



## The Pain Management Healthcare Disruption Is Calling.

Are You Willing To Accept The Call?

by Dr. Bill Hemmer

We are all aware of the opioid epidemic and how chiropractic has been, at best, an afterthought in this discussion. And as chiropractors we should jump for joy that we were left out of this mess, because this will allow us to seize the opportunity to become the leaders in the swelling “Pain Management Healthcare Disruption” that is gaining momentum around the country. For us to lead this disruption, we must be the first to describe and implement this new pain management paradigm, and then smile as the rest of the healthcare world wonders how we did it.

**A real Pain Management Healthcare Disruption can only occur by completely replacing our current pain management paradigm with a new one.** History demonstrates that attempting to modify bits and pieces of an existing paradigm never results in a real disruption and/or change. Either you replace the paradigm, or you keep it. For example, almost no one uses a regular camera anymore for everyday purposes.

Most everyone has a cellphone with a pretty good camera. We have replaced our cameras of the past with our phone; can you even find or buy film for a camera anymore?

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The cellphone is also going to be a key driver of this healthcare disruption, and the future of healthcare delivery will revolve around this tool. With few exceptions, apps and virtual visits will replace face-to-face appointments. This paradigm shift is the driving force behind Amazon, Google, Apple and many other tech companies that continue to invest in the healthcare sector. Of course, chiropractic adjustments will never be done virtually but most other natural healthcare information and follow-up can be done via the use of a cellphone.

This leads me to the crux of the replacement of the current pain management healthcare paradigm. **The catalyst of this disruption will be placing the patient in the driver’s seat and guiding them to be responsible for their own health.** What a concept! This paradigm shift has been shown to be both cost-effective and sustainable in other areas of healthcare, e.g. this conceptual model has been described in detail in the book *Healthcare Disrupted: Next Generation Business Models and Strategies* by Jeff Elton and Anne O’Riordan.

Allow me to describe, as I see it, the 3 levels of this new Pain Management Paradigm Disruption for the chiropractic profession. First of all, patients must learn to become healthy by themselves. With this **Do-It-Yourself Approach** they learn to focus and educate themselves on their current pain, using resources you provide them via their cellphone. Second, when necessary, patients come into your office for a **Classic Chiropractic Care Plan**, to reinforce and solidify what they’ve learned on their own from the information you have provided them. And third, some patients will be motivated to dive deeply into a

**Short-Term Intensive Treatment Plan** including all three areas of the Functional Health Recovery Triangle (Structural, Chemical and Stress Reduction) to address their current health challenges until their issues are resolved, and then take back responsibility for their own health.

We all wake up every morning yearning to become a better version of ourselves. We imagine our life with less pain, more energy and greater joy. Then, as our feet hit the floor, the current version of ourselves slaps us in the face. Our

job, as a member of this new pain management healthcare paradigm, is to recognize and acknowledge this shared humanity. With this world view acknowledged we can then provide our patients with a reasonably authentic way to make a better version of themselves attainable, and with minimal help from others. This allows us, without being too “salesy” or pushy, to get our foot in the door to become their trusted health authority. Then, you can provide easy-to-understand, personalized ways for patients to make the lifestyle changes necessary to decrease their inflammation, increase their ability to heal, manage pain, and provide them with a way to teach others about their newfound health. As we all know, everyone loves to be noticed for their accomplishments and thereafter becomes very willing and eager to share their learning with others.

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The problem with most current Functional Medicine educational programs is the use of complicated language and the expensive cost, factors which keep a good many middle-class people from even starting the process of getting healthy on their own. And even if they do decide to buy a program they have trouble understanding most of it, and thus have difficulty following through. This invariably leads to poor commentary to others, and consequently many of these programs expire quickly.

Another important part of the Do-It-Yourself Level is the support you give patients as they begin to go through the lifestyle changes necessary to achieve optimal health and wellbeing. Online and in-person support is the glue that can hold the whole thing together. Daily emails and group classes on different topics help nurture your rela-

tionship with your patients; you’re literally providing daily value to their health journey, and without lifting a finger. **So, in other words, automation is the key to the success of this process.**

Once your patients understand, and trust, that you are their support system the likelihood of them contacting you to initiate a round of Classic Chiropractic Care is much higher. Now they know you; you’ve been helping them, without being pushy, by being their trusted authority on health and wellness. They feel compelled to use more of your services (known as The Law of Reciprocity) because of the value you have already provided them. This leads to the second level, the Classic Chiropractic Treatment Plan. No need to go into detail here. Patients can go through your treatment plan, use their insurance for reimbursement, if available, and

reach their desired outcomes for that treatment plan. As you continue to become more familiar with this new paradigm, your ability to switch gears from do-it-yourself discussions to classic chiropractic care conversations to going-all-in dialogues will become seamless and matter-of-fact.

The final level is the All-In Level, usually characterized by a bundled care plan of diagnostics, treatments, advice about supplements and pain relievers, lifestyle changes, et al, and any other specialized procedures practitioners may use in their practice. This level is All-In because it’s an intense, short term (usually 3 to 6 months) period of focused care on a specific area that is of great and immediate concern to a particular patient, e.g. neuropathy, diabetes, adrenal fatigue, and weight loss are common areas of intense focus.

**This is as close to rescue care as I want to get in my practice.**

The allopathic model of medicine is designed to let subclinical chronic conditions fester until they reach the point of crisis. Then, drugs and surgery are used to “save” the patient from that crisis. I want to stay as far away from that model as I can, because, as I stated at the start of this article, to replace a paradigm you must replace the entire paradigm, not just pieces of it.

The major difference between allopathic rescue care and All-In Care is that with All-In Care specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and time-based goals are set for each patient, based on their current health condition. SMART goals, as they are called, are agreements made between the doctor and the patient at the beginning of the All-In level of care, ground rules so to speak. Once those goals are set, then the case continues until those goals are met. Once they are met, the patient then decides on which of the other two levels of care best suits them moving forward.

To summarize, the future of pain management will be found in your patient’s back pocket. The cellphone will be used to disrupt the entire healthcare delivery system in the very near future. (The current opioid crisis is just the latest example of the healthcare battle being fought using the same paradigm that has been used since World War II to fight infections with penicillin.) The idea of using “One Pill For One Ill” is totally a losing fight in today’s environment. We need to seize the opportunity to be the innovators of pain relief, pain management and ultimately good health and wellbeing, using all of the natural methods that have made us professional outcasts in the past. So, be thankful that you’re a chiropractor, and be sure to charge your phone. You’re going to need it!

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