

Public Health

for Chiropractors

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Rand Baird, Herbert Vear, Mitchell Haas, Fred Colley, John Pammer Jr., Karl Kranz,
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Contents

PREFACE	xi
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	xiii
CONTRIBUTORS	xv
Chapter 1 Introduction to Public Health, Public Health Agencies, and the APHA	1
<i>Rand Baird, DC, MPH, FICA, FICC, and Mitchell Haas, DC, MA</i>	
Definitions and Descriptions of Public Health	1
Primary, Secondary, and Tertiary Levels of Care and Prevention	5
Agencies: How Public Health Services Are Organized and Delivered	8
The Special Case of the American Public Health Association	13
References	34
Chapter 2 Basic Concepts in Public Health	35
<i>Marion Willard Evans Jr., DC, PhD, CHES</i>	
Definitions in Public Health	35
Assessment of Risk and Occurrence of Disease	38
Measuring for Causation and Risk Assessment	39
Risk Difference	40
Risk Ratio	41
Prevention	41
Counseling Patients on Behavior Change	43
References	47
Chapter 3 Public Health Research Methods	49
<i>Eric L. Hurwitz, DC, PhD</i>	
Introduction	49
Epidemiology	50
Health Services Research	64
Data Collection	75

Ethics in Public Health Research	77
Community-Based Participatory Research	79
A Few Notes of Caution	80
Emerging Issues	81
References	83
Chapter 4 Environmental Health	89
<i>Gyan P, Khare, PhD</i>	
Air	89
Water	92
Solid Waste	98
Hazardous Waste	101
References	104
Chapter 5 Food and Nutrition	107
<i>Susan St. Claire, MS, DC, DACBN</i>	
Introduction	107
Iron Deficiency and Its Related Anemia	108
Folic Acid Deficiency: Related Diseases and Risk Factors	111
Rickets and Other Vitamin D-Related Disorders	113
Fluoridation: Risks and Benefits	115
Dietary Sugar and Sweeteners	118
Fast Food	123
Trans Fats	127
Obesity	131
References	134
Chapter 6 Care for Work-Related Musculoskeletal Disorders: Implications for Public Health	147
<i>Robert D. Mootz, DC</i>	
Work Injury as a Public Health Issue	147
History of Workers' Compensation	148
Evolution of the Compensation Era	149
Challenges of Contemporary Workers' Compensation Systems	149
Impacts and Incidence of Noncatastrophic, Work-Related Musculoskeletal Injury	150
Chiropractic Experience in Workers' Compensation	151
Chiropractic Benefits in Workers' Compensation Systems	153
Best Practices and Disability Prevention	153
What Does the Future Hold for Workers' Compensation Systems?	156
Chiropractors: An Expanding Occupational Health Care Resource	158
References	159
Chapter 7 Unintentional and Intentional Injuries	163
<i>Michael Freeman, PhD, DC, MPH, and Michael, T. Haneline, DC, MPH</i>	
Injury Is a Leading Public Health Concern	165
The Impact Injuries Have on Society	166
Injuries Are Not Accidents	169
Injury Epidemiology	169
Injury Prevention	170
The National Center for Injury Prevention and Control	171
Categories of Violence	177
The Public Health Approach to Violence Prevention	179
The Ecological Model	179

