

Is an All Cash Chiropractic Wellness Care Practice Right for Me?



5 Important Points to Consider Before Opening a Chiropractic Wellness Care Office

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I will sell Chiropractic, serve Chiropractic, and save Chiropractic if it will take me twenty lifetimes to do it. I will promote it within the law, without the law, in keeping with the law or against the law in order to get sick people well and keep the well from getting sick.

- B. J. Palmer

Sounds like a dream right?...

A chiropractic office that is literally all cash - not dependent on 3rd party payors in the least, eliminating the hassles ridiculous documentation requirements, claims denials and confused or disgruntled customers.

An office that literally changes hundreds or even thousands of lives every month as more and more people in your community discover how easy and affordable it is to experience the 'power' of routine chiropractic wellness care.

An office you are excited to arrive at every morning because the only stress is handling the volume of families *wanting* their spines checked.

A 2015 Gallup Poll showed 32% of people would like to get chiropractic care even in the absence of pain but don't for a myriad of reasons. Express Chiropractic overcomes those obstacles through the business model we have developed.

What if I told you It's not a dream? – that it can be done.

Sounds awesome!... Sign me up!

But what if I also told you it's not for everybody?

It's true. **An all cash Chiropractic Wellness Care practice is not the right fit for every Chiropractor.**

Whether you are opening a new office or thinking about transitioning an existing insurance-based practice to a cash Chiropractic Wellness Care office, there are many considerations when figuring out if it makes sense for you.

But before we get to these 'considerations,' the first question you must ask yourself is **are you willing to break your old familiar patterns of practice, step out of your comfort zone, and start a new unfamiliar business.**

Most people continue to hold onto the same business model not because it works, not because it makes them happy, not even because it makes them money but because it's familiar.

Familiarity breeds Comfort.

People find comfort in being *comfortable* – even if they know it is a dead-end road – they find comfort in 'understanding' their current type of practice.

Stepping out of the familiar and into the unknown seems too scary and the learning curve just too steep so they continue to take the short term comfort over the long-term success.

For now, let's assume you are a *chiropractic rebel* and fear is not a factor. This will allow us to objectively look at whether putting in the effort to build a successful Chiropractic Wellness Care (CWC) 'cash practice' is the right move for you.

And notice I said **successful** rather than just saying *owning* or *running*. I am talking about deliberately creating and executing a plan that will lead you down the path to a successfully operating business that is an asset. Something you can sell in the future.

CWC Practice Tip: A burning desire to help others through the power of chiropractic won't fix a practice lacking sound business systems.

Whether you want to work in it till you drop, bring in an associate and work less hours or sell your practice 10 years from now, the fact remains that you are either creating an asset of which the value grows over time or you are slowly creating a burden that will stick around even if you are ready to part ways.

To develop a business into a Stable and Valuable Asset, it's important that you create a business that is not affected by forces you can't control.

Insurance is one such factor that can change and impact your stability and success. It may be an immediate impact such as not paying a claim, bundling of services or changes in fee schedules. Or it can be a slower but permanent change such as altering their reimbursement policies or worse yet... farming their chiropractic claims out to an outside company to manage them – and profit off how much they can save the insurance carrier in claims paid each year.

Remember, when you are in bed with insurance you are playing their game. And because it is their game, they are better at it than you. Their wealthy shareholders can attest to that.

CASH PRACTICE CONSIDERATIONS

Having owned many practice types from multimillion-dollar multidisciplinary insurance based to cash only models, there is a reason that I am now only focusing my time on helping chiropractors create a cash practice. That reason is because you have more control over the growth and income over time.

It only took the 'insurance rug' being yanked out from under me once – in an office that had an almost \$100K per month overhead with gross revenues at an average of just over \$150K a month – to make me begin to reevaluate the long-term viability of a business model that includes an X factor called 'insurance' in the success formula.

The office was doing great, minding its' own business, helping a ton of people and turning a profit. At first insurance changed a little year after year with slightly lower reimbursement and then the changes happened fast. Two major insurance carriers made big changes in reimbursement very quickly with the result being very bad.

It didn't just affect me but hundreds of other chiropractors in the state, many of whom closed their doors. That's right... Closed down! I was lucky in that I had another office less than 4 miles from the practice that took the worst hit. As a matter of fact, I owned 6 offices at the time in that state.

