OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
WASHINGTON, DC 20301-1200

HEALTH AFFAIRS

SEP 22 2009

The Honorable Carl Levin
Chairman, Committee on Armed Services
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Mr. Chairman:

The enclosed report responds to the request in Senate Report 110-335 accompanying the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2009, which requests a study of chiropractic health care services. In May, we informed you that the study would be reported by December 2009.

The report reveals that our Active Duty Service members are very satisfied with the chiropractic care they receive, and military treatment facility personnel consider offering chiropractic care to be beneficial. We are expanding the program to Germany and Japan to provide additional care for our Service members.

Thank you for your continued support of the Military Health System.

Sincerely,

Ellen P. Embrey
Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense
(Force Health Protection and Readiness)
Performing the Duties of the
Assistant Secretary of Defense
(Health Affairs)

Enclosure:
As stated

cc:
The Honorable John McCain
Ranking Member

OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
WASHINGTON, DC 20301-1200

HEALTH AFFAIRS

SEP 22 2009

The Honorable Ben Nelson
Chairman, Subcommittee on Personnel
Committee on Armed Services
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Mr. Chairman:

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Enclosure:
As stated

cc:
The Honorable Lindsey O. Graham
Ranking Member

OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
WASHINGTON, DC 20301-1200

HEALTH AFFAIRS

SEP 22 2009

The Honorable Ike Skelton
Chairman, Committee on Armed Services
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

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Enclosure:
As stated

cc:
The Honorable Howard P. "Buck" McKeon
Ranking Member

OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
WASHINGTON, DC 20301-1200

HEALTH AFFAIRS

SEP 22 2009

The Honorable Susan Davis
Chairwoman, Subcommittee on Military Personnel
Committee on Armed Services
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Madam Chairwoman:

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Enclosure:
As stated

cc:
The Honorable Joe Wilson
Ranking Member

OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
WASHINGTON, DC 20301-1200

HEALTH AFFAIRS

SEP 22 2009

The Honorable Daniel K. Inouye
Chairman, Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

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Enclosure:
As stated

cc:
The Honorable Thad Cochran
Ranking Member

OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
WASHINGTON, DC 20301-1200

HEALTH AFFAIRS

SEP 22 2009

The Honorable Daniel K. Inouye
Chairman, Subcommittee on Defense
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

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The Honorable Thad Cochran
Ranking Member

OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
WASHINGTON, DC 20301-1200

HEALTH AFFAIRS

SEP 22 2009

The Honorable David R. Obey
Chairman, Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Mr. Chairman:

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Enclosure:
As stated

cc:
The Honorable Jerry Lewis
Ranking Member

OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
WASHINGTON, DC 20301-1200

HEALTH AFFAIRS

SEP 22 2009

The Honorable John P. Murtha
Chairman, Subcommittee on Defense
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Mr. Chairman:

The enclosed report responds to the request in Senate Report 110-335 accompanying the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2009, which requests a study of chiropractic health care services. In May, we informed you that the study would be reported by December 2009.

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(Health Affairs)

Enclosure:
As stated

cc:
The Honorable C. W. Bill Young
Ranking Member

Report to Congress

Chiropractic Care Study

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Chiropractic Care Study

Background

Senate Report 110-335 accompanying the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year (FY) 2009 directed the Secretary of Defense to conduct a study to reassess the requirement for chiropractic services for members on active duty. It also directed the study to include surveys of service members, medical treatment facility (MTF) personnel, and a review of injury data. Also requested was an assessment at units outside of the continental United States.

Service Member Surveys

Each medical treatment facility conducts its own customer satisfaction surveys at the clinic level for use in managing the quality of care they provide. Chiropractic clinic users are routinely surveyed to assess their satisfaction with the care they received. For example, the Army reported that overall satisfaction with chiropractic care was at 94.3 percent between March 2008 and March 2009. In addition, a review of FY08 satisfaction with the chiropractic provider showed Ft Leonard Wood, Ft Benning, Ft Campbell, and Ft Knox all reported 100 percent satisfaction. The lowest rating was at Ft Stewart with an 88 percent satisfaction with provider rating.

Navy reports of satisfaction with the chiropractic care received were similar. Between October 2007 and February 2009, Naval Hospital Twenty Nine Palms, Naval Hospital Beaufort, and Naval Branch Health Clinic Beaufort received 100 percent overall positive ratings of their chiropractic services. The remainder all had satisfaction levels of 90 percent or higher. The one exception is the Naval Medical Center Portsmouth which had the lowest customer satisfaction rating at 86 percent.