	Violence Prevention in the Chiropractic Office	180
	References	181
Chapter 8	Infectious Disease	183
	<i>Jonathon Todd Egan, DC, MPH, PhD (cand)</i>	
	Introduction	184
	Patterns of Disease Distribution	184
	Surveillance: Detection and Response	191
	Immunization	193
	Resistance and Reemergence	198
	Health Care–Acquired Infection	200
	Putting It All Together: Influenza A and Pandemic Influenza	202
	Conclusion	205
	References	205
Chapter 9	Prevention of Chronic Diseases	215
	<i>Jerrilyn Cambron, LMT, DC, MPH, PhD, and Sylvia, E. Furner, MPH, PhD</i>	
	Introduction	215
	Heart Disease	217
	Diabetes	218
	Cancer	219
	Conclusion	223
	References	224
Chapter 10	Physical Fitness	233
	<i>Meridel I. Gatterman, MA, DC, MEd, and Ron Kirk, MA, DC</i>	
	Inactivity as a Major Risk Factor	234
	The Cost of Inactivity	234
	Decreasing Health Care Costs and Increasing Productivity	235
	Fit for Life	235
	The Health Risks of Not Maintaining a Healthy Weight	235
	Health Benefits of Specific Exercises	236
	Conclusion	238
	References	239
Chapter 11	The Public Health Impact of Musculoskeletal Conditions	241
	<i>Marion Willard Evans Jr., DC, PhD, CHES</i>	
	Epidemiology of Musculoskeletal Conditions	241
	Risk Factors for Chronic Spine Conditions	243
	Arthritis	243
	Occupational Musculoskeletal Injuries	244
	Back and Neck Injuries	245
	Costs Associated with Musculoskeletal Disorders	245
	Comorbidities of Chronic Spine Disease and Its Public Health Implications	246
	Action Needed from Spine Practitioners	247
	References	249
Chapter 12	Tobacco, Alcohol, and Drug Abuse	251
	<i>Samir Ayad, MD, and H. Garrett Thompson, PhD</i>	
	Introduction	252
	Tobacco	252
	Alcohol	262
	Drugs	272
	Chiropractic Involvement	279
	Conclusion	283
	References	283

Chapter 13 Pediatrics in Public Health	299
<i>Neil J. Davies, DC, FICC, FACC</i>	
The Role of the Chiropractor in Developmental Surveillance	300
The Role of the Chiropractor in Nutritional Surveillance	302
The Role of the Chiropractor in Child Safety Surveillance	309
The Role of the Chiropractor in Environmental Surveillance.	312
Conclusion	314
References	315
Chapter 14 Aging, Public Health, and Chiropractic	319
<i>Lisa Zaynab Killinger, DC, and Paul E. Dougherty, DC</i>	
Chiropractic and the Public Health Effort	320
Specific Public Health Concerns in the Aging	322
A Discussion of Living Options: Choices Facing Families	330
Conclusion	333
References	333
Chapter 15 Population Health	337
<i>Claire Johnson, DC, MEd, DACBSP, and Bart Green, DC, MEd, DACBSP</i>	
Population Health Issues	338
Socioeconomic Status and Poverty	340
Access to Health Care	341
Physical Living Environment	342
Work Environment and Employment	343
Education	343
Maternal, Infant, and Child Health	344
Social and Family Networks	344
Culture, Race, and Ethnicity	345
Religion and Spirituality	347
Individual Characteristics	347
Addressing Population Health Issues	348
Conclusion	351
References	351
Chapter 16 Principles of Health Care Systems with Considerations for Chiropractic	355
<i>Monica Smith, DC, PhD</i>	
Health Services and Health Insurance, Public and Private	356
Consumer Protection and Consumer Empowerment in Health Care	358
Conclusion	361
References	361
Chapter 17 Public Health: A Personal Responsibility?	363
<i>Jennifer R. Jamison, PhD, EdD, MSc, MBBCh</i>	
Targeting Intervention	364
From Beliefs to Behavior	364
Changing Behavior	365
The Impact of Lifestyle Choices	367
Motivation	367
Making Prudent Choices	369
Taking a Broad-Based Approach	371
Conclusion	372
References	372

Chapter 18 Integration of Chiropractic into the Public Health System	
in the New Millennium	375
<i>Cheryl Hawk, DC, PhD, CHES</i>	
Moving Forward in the New Millennium	375
Healthy People 2010: Roadmap for Integration	376
The Interface Between Chiropractic Practice and Public Health	380
Using a Wellness Model for Integration of Chiropractic into Public Health	381
Using Healthy People 2010 as a Roadmap to Integrating Chiropractic Practice into the Public Health Arena	382
Conclusion	387
References	387
Glossary	391
Index	407



Preface

The primary purpose of this book is to meet the needs of chiropractors, especially chiropractic students, for a succinct, relevant textbook on the application of public health concepts, tools, and behaviors in chiropractic practice. There are many excellent and venerable general textbooks of public health, but we believe this is the first to be written by and specifically for Doctors of Chiropractic.

