

## Multidisciplinary Services

Issue: October 2007

### Give Your Practice a Boost

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**Selling nutritional supplements can provide an immediate return, but the long-term benefits contribute toward practice growth**



According to a study published in the *Archives of Internal Medicine*, the number of deaths and serious adverse side-effects related to prescription drugs more than doubled in the US between 1998 and 2005.<sup>1</sup> Today, chiropractors and patients are realizing the benefits of nutritional supplements for strengthening bones, joints, and the immune system.

The popularity of nutritional supplements in maintaining overall health has increased the number of companies that manufacture and distribute them.

*Chiropractic Products* interviewed representatives of four companies. Richard Drucker, BS, MS, ND, PhD, is CEO of Drucker Labs; Andrew Halpner, PhD, is vice president of product development and technical services at Douglas Laboratories; James J. Scaffidi is president and CEO at ZyCal Bioceuticals Inc; and Marcia White is nutritionist and owner of Nutri-West.

#### When developing supplements, what health factors do you consider?

**Drucker:** We look for multiple ways to create wellness by developing multiple-purpose supplements that are intended to bring the body into balance. We also focus on nutrients that support proper digestion of all food groups and boost the digestive system with proper probiotics and enzymes that release toxins. Many people have specific nutritional holes. Instead of filling those holes, we mimic nature by providing all the important co-factors. Humans are becoming allergenic and sensitive due to various environmental factors. Therefore, we provide ultra-hypoallergenic formulations.

**Halpner:** Nutritional formulations are developed based on strong research and clinical data for a specific health condition.

**Scaffidi:** ZyCal Bioceuticals' products provide nutrition for bone and joint care. With nearly 40 million women estimated to have osteoporosis or low bone mass, women's health and bone-related issues are a dedicated priority for ZyCal. Additionally, an estimated 66 million men, women, and children have some form of arthritis or joint problem.

**White:** We consider the individual. All of Nutri-West's products are developed by a group of physicians that know how to test and suggest the exact amount of nutrients and synergists that are needed for a particular condition.

#### What are the financial benefits of selling supplements within a chiropractic practice? And how can these benefits be measured?

**Drucker:** There are a couple of things to consider here. There are direct profits gained from selling supplements, which range from a 20% to a 100% markup. But more importantly, your patients come to you so you can make them "well." The better job you do at taking care of them, the more they will value the relationship, and the more likely they will continue to remain an active patient. More importantly, the better their overall systemic health is, which can be directly affected by supplements, the better their body balance is and the faster their body heals, helping them hold their adjustments longer.

**Halpner:** Chiropractors can positively affect patient health and wellness by properly dispensing nutritional supplements within their practices. Nutritional supplements can support chiropractors' adjustments and enhance healthy patient outcomes. Benefits can be measured by revenue stream. Supplements are sold as a fee-based offering with no insurance

limitations.

**Scaffidi:** Certainly, selling nutritional supplements can provide an immediate revenue return, but it is the long-term benefits that contribute toward practice growth. Helping patients achieve better bone and joint health through nutritional counseling and provider care builds patient satisfaction, which leads to patient retention and referrals. What health care providers should consider when developing patient and practice protocol is the cost to the patient by not selling or recommending a product as part of a patient's total health care program.

**White:** This gives practitioners a better perspective on patient management. You can take too much of a nutrient, which can be just as detrimental as having a deficiency. We feel that physicians who have been trained in prescribing nutritional supplements should be the ones to determine what a patient needs. The financial benefits, of course, are the patients who are completely satisfied with their treatment.

### What are significant findings of the most current research in nutritional supplements?

**Drucker:** Synthetic chemical nutrients that are used in many supplements are increasing in prevalence due to inexpensive cost to the manufacturer and may be contributing to toxicity and declining health.

**Halpner:** Research and clinical studies show the benefits of Omega-3 fatty acids from fish oil. Studies have linked health benefits of Omega-3s with cardiovascular health, neurological health, joint health, and ocular health. Vitamin D is also making news because researchers are finding that the public is not consuming enough of this nutrient. They are also questioning whether current recommended dietary allowance levels are too low. Studies suggest that vitamin D is important for the support of bone and muscle health.