Air Force chiropractic users are generally completely satisfied with the care they receive. Twelve of the 19 sites providing chiropractic care report 100 percent satisfaction. Of the remainder, all had satisfaction ratings higher than 90 percent, with the 6th Medical Group at MacDill Air Force Base (AFB) trending the lowest at 93.3 percent.

These Service findings are also supported by our own TRICARE outpatient satisfaction surveys (TROSS). Between December 2007 and November 2008, 88.54 percent gave chiropractors an overall provider rating of eight or more on a ten-point scale. This trends higher than the overall satisfaction with all providers which was reported as 78.31 percent using TROSS data.

Outside the continental United States (OCONUS), Naval Health Clinic (NHC) Hawaii had an overall 90 percent positive approval rating, Fort Shafter had an overall satisfaction rating of 93 percent, and the 3rd Medical Group at Elmendorf AFB, Alaska, reported a 100 percent overall customer satisfaction rating.

Surveys of Unit Commanders and MTF personnel

We performed telephone surveys of our MTF personnel and asked three questions. The first question was: On a scale of one to five, from one being not beneficial at all to five being very beneficial, how beneficial do you think it is to offer chiropractic care at your MTF? The responses were overwhelmingly a five; MTFs that offer chiropractic care are pleased to do so.

The second question was: On a scale of one to five, with one being not faster at all and five being very much faster, do you think chiropractic care returns Active Duty Service members (ADSM) to duty faster? The results varied from a two to fives. We thoroughly analyzed this in our last report to Congress regarding chiropractic care, so this question was designed to get MTF personnel feedback. Once again, it was generally positive.

The third question was: On a scale of one to five, with one being not likely to select chiropractors first, to five being very likely to select chiropractors first, if given a choice between a chiropractor and a Doctor of Osteopathy or a physical therapist, how likely are you to select the chiropractor first? Responses ranged from threes to fives.

Overall, the surveys showed that MTFs consider chiropractic care a valuable adjunct to the care offered in the MTFs. Unit personnel generally consider chiropractors to return ADSMs to duty faster, and they would select a chiropractor as much or more than a Doctor of Osteopathy or physical therapist.

Service Member Injury Data Analysis

Nearly 183,000 ADSMs have used chiropractic services since the program's inception in FY02, and this has resulted in over 1.3 million encounters between FY02 and FY08. As would be expected, the rate of growth in users and visits is consistent with the addition of new chiropractic locations and the familiarity of primary care managers to refer members to them who require the appropriate scope of care. A chart outlining the growth in ADSM chiropractic users by Service is enclosed. Attachment A

Last year alone, the number of ADSM users rose ten percent (FY08 over FY07). The Air Force had the highest rate of growth (16 percent) as a result of adding five new locations providing chiropractic care. The number of users rose by eight percent in the Army and four percent in the Navy and neither added new sites.

OCONUS, the 3rd Medical Group, has had 986 ADSM users since its start in FY07 and has increased by more than 100 percent between FY07 and FY08. The Naval Health Clinic in Hawaii has had 1,234 users since its inception in FY06. Interestingly, the number of users dropped there by 24 percent between FY07 and FY08. Ft Shafter has had 4,144 users since its implementation in 2003 and their workload remains fairly constant.

ADSM encounters per user have trended slightly downward since the program's inception in FY02; but, within each Service, encounters per user have remained fairly constant from FY06-FY08. The Air Force averages 7.2 encounters per user, the Army average is slightly higher at 7.5, and the Navy's is slightly lower at 5.9 encounters per user. A chart highlighting these trends is enclosed. Attachment B

At OCONUS locations, encounters per patient user have trended slightly downward. The 3rd Medical Group's encounter per user between FY07-FY08 went from 6.1 encounters to 5.4. NHC Hawaii dropped from 5.4 encounters per user in FY07 to 3.7 encounters per user in FY08. At Fort Shafter, encounters per user went from a high of 7.2 in FY03 to an average of 6.1 in FY08.