I was knee deep in practice management clients at the time so I decided I didn't have the time or desire to deal with making up the difference with a hardcore marketing push. I just closed the office and distributed patients to the other locations. Others were not so lucky.

That brings me to today... completely out of the insurance game, running a much more successful and sustainable model than I had with insurance and helping other chiropractors realize the same dream. The dream that I was essentially forced to go create.

Now I've opened multiple Express Chiropractic locations and I have proven that it works (most importantly) and now I am sharing how I do it with you.

We are building a tribe of like-minded chiropractic entrepreneurs that believe more people should be under routine chiropractic care while also building a big busy cash practice. It's that simple.

But first let's make sure a 'cash practice' is the right way for you to grow your chiropractic small business into the valuable asset we discussed a moment ago.

Below are just a few of the specific factors you should consider before jumping into the deep end. By no means does this cover everything but what it will do is give you a few major considerations while stimulating your mind to think of others.

1. Your Philosophy

I would contend that there are no health professionals that *believe* in the philosophy behind the care they provide more than chiropractors. And yet I also contend that there is no other health profession that has as much confusion and conflict about the philosophy behind the care they deliver.

If you are going to run a successful Chiropractic Wellness Care cash practice, you are no longer relying on or allowing a 3rd party to *determine* the necessity, frequency, type or efficacy of the care you are providing. It is now between you and the patient. Sounds liberating right?!

The caveat is that you now must completely develop the philosophy behind the care you provide.

The reality is that developing a sound business philosophy is step #1 for running a successful business but it especially rings true for a chiropractic small business. You can only competently explain and expect patients to ‘buy’ into what you are telling them if it is first very clear in your own mind.

You may be thinking ‘duh’... but you would be surprised at how many chiropractors haven’t really defined a business philosophy they identify with and can effectively explain to patients and people in their community.

Your philosophy of how and why you deliver powerful chiropractic care isn’t right or wrong when compared to anyone else. It should be unique to you. However, it goes without saying that if you want to build a Chiropractic Wellness Care practice – one where people are getting regular spine checks as part of their health and wellness lifestyle – then it is essential that you believe routine spine checks are beneficial, even in the absence of pain.

The point here is that you must take time to define a Philosophy of Care that will help you determine if it will fit well with a practice that is

- a. All Cash
- b. Provides care for Restoring and Maintaining a health spine

But there is a second part to this philosophy formula.

While your front and center *Practice Purpose* should be your impact on those you serve, defining the impact you want your practice to have on you and the staff is critical for keeping everyone’s enthusiasm high and head in the game.

From the amount of money you want to make to the amount of free time away from the office you would like to have, you have a philosophy about it. You just need to identify it and again make sure it ‘fits’ within the cash and wellness care practice model.

Now you can combine these philosophical premises into a cohesive Philosophy that will point you towards the Personal and Professional Life you desire.

CWC Practice Tip: Make sure your Practice Philosophy expands beyond the impact you wish for your business to have on the community. You should also define the impact you want it to have on your own life.

For the Express Chiropractic Franchises, the Philosophy (usually written as a mission statement) is...*to give families convenient and affordable access to regular chiropractic care while giving me and my team a low stress, high volume, profitable subluxation based practice in which to serve our community.*

The unfortunate reality for most chiropractors is they have contradictions in their philosophical premise for the care they deliver or just allow it to be determined by a 3rd party insurance provider.

Even more unfortunate is that they have just as many contradictions in, or never define, the impact they expect their service to have on their own life.

From a poverty mindset to always believing that ‘I just *need* more new patients’ there are often a whole host of subliminal success sabotaging beliefs.

The success of their business, income and overall quality of their life suffer because of this lack of a complete and solid philosophical foundation on which to build their services and life.

If you are going to operate a cash practice that positions itself as THE go-to office for Maintenance and Prevention care in your community, then a solid practice philosophy becomes more critical.

2. Your Services

Before you can commit to a CWC practice model and philosophy, consider the services you wish to provide. Really think about the services you feel are the most important for your community to get the most out of your care while also being the services you are passionate about delivering. It is that combination that will help you create the perfect cash practice.

