

# Delisting chiropractic services unfair - Peloso

BY MAGGIE PETRUSHEVSKY  
The New Tanner

Delisting chiropractic care, optometry and physiotherapy flies in the face of government opposition to privatizing health care, says a Rockwood chiropractor.

Dr. Tim Peloso says by removing these services from those covered by Ontario Health Insurance Premiums (OHIP), the Ontario government is forcing private health insurance carriers to bear the costs of the services.

Not only does this contradict what Premier Dalton McGuinty told voters prior to the election, it also ignores research showing that treating ailments in the early stages keeps problems from escalating and decreases both the cost of treatment and the length of time required to effect a cure.

Numerous documents, including the Mango study and the Romanow report, have urged the government to sink money into preventive treatments as the most cost effective way to spend health care dollars.

The government's own Workmen's Compensation policies support the concept of chiropractic care as the "best, fastest and least expensive way" to treat neck, lower back and extreme mechanical pain, Peloso says, and studies show that chiropractors have kept workers working for years. Yet physiotherapists have been pretty much delisted in recent years unless the clinic is connected to a hospital. Optometrists are to be cut off in September and now the government is about to do the same with chiropractors.

The Ontario Chiropractic Association sets the fee schedule for its members and visits run about \$20 each in this area. In Toronto the cost is more like \$30 per visit, Peloso says.

Thirty years ago OHIP covered about 80 per cent of the cost of chiropractic care but over the years the fees have not kept pace with increases. Before the government announced its intention to change that, the support had dropped for about \$10 per visit for the first 15 visits. As of January 1, unless the government changes its mind, patients - or their health care plans - will have to pay the full price per visit.

Chiropractors, optometrists and physiotherapists are all primary health care providers just like the fam-



Dr. Timothy Peloso, right, and office manager Daphne Smith, left, contend the provincial government's delisting of chiropractic care, optometry and physiotherapy is a blow to preventative medicine. - Ted Tyler photo

ily doctor, Peloso points out, because people don't need a referral from a physician to make an appointment with them.

This is why chiropractors are asking the public to support their fight to receive

equal treatment with other primary care providers.

"So long as they continue to charge nothing for one type of service, that's where the patients will flock," he says, no matter what research says about effective

means of treating mechanical pain.

Dropping OHIP support means chiropractors become less accessible and that means a reduction in services available to the taxpayers who are funding

OHIP in the first place. Chiropractors are urging patients and the public in general to make their MPPs aware of their feelings about the change.

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