The top 10 primary diagnosis codes for MTF chiropractic care have stayed fairly constant between FY02 and FY08. Somatic dysfunction of the lumbar region continues to be the number one primary diagnosis, followed by somatic dysfunction of the cervical region. Rounding out the top five diagnoses are lumbago, somatic dysfunction of the thoracic region, and somatic dysfunction of the sacral region. A chart highlighting the top 10 encounters by primary diagnosis is enclosed. Attachment C

There is a fair degree of variability in the top 10 primary diagnosis codes for MTF chiropractic care in OCONUS locations over the period FY03 through FY08, reflecting the fact that the 3rd Medical Group and NHC Hawaii became fully operational in FY07 while Fort Shafter had been providing chiropractic services since FY03. Overall, the top five OCONUS diagnoses roughly mirror those in CONUS. The number one overall primary diagnosis is somatic dysfunction of the lumbar region followed by somatic dysfunction of the cervical region. The additional top five diagnoses in order include somatic dysfunction of the sacral region, somatic dysfunction of the thoracic region, and somatic dysfunction of the rib cage. A chart highlighting the top ten encounters by primary diagnosis in OCONUS is enclosed. Attachment D

OCONUS Expansion

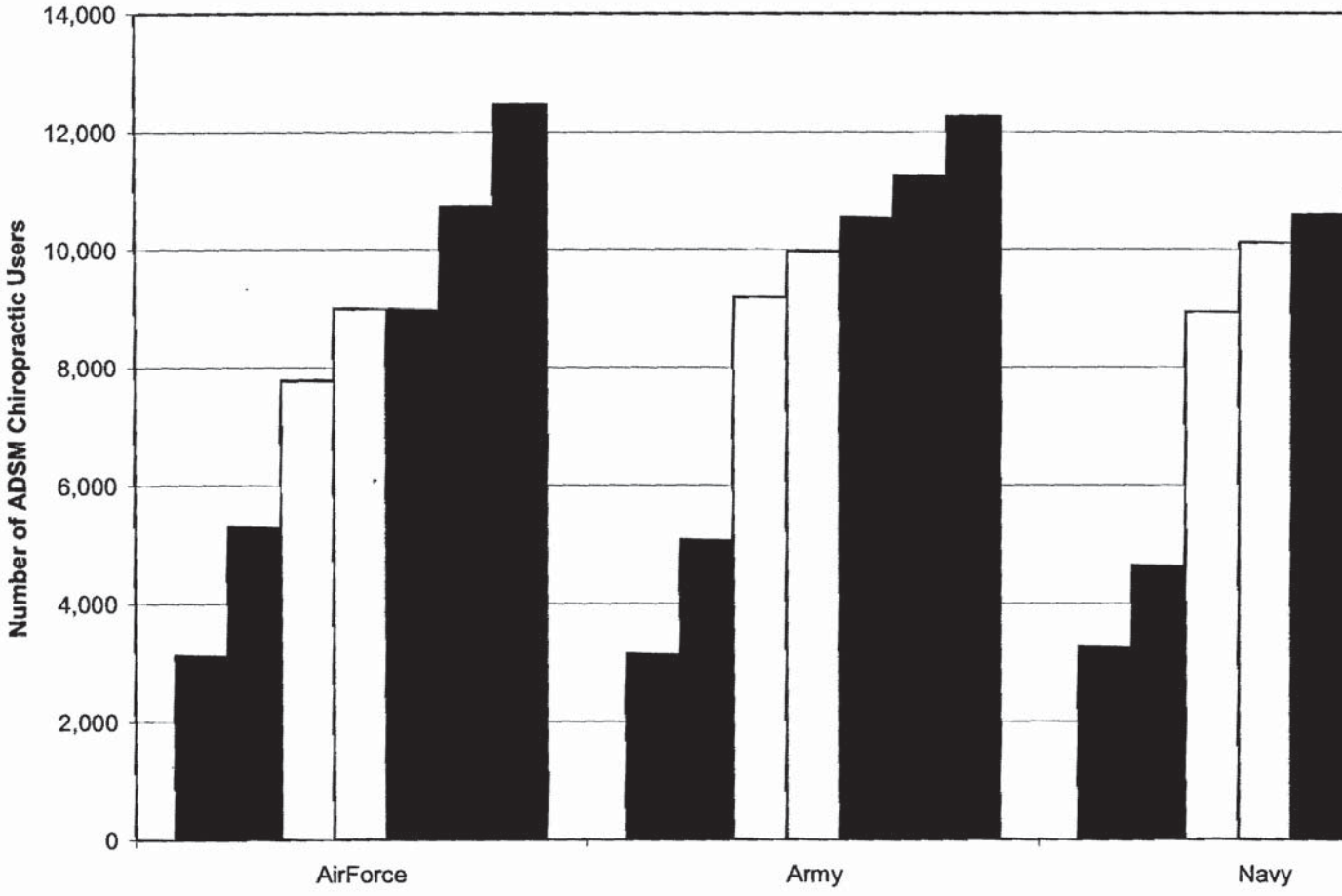
Section 704 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2009 requires the Secretary of Defense to provide chiropractic services to ADSMs at 11 additional MTFs by September 30, 2009. For the first time, 3 of the 11 additional locations will be outside of the United States. U.S. Army Medical Center Landstuhl, U.S.