CWC Practice Tip: Don't overcomplicate your office. Less services typically equates to lower stress and a better understanding in the community about what you 'do.'

You can provide virtually any service you desire at a cash rate provided you can make a profit for your business and it fits well with the patient flow. In other words it must make logical (financial, available manpower, office size, etc) sense.

Just keep in mind that every additional service you offer does complicate the business model to some degree and creates brand confusion in the eyes of the consumer in this way..."What do they really do here?"

Confused consumers won't buy. Sometimes simple is better. Chiropractic is powerful and often does not require much more to complement it other than a little healing time.

In the Express Chiropractic model, the services are limited to chiropractic and massage to help reduce the Vertebral Subluxation Complex or VSC. A new location starts with only a chiropractor who does it all. Once the office reaches a certain volume a massage therapist is hired. Together they provide the services and manage the front office. This is simple to handle because it is only "cash" being exchanged and since many people are on memberships, there is no transaction occurring at all. They just get the care and go.

As the volume continues to grow, a front office person is hired. From there additional chiropractors or massage therapists can be added – again, only as volume of patients dictates and income allows.

Think in terms of this type of growth. It will save you a fortune in overhead expenses.

It's simple and smart and we know the *right* time to add each person to the team.

If you have an existing practice, you will want to think in terms of simplifying your practice services and streamlining staff to the greatest extent possible. Again, you can always add this complexity back on later – that is, if you don't completely fall in love with the simplicity. And you just might!

3. Your Fees

The cash business model lives and grows by people taking money out of their own pocket and spending it for something of value. The fees should be set so that the community can get 'affordable' access to long term *regular* chiropractic care as part of their overall wellness or vitality plan.

What you value an adjustment at has no connection to what a new patient in the office *feels* is a good value for an adjustment and especially once out of pain.

At Express Chiropractic, we use specific psychologically compelling scripts (called 'Conversational Sales') to help people understand the benefits of the membership option or pre-pay packages. There is one primary reason for this. **The less money that is transacted over the counter, the less the visit is about money.**

CWC Practice Tip: Get the money out of sight so that the exchange of it doesn't slowly nullify your patient education and prescribed plan of care

Setting fees is such a pivotal part of creating a lasting and growing office model and brand. Factors like rent and other expenses impact what the fees need to be. We have spent years getting this dialed in to ensure a customer experience 'value' that is greater than the fee paid and time spent.

When I first started departing the world of 3rd party reimbursement in 2010, I decided I wanted to transition a 3500 square foot clinic in a class A high rise building to 'cash only.' The more I crunched the numbers the more I realized it didn't make sense. I could not get the fee structure low enough to make it worth it for the patients to stop using their insurance, leave the Dark Side behind and follow me to the *promised land*.

In short, the fees must make sense to those who have insurance just as much as they will to those that don't. If you are great at 'selling' chiropractic, then perhaps your fee structure could be higher but who really wants to 'sell' anything?

In the Express Chiropractic & Wellness model, we basically make it a no-brainer to commit to care and do it with zero pressure on the customer and thus it's comfortable for your staff to say as well.

I can't tell you how many doctors I have coached that want to charge the same amount for an out-of-pocket visit as they did in an insurance model. When I discuss changing the fees and building the volume they will rebut with comments such as "my service is worth a thousand times what I am charging!" Well perhaps it is but we are running a business, not proving a point. I know how to make businesses successful; I have proven that in insurance practices and with cash practices that, while they may not have the same level of annual gross revenue, turn a stellar net profit.

While charging more per visit and just seeing less patients (i.e. only seeing those that can afford the care and/or see the value in paying for it week after week or month after month in sickness and in health) seems like it makes sense, you are missing many very important components to success when you approach a chiropractic business from this mindset.

For example, The *Positive Healing Energy* and *Social Proof* that your office is 'The Place to Be' that can only be generated by a reasonably high volume of people moving in and out of the practice.

Depending on the statistics you read, something like 7 to 15% of people in the US regularly visit a chiropractor. I am sure the percentage is much higher if you consider those who have tried it once or twice in their life.

The reality is that people are just not sure about chiropractic. They think it could have some value in relieving back or neck pain but as far as a way to find and maintain better overall health, no way!

