New Chiropractic Assistant Diploma Program Now Available in Cincinnati, Ohio

By Jayson Levine, DC

In May, 2014, Beckfield College (Ohio Reg. # 08-05-1857 T) launched a new nine-month educational program leading to a diploma in Chiropractic Assisting. Despite the incongruence between the clinical skill sets of medical assistants and chiropractic assistants, a significant number of the school’s Medical Assisting program externs were assigned to local chiropractic offices to participate in this facet of their education. Recognizing this dissimilarity, and with an eye toward providing a closer match between the skills taught and the demand on the part of local chiropractors, Beckfield College’s Chiropractic Assisting diploma program was designed to bridge the educational and experiential gap and to provide chiropractors in southwestern Ohio, northern Kentucky, and southeastern Indiana with well-trained clinical and administrative chiropractic support personnel.

At its core, the program is modeled largely around the requirements set forth in the Federation of Chiropractic Licensing Boards’ testing plan for the new Certified Chiropractic Clinical Assistant (CCCA) examination. An anatomy course specifically designed for students seeking a diploma in Chiropractic Assisting provides a high-level overview and understanding of the majority of the human organ systems while delving significantly deeper into the nervous, skeletal, and muscular systems. At this early stage in the curriculum, students are introduced to subjects including surface and palpatory anatomy as well as neuromusculoskeletal dysfunction. A course on office and patient safety discusses topics including emergency procedures, OSHA regulations, basic recognition of contraindication situations, care of pregnant and elderly patients, office design, and conflict resolution.

Two specific courses provide an early hands-on experience for students in a supervised laboratory setting, prior to their field externship experience. The Chiropractic Diagnostics course provides the fundamentals of and teaches participants how to perform assessments including vital signs, basic orthopedic tests and neurological examinations, range-of-motion studies, developing radiographs, as well as rudimentary postural and gait analysis. The Therapeutic Modalities class presents students with an in-depth understanding of the healing process and the effects of selected therapeutic applications on tissue repair, including electrotherapy, therapeutic ultrasound,
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 thermal therapies, traction, orthotics and inserts, stretching, active rehabilitation, and complementary practices including massage.

 Students also take formal courses in clinical terminology, patient interviewing and documentation, administrative practices and procedures, navigating health insurance, as well as legal and ethical aspects of health information.

 Beyond the stated basic knowledge requirements involved in successfully earning the CCCA credential through the FCLB, Beckfield College’s Chiropractic Assisting diploma program also includes additional requisite coursework. A course in the foundations of chiropractic presents a discussion concerning the inception and history of the profession, including chiropractic’s battle to maintain a distinct identity and the legal challenges brought against many of its early notable figures, the necessary distinctions between the allopathic and chiropractic approaches to health care, the increasing representation of chiropractic in the mainstream of the American health care mosaic, historical and more recent theories explaining how chiropractic works, and a variety of common techniques practiced in the profession. The Basic Nutrition course introduces participants to the nutritive value of foods as well as factors influencing food requirements, macronutrients and their absorption, diet modifications, weight controls, and the effects of various dietary components on overall tendencies toward or away from general inflammatory states. Finally, a module covering the ever-important marketing of the chiropractic office and its services teaches the importance and generation of internal and external referral sources, best practices in building rapport with patients in the office, how to create educational programs aimed at prospective patients in both individual and group interaction settings, how to design and participate in new patient orientations, community presentations, health fairs, fundraising events, and how to present and cross-market with other related professionals.

 News of the program’s launch has been met with overwhelming support from local doctors of chiropractic. Dr. Stacy Chidester, Vice President of the Southwestern Ohio Chiropractic Association, described the timing of the program’s having become available to prospective chiropractic assistants in the area as “perfect,” considering the actual and projected increases in utilization of chiropractic services in the geographic area as well as the need for formal preparation of chiropractic assistants in the current climate of increased regulation by legislators, licensing boards, and insurance carriers.

 According to the FCLB, as of July, 2014, the chiropractic boards of twelve states have promulgated legislation and regulations governing the qualifications and/or certification of chiropractic assistants. An increasing number of insurance carriers have begun denying payment for services rendered by chiropractic assistants who do not meet minimum qualifications per enacted statutes or have certification within their jurisdiction (where applicable). It is not unreasonable to predict that, in the coming years, additional states will follow suit and adopt similar regulations. The chiropractic community in the Ohio/Kentucky/Indiana Tri-State area has recognized this trend, and Beckfield College is proud to now provide a means by which local existing and would-be chiropractic assistants can position themselves “ahead of the curve,” should any or all of the pertinent jurisdictions take positive action to endorse regulations intended to establish minimum educational and training qualifications for area chiropractic support personnel.

 Beckfield College is proud to announce that students in the program’s inaugural class will graduate in February, 2015, and looks forward to training tomorrow’s top-quality chiropractic assistants.

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