

Refresh Your Fees for 2026

By Dr. Ray Foxworth, DC, FICC

The financial stability of any practice starts with the UCR (usual and customary) fee schedule. All too often, we neglect to review and update our fees each year. Problems arise when our expenses go up each year due to inflation and our fees stay the same. With current economic challenges, I can guarantee you that you've had an increase in overhead and most doctors will "eat it" rather than consider making adjustments to their fees. If we are seeing the same number of patients each year, our profits begin to diminish and we are left wondering, "what happened?"

Dr. Ray Foxworth, DC, FICC, is founder and CEO of ChiroHealthUSA. For over 35 years, he worked "in the trenches" facing challenges with billing, coding, documentation, and compliance, in his practice. He is a former Medical Compliance Specialist and currently serves as chairman of The Chiropractic Summit, an at-large board member of the Chiropractic Future Strategic Plan Committee, a board member of the Cleveland College Foundation, and an executive board member of the Foundation for Chiropractic Progress. He is a former Staff Chiropractor at the G.V. Sonny Montgomery VA Medical Center and past chairman of the Mississippi Department of Health.

Although I can't tell you what you should be charging in your practice due to **The Sherman Antitrust Act**, I can provide you with resources to help you make the right decision for your practice fee schedule. First and foremost, you need to know your cost of doing business. According to a national survey a few years back, overhead in a typical chiropractic practice averages 50%. I would be surprised if that average hasn't increased considering the increased cost of addressing compliance mandates, rising overhead, and lower reimbursement models. To calculate your average cost of providing an office visit and the percentage of overhead, follow the checklist below or **use this simple online calculator**. This number is key to knowing your bottom dollar for maintaining profitability in your practice. While this is not as exact as a formal Profit and Loss Statement, it will give you a great ballpark idea of your costs.

Next, you need to determine the average price for services offered in your area. The Sherman Antitrust act prevents you from reaching out to colleagues in your community and asking what they charge as this can be seen as price fixing. There are multiple ways you can gather this information, however. You can hire a consultant to collect this information for you or utilize websites such as **ChiroCode.com** or **fairhealthconsumer.org** which calculate fees in your zip code.

Finally, start a spreadsheet and list every code that you use in your practice. Then list the reimbursement rates for each code from Medicare, in-network, and out-of-network insurance companies. Next, add the information you gathered on average fees based on your zip code. Start by comparing the averages in your area to the existing fees in your practice. Are you above or below the average? Then, using your actual fees, determine what you are currently charging per visit, on average. Are you falling above or below your cost per visit? Finally, you will want to compare your cost per visit to your reimbursement rates with provider agreements. Do you have any contracts that pay you less than your cost per visit?

Now that you have all of this information in front of you, what's next? This is a great time to determine if you need to make any adjustments to your existing fees. Even a small change of \$5 per visit can have a significant financial impact on your practice. Just \$5 more per visit is the equivalent of getting paid for 13 months, while only working 12. If you have any provider contracts that are not meeting your desired cost per visit, reach out to negotiate your agreement. If they are unwilling to negotiate, it may be time to consider your participation. If you are part of a DMPO, like ChiroHealthUSA, don't forget to evaluate and update those fees too.

This process takes a little work, but it will give you an opportunity to strengthen the financial foundation of your practice, plug up any holes where you may be losing money, and start 2026 on the right foot for a profitable year.

OVERHEAD/PROFITABILITY CHECKLIST

Calculate Your Income *(Review your records for the past 12 months)*

- List all collections for the year and add them up.
- Divide by 12

Calculate Your Expenses *(Review your records for the past 12 months)*

- List your total fixed monthly expenses (rent, loans, equipment leases, insurance, etc.)
- List your total variable monthly expenses (utilities, payroll, taxes, etc.)
Add both sums and divide by 12

Total Your Number of Office Visits for the Year

- Divide by 12

REVIEW YOUR RESULTS

- Divide your monthly expenses by your average monthly visits to determine your cost per visit.
- Subtract your monthly expenses from your monthly income.
- Divide that sum by your average monthly visits to determine your average income per visit.

WHAT NOW?

- If your cost per visit exceeds your income per visit, adjust your fees.
- If your income per visit is not at least 30-50% higher than your cost per visit, review your fees.
- Determine whether you are maximizing insurance payments and reimbursements.
 - List all the codes you use
 - List your ACTUAL fees for those codes
 - Add columns for all payer sources (Insurance carriers- both in and out of network payments, Medicare reimbursements, etc.)
 - Include amounts you receive from each source
- If your contracted insurance payments are lower than your cost per visit, review your contracts.
- If your reimbursements are lower than your cost per visit, check UCRs for your area and adjust your fees accordingly.
 - Research fees by zip code at fairhealthconsumer.org or chirocode.com **OR**
 - Enlist the help of a consultant to help determine average fees and typical reimbursement rates for your area.
- Use a DMPO to discount your actual fees to patients for their non-covered services at rates similar to your insurance network contracts.
- Use DMPO discounts instead of prompt-payment or hardship discounts to avoid potential compliance risks.