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THE CLINIC THAT STANDS OUT

Building a unique clinic and clientele with Class IV laser therapy

BY GARY HUDDLESTON, DC

TIME TO READ: 5-7 MIN.

THE TAKEAWAY

Cash-based laser therapy can make your clinic unique in your local area while creating a new revenue opportunity.

IN OVER 42 YEARS OF PRACTICE, I have had the opportunity to work with, study under and learn from some of the best chiropractors who have ever lived. Every one of them had knowledge and insight to pass on, and that is what a good doctor will do — expand the information highway to his peers.

As chiropractic has grown over the last 100+ years, we have seen a plethora of different techniques, gadgets, theories, gizmos and instruments introduced. Many of them have withstood the test of time, while a majority have disappeared with the passing of their originators. One thing remains true and accurate from day one of the founding of chiropractic to

the present: removing the subluxation from the spine.

There are so many different techniques available out there to remove subluxation that it is mind-boggling trying to remember them all. However, as stated, all techniques ultimately have one target in sight: addressing the subluxation. DCs complain that there are too many chiropractors now or that practice is getting too difficult. The answer is not limiting the number of chiro's, but increasing the number of people who utilize us. This concept has been pushed and talked about for years, but what can you do to help accomplish this feat?



Of course, laser wasn't a panacea, and many wanted to do a visit once or twice a month just to stay in the improved condition they were in.

What do you do differently?

In our own practice, we often heard from our patients a simple statement: "You do different treatments than the other chiropractors I have been to." We didn't have a monopoly or an inside track to genius chiropractic care; what we had done was establish our clinic as a unique experience for our patients.

So many docs have fallen into a rut of giving generalized, diversified adjustments with double lumbar rolls or bilateral cervical breaks, and this is still all well and good. I have had patients complain that it takes them longer at other clinics to check in than to get treated. I'm not saying spend an hour or even 30 minutes with each patient, but what I try to stress is to make that experience special.

The secret is not just to shotgun your patient base, but make yourself special, unique and that go-to doctor.

Laser care and exceptional service

We did very limited advertising and marketing, and due to my laser company, I only worked 15 hours weekly. What we did market was our specific treatment specialty.

We did not call ourselves specialists, but pushed that exceptional service we offered and had expertise in. If you look

online, many docs advertise or talk about being spinal experts with the caption: "If you have neck or leg pain see us." Years ago, this may have worked, but with increased patient savvy and a large increase in the number of chiropractors, you may want, or especially need, a new avenue. Believe me, if you are successful doing what you are doing, then stay with it, but more and more docs want a fresh approach to getting and keeping more patients.

Cash-based laser growth

Before the use of our Class IV laser, our clinic had a myriad of tools for improving patients' health: high-volt, low-volt, ultrasound and interferential. Our reputation had grown because we were known as the clinic that did something different.

I wasn't a better adjuster than anyone else. What we did was push not only our adjusting skills but also that special something by offering Class IV laser therapy as our main focus of "specialization." We offered this therapy in order to give the patient an affordable choice. Laser treatments are cash-based, so that made them economical and a bonus for us as well.

It should be noted that our patient compliance was much better and much higher with laser therapy than it was with chiropractic. In fact, probably 60% of our practice was laser therapy only. For whatever reasons, many patients chose laser over chiropractic care. It was not my decision to make the choice for these patients, but to offer them this option in order for them to get better. Being able to offer this option is what set us apart from other clinics in the area.

Establishing a laser rehab and pain clinic

We actually started to promote ourselves as more of a laser rehabilitation and pain clinic than we did as a chiropractic

office. Of course, we adjusted as well when needed. Our clinic did some minimal advertising on radio and in print.

We also had stand-alone laser literature and a special sign. The sign alone drove in dozens and dozens of new patients and continued to do so until I semi-retired to work in the entertainment and music industry. We offered a simple 10- to 14-visit laser protocol for \$40 per visit while other doctors in other areas charged anywhere from \$45-100 per session. Many doctors chose to do fewer or more visits based on patient outcome. Not once out of hundreds of patients did I get one complaint about the price.


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A reevaluation was done every four visits, and my two full-time laser therapists did all of the treatments after they were certified. Most of the time, I didn't even speak to the patients receiving laser treatment. They came in, got attended

or non-attended Class IV laser based on their needs, and left. The feedback from them was amazing; they were often getting noticeable relief in just a few visits, while others needed more.

Of course, laser wasn't a panacea, and many wanted to do a visit once or twice a month just to stay in the improved condition they were in. One surprising element was I had old patients calling in whom I hadn't seen for years wanting to come in for a series of treatments, but wanting laser therapy only. It should also be noted that in a small Midwestern town in Missouri with five chiropractors, we were seeing 20 stand-alone laser patients per day during the three half-days I was open.

Choose that special or particular skill you have and expound on it. This can be flexion therapy, pediatrics, weight loss, sports rehab or several other disciplines. The secret is not just to shotgun your patient base, but make yourself special, unique and that go-to doctor. Believe me, no matter what you choose, there will be thousands of patients available who have the conditions you treat who will seek you out.

Practicing in this manner is not only fun, but also helps you focus on what you want to do as well as play to your strengths. When you target your healing powers, your patients will reap the benefits. 

GARY HUDDLESTON, DC, has been in practice for 42 years and owns Accuflex Lasers & Technology. His practice is now limited to only the film, music and entertainment industry, treating world-class musicians, bodybuilders and pro wrestlers. He can be reached at drg4000@att.net, 573-745-1086 or via medraylaser.com.