



For more information, please contact:

Sandy Carapezza, (201) 291-6316
acarape@valleyhealth.com

**Integrative Medicine: Managing Chronic Pain Through
Personalized, Innovative Virtual Reality Therapy**

The request: Valley's Integrative Medicine Department seeks funding to support the establishment of an innovative pain management initiative to address chronic lower back pain using a multimodal, integrative approach. The program would integrate RelieVRx®, the first FDA-authorized, prescription-based virtual reality (VR) therapy program for chronic low back pain, with our established integrative medicine services, which include chiropractic, acupuncture, and massage therapy. The approach features a series of home-based treatment protocols that blend cognitive behavioral therapy, mindfulness, pain neuroscience education, diaphragmatic breathing exercises, relaxation/meditation techniques, therapeutic movement, and balance performance activities to promote neuroplasticity and retrain patients' response to pain.

The technology repurposes advanced VR gaming technology for healthcare by transforming an entertainment-based platform into a clinically-guided, therapeutic experience for people in pain. By integrating this cutting-edge digital therapy with holistic care practices, our initiative aims to rigorously evaluate the specific effects of combining VR-based behavioral and movement therapy with hands-on, person-centered treatments. The integrative medicine team estimates this initiative could serve between 100 and 500 patients on a rotating basis.

Funding would support:

- RelieVRx® licenses and equipment: RelieVRx® systems, including headsets, software licenses, device support, and rotation planning to serve multiple patients over time. The cost per unit is \$2,500.
- Patient recruitment and outreach
- Program implementation, Training & Learning Center (staff training, workflow tools, onboarding materials, technical support)
- Digital tools and validated instruments

Background: Valley Health System is committed to embracing technology and pioneering patient-centered, digitally-enabled care. By integrating RelieVRx® with well-established holistic therapies, we aim not only to transform outcomes for individuals suffering from chronic pain, but also to establish a replicable model that can be used to treat other pain syndromes beyond chronic low back pain.

Chronic low back pain is a pervasive, life-altering condition affecting millions across the U.S., with 24.3% of adults reporting chronic pain and 8.5% experiencing high-impact chronic pain

that disrupts daily life. In New Jersey, prevalence mirrors these national trends, placing a heavy burden on individuals and the healthcare system. The economic toll is equally severe, with chronic pain costing the U.S. up to \$635 billion annually in healthcare expenses and lost productivity. Opioid -based treatments, while common, carry high risks and often fail to deliver long-term relief. There is a critical need for holistic, non-pharmacological approaches that target not just the symptoms, but the root causes of chronic pain. Integrative Medicine personalizes whole-person care that improves function, reduces reliance on medication, and enhances overall well-being.