This is the message you better be good at conveying if you want to have a busy, profitable cash practice that will serve thousands in your community. I can teach you how to convey that message effectively. And virtually every top performing chiropractic office in the world has someone that is running it (not necessarily actively practicing) that is excellent at communicating the importance of regular chiropractic care for healthy aging.

BUT... no matter how good I – or they – are, you cannot overcome a fee that does not fit your socioeconomic market. Period.

CWC Practice Tip: The Time and Money spent in your office must fit within a Customer's Value Formula (CVF). If the time or money it takes to get care goes beyond the Value they place on your care they will fade away with excuses such as "it's too difficult to get in" or "I'm feeling better."

To build a busy cash practice, you should create a *fee* and *payment* structure that turns you a profit while remaining reasonable for the customer. Now, back that up with a chiropractic care *message* that is powerful and yet easy to understand. Finally, you must make it a no-brainer for the patient to commit to care by providing a customer experience that far exceeds the time and money spent in your office.

That's it! Now you simply wrap that around your services provided and market like a mad man – or woman!

4. Your State

Before you get too deep into the fun and anticipation of owning and running a cash practice that offers memberships and prepayment plans, you should look into your state laws.

You must make sure that any service and payment structure you offer is allowed. You also need to understand any cancellation or refund policies for pre-payment plans or membership plans should you elect to offer them.

Truth be told most chiropractors don't read their governing rules. You should check that out before you commit to a specific way to set up your office.

Even if some payment options are not allowed in your state, chances are you can just modify your game-plan slightly and be well within what is allowed.

The awesome side effect of getting to know your state laws is you will discover that many (and probably many, many) documentation and other procedures are not required by your state. They are required by the insurance providers but not by the state.

For example, much of what you have to do as far as documentation goes will disappear. The rules may be as simple as provide a treatment plan, prognosis, diagnosis and a few other key points. How amazing would that be! It is even better than amazing actually. There is nothing quite as satisfying as helping 60, 80 or 100 people improve their health and go home 5 minutes after closing time knowing all your notes are completed and income is secured.

But either way, I encourage you to check out the rules and limitations before you get too deep into the cash practice model so you can better understand how it might be structured. And, of course, if you are a good fit for Express then we help you with all of this from day one.

5. Your Systems

Insurance first emerged onto the scene in the mid-1800s as accident insurance, offered against injuries arising from railroad and steamboat accidents. Sickness coverage emerged about 40 years later to compensate employees for lost wages if unable to work, not to cover medical expenses.

Over time this led to the development of medical expense insurance in the 1920s followed by national government funded plans. This all eventually morphed into the current government funded insurance mess they have going now and the for-profit, highly regulated sickness care racket that private insurance companies have developed.

Before that time, patients were expected to pay all non-accident health care costs out of their own pockets.

If you want to run a cash practice you are essentially going to eliminate the middle man. You and the patient basically sink back into an old school transaction method that took place long before 3rd party reimbursement emerged.

Because of that, you have to think a little differently and run your business accordingly.

Let me give you a great rule of thumb for running a successful cash practice.

The more different you are the more desirable you become

Let me explain by asking a question. What competitive edge does a cash practice give you over other chiropractors in town? – I know what you are thinking... ‘everyone needs chiropractic so there is *no competition*.’ That may be true but let’s look at it from a business owner perspective rather than as a practicing chiropractor.

As a business owner you want to fill your office with the same people in your community that the chiropractor down the road is hoping he or she will also realize as a new customer.

So what is the edge?

Becoming known as the no appointment needed, hassle free, affordable, all cash practice in town gives you a business model that sets you apart from the other (insurance based) chiropractors in town.

Advantage YOU.

What if you also had an office name and signage that essentially markets your practice better than any expensive marketing plan through the simple power of ‘curiosity;’ all without you needing to even lift a finger.

Even BETTER...

Now, what if you were also known for a Consistently Excellent Customer Experience (CECE) that blew people away visit after visit?

This is where you lock in LIFETIME CUSTOMERS.

How do you make this happen?

The answer is Systems

Running your business via Systems (or what we call Systems Based Service at Express) gives you much more than just the competitive edge.

It is THE critical component for transforming a business run off goodwill and grit into an Asset that anyone can run once they learn the systems. *Systems* are defined **protocols** and **scripts** that allow you to develop a practice that can run with or without you at the controls – one where you can easily replace administrative and professional personnel, yourself included.

