

In the summer of 2004 the Veteran's Administration Health Care Systems finally agreed with a Congressional Mandate to have Doctors of Chiropractic work in their hospitals as either full-time, part-time, independent contractors, or staff doctors of Chiropractic.

Initially, 28 VA hospitals opened up positions for Chiropractic care. Since then, the VAHCS have added approximately 5 additional sites. The Chiropractic profession has a goal to be in all approximately 150 VAHCS sites by December 2011.

In July of 2004, I applied to five VAHCS hospitals for staff privileges. Three VA hospitals expressed interest in my credentials. Of the three, the Albuquerque, New Mexico VA was the first to contact me by telephone to set up an interview. The telephone interview took place in late September 2004 and went well. Their primary concerns were start-up costs and the necessary space for establishing a Chiropractic office and in the amount of force used in cervical adjusting as related to CVA/stroke.

I stated that the equipment which I would recommend would be economical yet functional and that the space needed would be less than 150 square feet. The current treatment room is 98 square feet and is adequate at this time.

On October 4, 2004 I was flown to the Albuquerque VA and personally interviewed. At the end of the day I was offered the position as a VA staff Doctor of Chiropractic. However, the actual start date was set for early February, 2005. In the interim I continued to maintain my private practice. After going through one week of employee orientation I reported to my new office which was located with the Physical Therapists. I met all the Physical Medicine colleagues and immediately began developing a Chiropractic template and all the necessary Chiropractic forms.

In late February 2005 I began processing new patients. Since then I have examined and treated nearly 1,200 patients with good to excellent results on the vast majority of the patients. It is very rewarding to assist the veterans in their health challenges. In the past 43 months, nearly 300 Primary Care Providers have referred patients for Chiropractic care. The PCPs consist of M.D.s, D.O.s, P.A.s, Nurse Practitioners, Interns and Residents.

Currently, there are approximately 75 active Chiropractic Consults. There are 52 patient time slots each week, 43 returning and 9 new patients. We, Doctors of Chiropractic have overwhelmingly proven the efficacy, expediency, cost-effectiveness, patient safety and extremely high patient satisfaction.

If interested in working in a hospital environment, I would recommend that you allow 3 to 6 months from the time the application is submitted to the actual start date. If interested, peruse the VA careers website and Chiropractic publications on a regular basis.

Thank you,

John Gelhot, D.C.