Public health has many definitions (please see Chapter 1), but in whatever form, D.D. Palmer, the founder of chiropractic, clearly articulated the public health context for the profession late in the 19th century. He identified the source of health problems as originating from “trauma, toxins, and auto-suggestion.” These 19th century terms may seem quaint to us now, but external and internal environments are determinants and modifiers of health in human populations and they are as relevant as ever. Indeed, they are becoming even more important in the global context.

As this textbook is being written, the U.S. Congress is grappling with ways to initiate health care system reform to improve the public’s health and simultaneously make it more affordable to society. These goals are laudable but extremely complicated to design and implement considering the many powerful competing interests involved in the effort. And yet, there seems to be a growing consensus among all stakeholders that the health care system in the United States needs to refocus

its attention and resources toward disease prevention and health promotion, including efforts to instill a greater sense of personal responsibility for one’s own health as part of a healthy lifestyle. These concepts have always been a component of a public health professional’s approach to the common good, but rarely have they received the support that they should.

The bulk of what constitutes the knowledge base for public health has been part of chiropractic education since the inception of the profession. In recent years, however, the programmatic accrediting body for chiropractic education, the Council on Chiropractic Education, has codified specific learning objectives in its *Standards for Doctor of Chiropractic Programs and Requirements for Institutional Status* under the rubric of “Wellness.”¹ As part of the formal accreditation process, chiropractic training institutions must demonstrate that students have the appropriate attitudes, knowledge and skills to appreciate, understand, and implement public health behaviors in the clinical context, especially in the area of health promotion and disease prevention. Doctors of Chiropractic provide about 200 million health care visits in the United States each year. During the course of a typical chiropractic course of care, patients and their chiropractors often

1. The Council on Chiropractic Education. *Standards for Doctor of Chiropractic programs and requirements for institutional status*, Scottsdale, AZ; 2007:46–49.

develop excellent relationships that provide any number of “teachable moments” during one-on-one encounters. We intend for this textbook to contribute significantly to the attainment of these educational goals, and to the implementation of health promotion and disease prevention behaviors in clinical practice.

In addition to the opportunity to contribute to the public’s health one patient at a time, chiropractors have many opportunities to become involved in public health activities at the local, community, state, and national levels. There is a small but growing cadre of chiropractors who have become public health activists by participating significantly in the public health community through the American Public Health Association and other organizations. Many have formal education in public health and many have contributed chapters to this book. Over the course of the last few decades, this group has contributed to the growth, development, and professional perception of chiropractic. They should be applauded.

Both of us (coeditors Michael Haneline, DC, MPH, and William Meeker, DC, MPH) pursued graduate degrees in public health early in our chiropractic careers. We believed that the knowledge, skills, intellectual rigor, and sense of community responsibility and activism that are inherent parts of the profession of public health would dovetail nicely with chiropractic. In fact, they have and they do. Both of us have been involved in developing chiropractic research capacity, teaching clinical

epidemiology, and contributing original research. Without an understanding of epidemiological principles our efforts would have been much less effective. Both of us have been involved in teaching public health to chiropractic students in a variety of contexts. We know from our own experience and that of our colleagues engaged in similar activities that a good text and reference book would have made our tasks much easier. One of us (Michael Haneline) decided to take matters into his own hands and persuaded the other (William Meeker) to sign on as coeditor, notwithstanding a great deal of soul searching about the difficult reality of textbook creation. And yet, the task has proven to be quite rewarding. What has made this relatively easy is the willingness and the knowledge represented by a wonderful group of contributing authors, each a true expert on the relationship between chiropractic and public health.

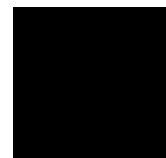
The text is organized in a fashion designed to guide the reader step-by-step through public health issues that are applicable to chiropractic practice; from basic definitions to the more complex. Indeed, one of the main objectives of each of the authors as they wrote their chapters was to make their contribution relevant to the practicing chiropractor. Furthermore, chapters were included that are not commonly found in general introductory public health texts, but are of interest to chiropractors, covering topics such as nutrition, occupational and traffic-related injuries, physical fitness, and the integration of chiropractic into the public health system.



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