If **you** are the business or you require administrative staff with specialized training, then you don't have the correct systems in place.

With every doctor we train, most of our initial focus is on using systems to make the small business operate like a well-oiled machine. This results in a more efficient office that handles high volume while providing a Consistently Excellent Customer Experience for the patient and a more enjoyable, profitable, lower stress business for the owner and staff. It is only after systems are in place that we ramp up marketing to push new patients through the door.

At a single Express Chiropractic location, we may see 70 to 100 new patients and a couple thousand visits each month with 2 doctors in the office. It only works so well because everyone is well trained to use the systems.

You want a business that – if let's say you were going to sell it – you want a business that you can bring someone in and 'show' them how it runs... not just 'tell' them how it runs. You should be able to show that new owner that there is a protocol for everything.

There is a reason a franchised business has such a higher success rate over a *Mom & Pop* business... *Systems* is that reason.

The only way to create a business that operates with or without you and that will become a valuable asset over time is if it is run via proven systems. If you are not willing to create or learn a Systems Based Service approach to *doing business* then you will have a tough time building a powerhouse cash practice.

You might survive but thriving will be difficult.

CWC Practice Tip: Chiropractic care as a service will hold up its end of the bargain as a premium service well worth the money paid for it. This means it's not the chiropractic adjustment you provide that will hold you back from success. It is the way you offer the chiropractic that will be the difference between failure and success.

In closing let me give you some sound business advice that I learned early in my career. **Time is something that is always moving even if you are standing still. If you want to have the freedom to use your allotted time as you see fit then you have to earn it.**

Creating a business that is not dependent on an outside governing force such as insurance is a great step towards having an asset that can continue to grow and will not shrink with the economy or get hammered by changes in insurance or the enforcement of a new regulation.

Yes, it's scary to think about running a business that is dependent solely on your ability to *sell* your service and transact directly with customers who spend their money because they believe in you and your message.

But I am here to tell you that you have the most powerful tool in the world to help them make the decision to commit and pay for the care you provide. It is called CHIROPRACTIC and despite people trying to dilute it with drugs and hold it out as functional medicine and every other creative alteration of our profession that is being pushed in front of our eyes, real chiropractic care – where interference to the nervous system is removed – is so incredibly powerful.

You've seen it, you know it.

You just need the right business model through which you can sell and provide it.

That is what a cash practice with the correct services, pricing structure, fees, patient access, protocols and scripts will provide you.

Is it right for you right now? Only you know that but if and when it is, structure it right the first time around. If you need our help starting a new office, sparking some life into your current cash practice or transitioning your office towards cash, you can contact us through our website.

Our future in this industry is flourishing, and we welcome you to join us on our mission!

Express YOUR Health and Prosperity,

Daron Stegall, DC

Founder and COO - Express Chiropractic

To learn more about Express Chiropractic & Wellness visit www.ExpressChiropractic.com. Also, check out our online reviews to see the impact we are making in our community through chiropractic wellness care.

If you are a licensed chiropractor looking to open a new office, open a second office as an investment or transition your existing practice to cash and wellness chiropractic, you might also take some time to learn about the Express Chiropractic franchise model at www.ExpressChiropracticFranchise.com. It is a proven plug and play model that lets you own your business and yet be what you want to be, a chiropractor. Every system is already created for you along with the name *Express Chiropractic* which has proven powerful at attracting a very high volume of new patients. It's low stress (well other than the stress of managing growth, which is a great problem to have). It's fun. It changes lives in your community every day and it turns a profit that will make you and your family – well let's say... smile 😊

The way we see it... Chiropractic is the best chance our society has for shifting from a healthcare model of 'sickness care' to one of 'wellness care.' This will only happen if more people in our communities are exposed to chiropractic – to a critical mass level where it becomes a consumer *accepted* part of our healthcare system.

A handful of ultra-successful chiropractors surrounded by a ton of struggling ones will keep chiropractic suppressed.

Our vision is for more people to discover the life-changing benefits of routine chiropractic care by helping chiropractors develop a Systems Driven, On-Purpose Practice that Attracts, Educates and Serves more people in the community while building a valuable business asset

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