

Canada's first Chiropractic Research Chair



Greg Kawchuk, DC, PhD

Canada's first Chiropractic Research Chair has been awarded recently to Dr. Greg Kawchuk DC, PhD at the University of Calgary.

In receiving the award, Dr. Kawchuk has hurdled a stringent peer review process established by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR), the Canadian Chiropractic Association (CCA), the Canadian Chiropractic Research Foundation (CCRF), and the Foundation for Chiropractic Education and Research (FCER). As a result, the Chair becomes the first research position in Canada specifically devoted to chiropractic research that is supported directly by the Federal Government.

The Chair is a 5 year funding commitment with both a salary award and an operating grant and requires an active faculty appointment. This appointment will see Dr. Kawchuk hold the position of Assistant Professor in the Faculty of Kinesiology at the University of Calgary. This historic endeavour and the CCA's significant long-term commitment to facilitating chiropractic research has grown out of

the association's mission statement which clearly sets out "helping Canadians live healthier lives" as paramount. This is completely congruent with Health Canada.

As Chair of Chiropractic Research, Dr. Kawchuk's investigations will be directed at increasing the profession's knowledge in three areas that are of particular importance to field practitioners: the measurement of treatment dosage, treatment outcomes and treatment complications. Preliminary work in these areas has resulted in the recent awarding of equipment and operating grants to Dr. Kawchuk from the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC) and the special Chiropractic Research Fund. In addition to his research, Dr. Kawchuk will act as the Faculty of Kinesiology's course coordinator and lecturer for undergraduate human anatomy and will supervise Master's and Doctoral level graduate students who hopefully will go on to become career chiropractic researchers.

Dr. Greg Kawchuk graduated from the Canadian Memorial Chiropractic College in 1990 and completed his master's thesis in biomechanics at the University of Calgary and his PhD in bioengineering at the McCaig Centre for Joint Injuries and Arthritis Research. His doctoral work was focused on delineating how different tissues interact to define spinal stiffness. Recently he was awarded the Surgical Dynamics Travel Fellowship from the International Society for the Study of the Lumbar Spine to participate in a collaborative study at State University New York at Stony Brook and Yale with Drs. Khalsa, Cholewicki and Panjabi. Dr. Kawchuk is presently the Assistant Editor of the Journal of the Canadian Chiropractic Association (JCCA) and is on the editorial board of the Journal of Manipulative and Physiologic Therapeutics (JMPT). In addition to academia, Dr. Kawchuk is the senior chiropractor and director of chiropractic residencies at University Health Services – a multidisciplinary clinic located on the University's main campus.

The CCA/CCRF/CIHR Joint Partnership Initiative is an innovative program that has been responsible for the crea-

tion of this new research position. Specifically, the CCA/CCRF/CIHR Joint Partnership initiative is aimed at:

- 1 strengthening linkages between the newly created Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR), *chiropractic* health researchers, the CCA, and the newly restructured Canadian Chiropractic Research Foundation (CCRF).
- 2 facilitating long term support for Canadian chiropractic researchers dedicated to sustainable and enduring *chiropractic* research in Canada.
- 3 building our academic intellectual *chiropractic* capacity to raise the profile of the profession in terms of being a key player in the health care system.
- 4 focusing our strategies and establishing a targeted chiropractic research agenda.

Both CIHR and government recognize the large numbers of Canadians who access alternative and complementary approaches to health care, particularly chiropractic. By working together, we can undertake our role in helping to shape the Canadian research agenda and translate research findings into practice within Canada's health system. The joint partnership program is a strong commitment which ensures talented investigators are provided with the resources and training needed to address the health challenges faced by Canadians and chiropractic patients. As a result, Canadians will enjoy the health benefits that are created by chiropractic research.

In our first partnership in 1999, three PhD candidates were supported with \$221,260 over a two year period. Dr. Jill Hayden is training in the Clinical Epidemiology program at the University of Toronto and is conducting research based at the Institute for Work and Health on low back pain outcome measurement and prediction of out-

come. Annalyn Mercado is training in clinical psychology and will undertake her research in the recovery of adult motor vehicle accident patients through the Institute for Health and Outcomes Research at the University of Saskatchewan. Dr. Greg Kawchuk was recognized in this program and has since completed his post-doctoral research at the McCaig Center.

In our second partnership, the "Chiropractic Research Chair" was established. Over a five year period, this award will provide a before-tax salary of \$250,000, total benefits of approximately \$41,250 and an operating grant of \$50,000.

In the third and most recent cycle of awards, a new agreement will support a 3 year postdoctoral fellowship. Candidates are currently in the peer review process utilized at the CIHR and the successful candidate should be announced shortly.

As you can see, The CCA has taken an aggressive leadership role in furthering the profession's research capacity. Acquiring valid and reliable scientific evidence concerning efficacy and safety of chiropractic care in addition to training chiropractors to perform high-quality research is extremely important to the profession and to our patients.

The CIHR is Canada's leading federal health funding agency with a budget in excess of \$500 million. The joint partnership program to date has provided for a total in excess of \$700,000 in support of chiropractic research and chiropractic researchers. The CCA and the CCRF are very proud to have facilitated this significant event and look forward to continued positive relations with the CIHR in promoting chiropractic research in Canada. Helping Canadians live healthier lives through chiropractic care is our mission.

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Become a member of the Canadian Chiropractic Research Foundation