Army Health Clinic Grafenwoehr, and U.S. Naval Hospital Okinawa are all slated to start offering chiropractic care under this expansion.

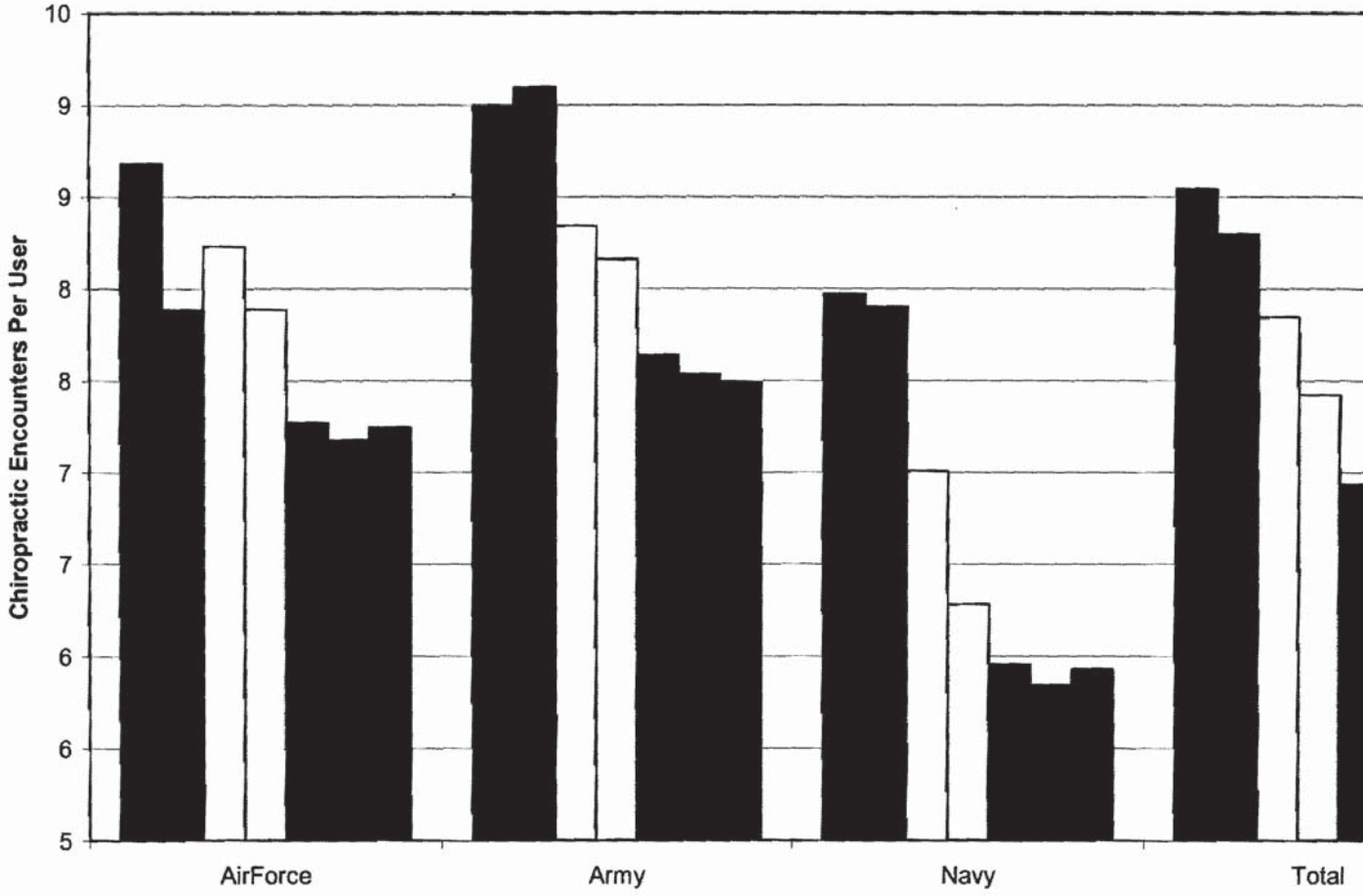
Conclusion

Service members are pleased with the chiropractic care they receive, and MTF personnel consider the care chiropractors provide as beneficial. Diagnosis codes have stayed fairly constant since chiropractic care has been offered although the number of users has grown. We're expanding the chiropractic program to Germany and Japan to provide additional care for our active duty service members.

