



# Prehealth Programs: Chiropractic Medicine

CU-BOULDER ACADEMIC ADVISING CENTER, PREPROFESSIONAL OFFICE  
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## THE PROFESSION

Chiropractic physicians, also called chiropractors or Doctors of Chiropractic Medicine, are health care professionals who focus on the musculoskeletal and nervous system of their patients. This is a drug-free hands-on approach to medical care with the most common procedure of spinal manipulation, also known as chiropractic adjustment. The purpose of this treatment is to restore mobility, alleviate pain and allow tissues to heal. In addition, many doctors of chiropractic also incorporate natural therapies such as nutritional and lifestyle counseling, vitamin supplements, and herbal remedies into their treatment. Chiropractic physicians are trained in patient assessment through clinical examination, laboratory testing and diagnostic imaging. In addition to general chiropractic practice, some chiropractors specialize in sports injuries, neurology, orthopedics, pediatrics, nutrition, internal disorders, or diagnostic imaging. The length of training is similar to medical school, four years. Likewise, before they can practice, all Doctors of Chiropractic must pass a series of National Boards, as well as a licensing exam for the state in which they choose to practice. In addition, most states require the doctors to attend clinical continuing education programs for annual relicensure.

Chiropractic medicine typically appeals to those interested in wellness and alternative approaches to healing. This profession emphasizes that the body is a self-regulating and self-healing organism. Although some consider chiropractic treatment controversial, in 1997 the American Medical Association stated specifically about chiropractic care that “manip-

ulation has been shown to have a reasonably good degree of efficacy in ameliorating back pain, headache and similar musculoskeletal complaints”. In addition, chiropractic treatment has become more accepted in recent years as a result of changing attitudes about alternative health care practices.

## BACHELOR’S DEGREE

Although not all chiropractic schools require applicants to have a bachelor’s degree, some states require the degree in addition to the DC degree. Therefore it is recommended that you obtain a BS or BA degree before entering chiropractic college.

## UNDERGRADUATE MAJOR

It is not necessary to major in biology or a related science to go to a school of chiropractic medicine. You should choose a major that you find interesting, and one in which you will succeed. You may also want to consider a major that will provide a good alternative if you decide not to attend a school of chiropractic medicine. In addition to the courses in your major, you will need to take the necessary prerequisites for chiropractic school.

## PREREQUISITES FOR CHIROPRACTIC MEDICINE

The basic requirements for chiropractic medicine are very similar, but some schools require specific coursework in addition to the basic prerequisites. You should research information for the specific schools you are interested in to be sure you meet the expectations. The minimum requirements for most chiropractic

schools are completion of 90 semester hours by the time of admission, with a minimum science GPA of 2.5 and an overall GPA of 2.0, with no grade less than 2.0 in a required course. For the majority of chiropractic colleges, none of the prerequisite science courses may be acquired by exam, such as AP and CLEP exams. The most commonly required courses are:

### **Biological Sciences (two sems. w/labs)**

EBIO 1210-1230 and 1220-1240 *or* MCDB 1150-1151 and MCDB 2150-2151.

### **Chemistry (four semesters )**

Most schools require two semesters of general chemistry with their respective labs. The CU courses that fulfill this requirement would be CHEM 1111, and CHEM 1131. In addition, schools require either two semesters of organic chemistry with labs (CHEM 3311-3321 and 3331-3341) or one semester of organic chemistry (CHEM 3311-3321) AND one semester of biochemistry (CHEM 4611).

### **Physics (2 sems. w/labs)**

PHYS 2010 and 2020 (algebra based) or PHYS 1110, 1120 and 1140 (calculus based). Some schools will accept one semester of physics with a lab and one semester of biomechanics, kinesiology, statistics or exercise physiology.

### **English (2 semesters)**

### **Psychology (1 semester)**

### **Social Sciences/Humanities (15 sems. typically 5 courses)**

This can include, but is not limited to courses in economics, education, history, political science, art, languages, literature, philosophy and religion.

## PREHEALTH PROGRAMS:

### EXTRACURRICULAR AND CHIROPRACTIC MEDICINE-RELATED EXPERIENCES

Schools of Chiropractic Medicine are looking for well rounded individuals who can be involved in a range of activities while still doing well academically. Students should choose extracurricular activities that are of interest and are a good fit for their personality. In addition to general extracurricular activities, schools of chiropractic medicine also want students who have a strong knowledge of chiropractic medicine and interest in the field. We recommend participating in job shadowing programs for chiropractic physicians, and volunteering in an office of chiropractic medicine. This will enable you to learn about the field and determine your own level of interest in, and suitability for, chiropractic medicine.

### APPLICATION PROCESS

Throughout your undergraduate years, you should be taking the necessary prerequisites for the schools of chiropractic medicine to which you will apply. There is no required admissions test for chiropractic colleges, so many schools use performance in the science prerequisites to evaluate candidates. Therefore it is recommended that you complete most of the science prerequisite courses before you apply. Most schools recommend that you apply one year prior to your preferred start date. Many schools have rolling admissions and multiple start times, so applying early can be an advantage. Be sure to research the deadlines for the schools to which you plan to apply.

### LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION

All schools require letters of recommendation. Usually you arrange to have these sent with your application. Most schools require at least one letter of recommendation from a practicing Doctor of Chiropractic and an additional 2-3 letters from other individuals such as professors or employers. One way to organize these letters is to establish a Preprofessional Credentials File at the preprofessional office. Our credentials service will retain your letters, assemble them into packets, and transmit them to the chiropractic schools that you request. There is a website for tracking receipt and transmission of your letters. There is a fee associated with this service. See Credentials File Service on the Prehealth Advising website.

### PROGRAM STRUCTURE

Most programs follow a four year academic schedule. During the first two years there is an emphasis on classroom and laboratory work in the sciences. The last two years focus on clinical experience in manipulation and spinal adjustments as well as physical and laboratory diagnosis. In addition students will participate in a long term internship that often begins near the end of the second year. Upon graduation from the program, students take the national board exam and any state board exams to gain licensure.

## CHIROPRACTIC MEDICINE

### VITAL STATISTICS

Average cum GPA: 3.0

Annual Tuition range: \$11,000 to \$25,000.

Median yearly income in 2006: \$65,220

Employment: There were 53,000 practitioners in 2006. The field is expected to grow faster than average.

**All information in this publication is subject to change. Please check with the prehealth advisor, or with the appropriate school for up-to-date information.**

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