, turn-key tools that would enable them to perform the Active Care procedures that third party payors began to demand as a source of objective documentation of functional improvement. Breakthrough Coaching expanded its 300 Series of Forms, perfecting a true turn-key approach that did not demand that the chiropractor have an expertise in Active Care in order to implement a world-class rehab protocol. Working with Performance Health, Breakthrough Coaching designed the "Rehab and Wellness Station" that allows chiropractors to outfit a complete Rehab Suite for under \$2,000.00. This price point enabled chiropractors to deliver the services that had become the standard of care for the profession in a cost-effective and efficient manner. Breakthrough Coaching was instrumental in shifting the perception of Active Care as a product to Active Care as a Paradigm. Our goal was to create a functionally-based model of care that empowered the patient through a program of in-office and at-home exercises. This past year, we made this process even easier by partnering with HouseCallRehab.com to deliver our entire Active Care Protocol via streaming video over the Internet. This new tool can be used by both chiropractic staff members and patients to learn the proper manner in which to instruct and perform our exercise protocol.

We have now entered a new era – the era of Healthcare Reform. Legislators and lobbyists are focusing on "Prevention and Wellness" as a method of decreasing out-of-control healthcare costs. A cover story in the Business section of the March 16 edition of the New York Times highlighted the current healthcare reform crisis occurring in Massachusetts. Massachusetts was the first state to implement Universal Health Insurance for every citizen. The costs to implement this bold project have doubled over the last year and the program will not be able to continue in its current form past 2010. Officials in Massachusetts have very clearly voiced their opinion, that in order to control the major costs generated from managing chronic diseases, the state must focus its resources on programs and providers that efficiently deliver Prevention & Wellness services. Other states, if not our national government, will surely have all eyes focused on the events occurring in Massachusetts.

While Breakthrough Coaching should be commended for the strong stance we have taken to assist our profession in adopting a Paradigm of Active Care, it is now time for us to help position the profession to take on its rightful role in the delivery of Prevention and Wellness Services. Objective measurement is the gold standard of Breakthrough's Active Care Paradigm. Objective documentation must be our standard for Prevention and Wellness Services. The objective measurement that is the most widely accepted and referenced to determine a person's state of "Wellness" is Body Mass Index (BMI). BMI can be calculated using a simple formula or with a low-cost Impedance Meter. Research shows that an individual with a BMI of 25 – 29.9 is considered overweight. Approximately 66% of Americans fall into this category. Research shows that individuals with a BMI of 25 – 29.9 are more likely to suffer from diabetes, coronary heart disease, high blood cholesterol, stroke, hypertension, gallbladder disease, osteoarthritis, sleep apnea, and some forms of cancer (breast, colorectal, endometrial and kidney). An individual with a BMI of 30 or more is considered obese. To not measure and monitor this important index of health is to bury our professional heads in the sand of healthcare reform.

In order to position ourselves as the providers of Preventative Care for the significant causes of death and disease described above, we must make measurement of BMI on the first patient visit standard procedure in all Breakthrough Coaching practices. We must also provide our Members with a low-cost, low-tech, turn-key approach to weight management. As we did with Active Care, we must change the perception of weight loss from that of a product to that of a Paradigm. The tools to make this conversion are provided by Doctors Weight Loss Solution™. The company provides a low-cost (under \$2000 for the program fee and initial start-up food purchase), low-tech (BMI can be calculated with a simple spreadsheet), and turn-key (the system and 14 behavioral modification lesson plans are staff driven) system. As with our Active Care Protocol, the doctor does not have to be an expert to successfully implement the program.

We must teach our Members to think of their patients' health using the analogy of a three legged stool. The first leg of the stool is Chiropractic Care that maximizes the potential of the neuromusculoskeletal system. The second leg of the stool is the Active Care that empowers the patient and decreases their reliance upon passive care. The third leg of the stool is Weight Loss. Weaken one leg and the stool teeters. Remove one leg and it comes crashing down. We cannot call ourselves practitioners of Prevention and Wellness without addressing the single greatest measurable and controllable contributor to death and disease – poor diet and unhealthy lifestyle choices. We must become the true "Whole Person Practitioners" that we claim to be. The chiropractic profession can no longer solely focus on the musculoskeletal aspect of care. This places our profession firmly in the grip of third party payors and in the vice of ever-decreasing insurance reimbursement. Embracing Whole Person Care including all three legs of Chiropractic, Active Care, and Weight Loss/Behavioral Modification will provide our Members with a solid foundation to withstand the winds of the healthcare reform storm and provide chiropractic with a central and unique role in the delivery of Prevention and Wellness. We stand to make a significant impact on the health of our patients and our nation.