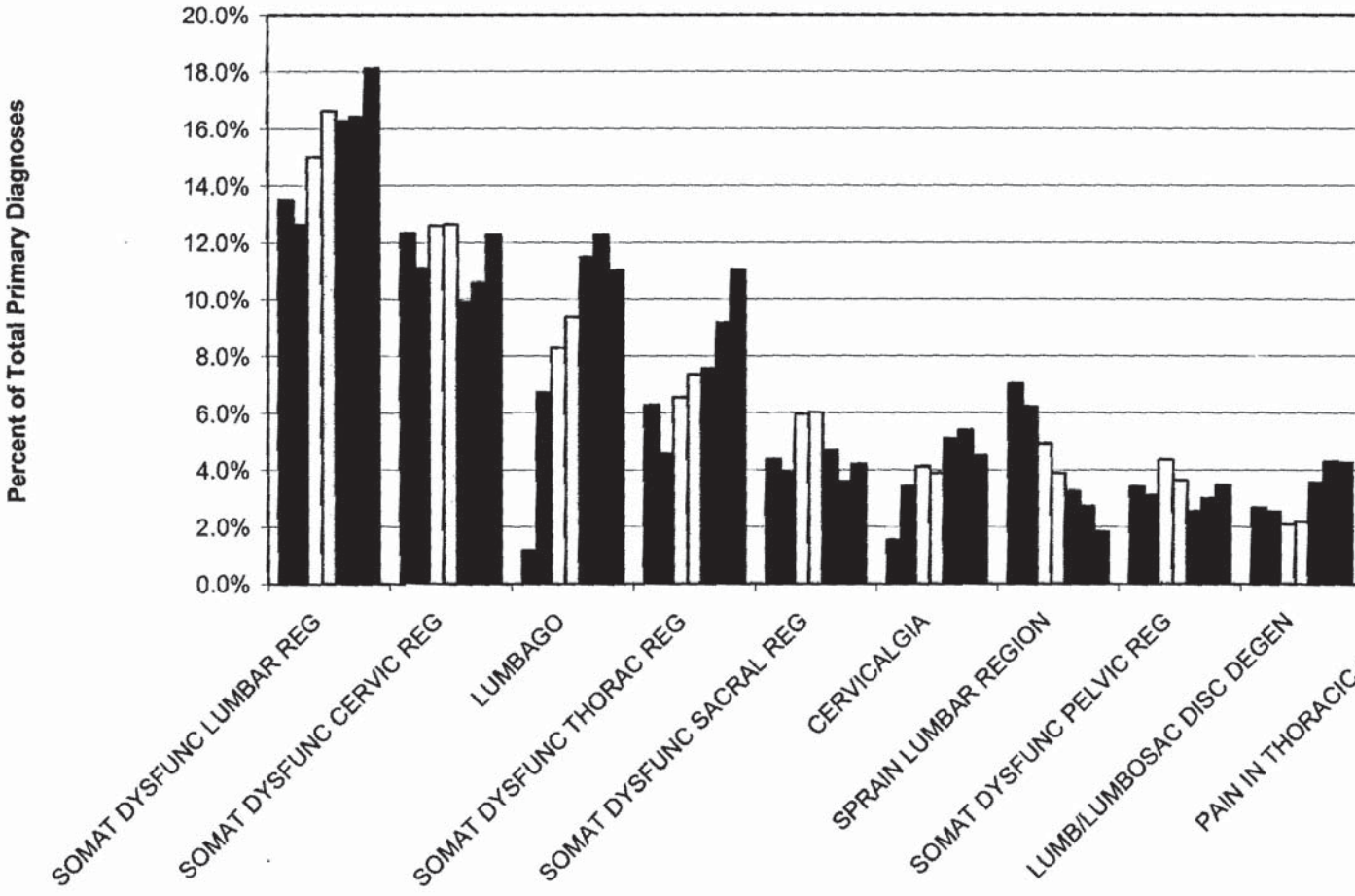
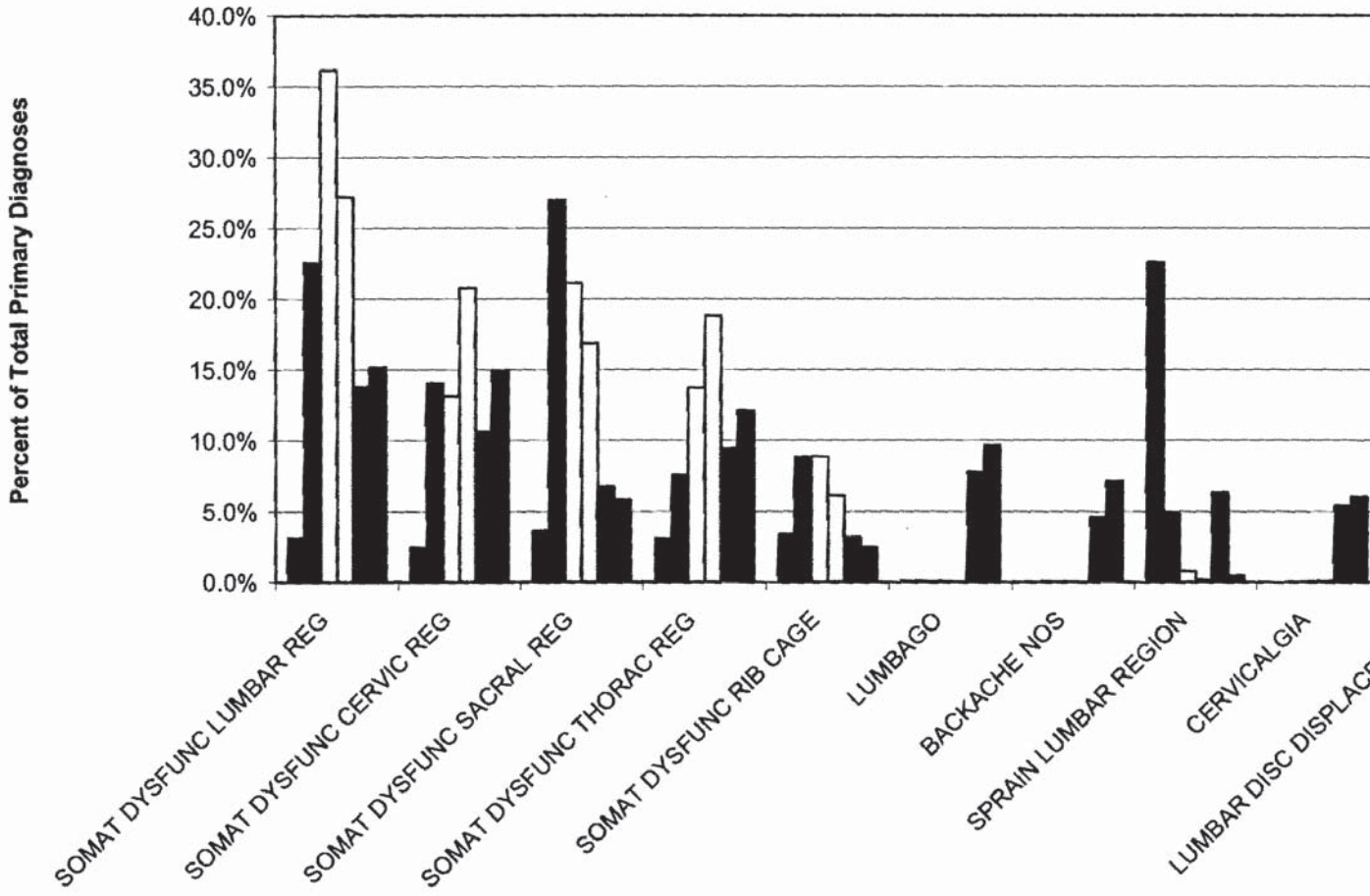
Attachment A
Growth in Chiropractic Patient Users by MTF Service Designation FY02-FY08
ADSMs Only in CONUS and OCONUS



Attachment B
Trends in Encounters Per Patient User by MTF Service Designation FY02-FY08
ADSMs Only in CONUS and OCONUS



Attachment C
Top 10 Primary Diagnoses for MTF-Provided Chiropractic Care, FY02-FY08
ADSMs Only in CONUS and OCONUS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Top 10 Primary Diagnoses for MTF-Provided Chiropractic Care, FY03-FY08
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