**Scaffidi:** Cutting-edge research has created a paradigm shift in uncovering key proteins, called bone morphogenetic proteins (BMPs), that are necessary for stimulating cellular activity for bone and joint health problems. Today, there are thousands of research studies published about BMPs and their ability to be functionally involved in bone and cartilage formation.

**White:** Probably one of the most significant findings in quite some time has been the effect of Omega 3s on health.

### For which health issues are most chiropractors suggesting nutritional supplements?

**Drucker:**

1. pain relief (musculoskeletal);
2. fatigue;
3. sugar imbalances; and
4. weight maintenance and appetite control.

**Halpner:** Traditionally, many chiropractors have limited their recommendations for nutrition to support joint and bone health, including inflammation processes. However, more and more chiropractors are addressing obesity, weight loss, and metabolic syndrome as the origin of many joint and bone issues. Chiropractors are also realizing that nutrition can support a broader range of health concerns—from general health to cardiovascular, neurological, digestive, and immune support.

**Scaffidi:** According to an independent research study, more than 75% of chiropractors recommend supplements for bone and joint health issues.

**White:** Most doctors that have been nutritionally trained can work with a patient on almost any health problem that arises. This does not suggest that nutritional supplements cure diseases—the body cures itself when working with a healthy internal environment.

### How do you help chiropractors market your supplements within their practices?

**Drucker:** Some doctors feel as if recommending a supplement is like being a salesman. That is the wrong mind-set to have. Medical doctors recommend products every day—it's called a prescription. Patients assume that what is prescribed

must automatically be taken. Chiropractors should be as confident in requesting what supplements their patients should take.

We offer a retail kit that includes intraMAX®, intraMIN™, and intraKID®, supplements. It is available with brochures, sample bottles, and suggested selling techniques.

We also offer a protocol pad that mimics a prescription. The chiropractor checks a few check boxes, and the patient is out the door with his or her instructions on how to take the desired supplement.

We also advertise to influence end users to seek our products, which may only be purchased through health care professionals.

**Halpner:** Douglas Laboratories offers patient literature and supportive materials to help educate patients about the benefits of nutritional support products. For practitioners with a desire to control overhead/inventory or those with limited space, we offer the option to recommend Douglas nutritional supplements and have them shipped directly to their patients. Douglas also offers an easy-to-use e-commerce site for practice and patient ordering.

**Scaffidi:** ZyCal Bioceticals is focused on educating chiropractors and their patients about cutting edge research and products for bone and health.

**White:** We supply brochures for patients and doctors, databases, and instructional material. Nutri-West sponsors numerous seminars that help teach doctors nutritional therapy along with chiropractic techniques.

### What future trends do you foresee within the nutritional supplement industry?

**Drucker:** Good trend: Consumers are continuing to understand the value of all natural and organic nutrition over synthetic. The closer we can get to truly natural products and practices, the healthier we become. Taking a nutritional supplement that contains 100% carbon-bond organic microcomplexes™ as found in nature's foods will maximize that benefit.

Bad trend: The increasing emergence of "functional foods." Food and beverage manufacturers are slapping synthetic vitamins and minerals into overprocessed products. This makes the consumer believe they are getting some rudimentary health benefit out of some of the worst foods. Calcium in your cookies, anyone?

**Halpner:** Baby Boomers are taking a more direct approach to their health and will be using more alternative medical therapies going forward. With the growing backlash against drugs, medicine is moving more toward prevention and away from disease-state treatment. I also foresee that there will be a continuing trend toward formulas that are supported by data from more and more scientific studies and research.

**Scaffidi:** New advances in nutrition are driving the demand for more effective and all-natural support therapies for bone and joint diseases. In bone health, plain minerals or vitamins add to the existing bone matrix, but do nothing to stimulate the cells that make bone matrix. In joint health, basic building blocks are only the beginning and do not have biological activity to support cartilage growth.

**White:** We see it escalating day by day. More doctors understand how important nutrition is for good health. Even the traditional medical doctors are beginning to see this.

### Reference

1. Moore TJ, Cohen, MR, Furberg, CD. Serious adverse drug events reported to the Food and Drug Administration, 1998–2005. *Arch Intern Med.* 2007;167(16):1752–1759.

### Normal Version