



Nova Scotia College of Chiropractors

Code of Ethics

*Approved by
the NSCC*

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Revised

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Nova Scotia College of Chiropractors

Code of Ethics and Conduct

Introduction

The purpose of this code is to assist members in maintaining proper standards of professional conduct and in understanding scope of practice issues.

The code of ethics and code of conduct are general guidelines and do not replace or eliminate other duties or other rights outlined in the Act, Regulations, or other guidelines.

These guidelines will continue to be revised as the profession evolves.

These articles are intended to provide specific direction to the members on certain ethics, conduct, and scope of practice issues. It is not inclusive. Again, it is anticipated that further articles, together with any amendments to the code of ethics, or to the code of conduct, or to previous articles as may be necessary, will be published and distributed from time to time.

The Board has the authority to decide on a case by case basis what constitutes professional misconduct, incompetence, or practicing beyond the scope of chiropractic.

The Board is not precluded from dealing with future cases for which there are no specific rulings in these regulations.

Part A – Code of Ethics

1. The code of ethics of the practice of chiropractic are established to ensure the dignity and integrity of the profession and honour its history and tradition.
2. The ethical chiropractor will accept the moral responsibility to act as his or her own ethicist. He or she will practice the profession with conscience and will observe the Golden Rule “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.”
3. Professional Conduct should be above reproach and will take neither physical, mental, social, nor financial advantage of the patient.
4. The ethical chiropractor will show concern and care for his/her patients, and will share information, whenever possible, so that his/her patients can make appropriate decisions regarding his or her care.
5. The chiropractor must practice to the best of his/her ability, and must continue to improve clinical competence and thus, assure the confidence and respect of his or her patients, through continuing education.
6. The dignity of both colleagues and patients must be respected by being truthful, respecting confidentiality, and acting with compassion.
7. The chiropractor will preserve, protect, and communicate the art, science and philosophy of the profession in legislative, public education, and research matters, as appropriate.
8. The chiropractor will collaborate with other recognized health care practitioners toward the ideal of teamwork, in which the rights of both the patients and the profession will be respected equally.

Part B – Code of Conduct

Preamble: These principles are intended to aid chiropractors individually and collectively in maintaining a high level of ethical conduct. They are not immutable laws, for the ethical practitioner needs no such laws, but standards by which a chiropractor may determine the propriety of conduct in relationships with patients, colleagues, members of other health care professions, and with the public.

Article I – Duties of a Chiropractor to the Patient

1. Patient Care

- 1.1. The chiropractor will recognize the responsibility to render health service to any person regardless of race, national or ethnic origin, colour, gender, sexual orientation, marital or family status, disability, age, religion, or political belief.
- 1.2. Professional limitations will be recognized by the chiropractor and, when indicated, other opinions and services will be recommended to the patient.
- 1.3. The right of the patient to select professional health care, separate or complimentary to chiropractic care, will be recognized;
- 1.4. The chiropractor will respect a patient's right to accept or decline care, and is not obliged to treat anyone with whom they have not established a doctor-patient relationship;
- 1.5. Once a doctor-patient relationship has been established, a patient should never be abandoned without due regard for his or her welfare. Sufficient notice of withdrawal should be given to permit the patient to secure another practitioner;
- 1.6. A chiropractor should not take responsibility for a case which is, or recently has been, under the care of another chiropractor, except in an emergency, or in consultation with the chiropractor in previous attendance, or when the latter has relinquished a case, or the patient has stated they no longer wish to attend the previous chiropractor;
- 1.7. The chiropractor should neither exaggerate nor minimize the gravity of a patient's condition. The doctor should ensure that the patient, or those persons responsible for the patient, has knowledge of his or her condition so that the best interests of the patient may be served.

2. Consultation and Examination

- 2.1. The chiropractor will keep a patient file, which will include the patient's name and address, history information, physical examination findings, radiographic examinations, investigations ordered and their results, the diagnosis, treatment plan, and record of patient visits;
- 2.2. The patient will be adequately prepared for examination and/or treatment;
- 2.3. Confidential information derived from the patient, or any other source, may be divulged only with the permission of the patient, except to safeguard society or when required by law;

- 2.4. The chiropractor will recommend only those diagnostic procedures deemed necessary to assist in the differential diagnosis of the patient's condition and will provide treatment considered essential for the well being of the patient;
- 2.5. The chiropractor will advise the patient of findings and recommendations in a professional and responsible manner before the commencement of treatment;
- 2.6. Guarantee of a cure, either verbally or in writing, will not be given, and an estimate only as to the length of time or number of visits required for a given condition will be offered;
- 2.7. When a chiropractor is requested to examine another practitioner's patient on behalf of an authorized third party, for the purpose of providing an opinion on the condition or treatment of the patient, the chiropractor will perform the necessary procedures to provide the requested information and will not engage in treatment of the patient as long as any conflict of interest exists;
- 2.8. When acting on behalf of a third party, the chiropractor's legal responsibility to the third party must be explained to the patient before proceeding with the examination.

Article II – Duties of the Chiropractor to the Profession

1. Personal and Professional Conduct

- 1.1. The chiropractor will expose, without fear or favor, unethical conduct or incompetence, for any reason, on the part of a member of the profession and report such matters to the Board of the NSCC;
- 1.2. The conduct of the chiropractor at all times should merit the respect of the public for members of the profession;
- 1.3. The professional reputation of the chiropractor will be protected by avoiding all situations that could lead to a conflict of interest;
- 1.4. A chiropractor should not solicit a patient under the active care of another chiropractor;
- 1.5. Self-discipline for the profession is a privilege to be recognized along with the responsibility to protect that privilege.

2. Contractual Arrangements

- 2.1. A chiropractor will, when associating in a practice with other chiropractors, insist that they maintain the standards enunciated in this handbook;
- 2.2. No contract will be entered into with any organization with jeopardizes professional integrity;
- 2.3. A contract offered to a colleague will have terms and conditions equitable and agreeable to both parties.

3. Chiropractic Research

- 3.1. The chiropractor will, through recognized scientific channels, communicate to colleagues or appropriate chiropractic institutions of learning, the results of any chiropractic research in order that those colleagues or institutions may establish an opinion of its validity before presentation to the public;
- 3.2. New techniques, methods, devices, or appliances that might be applicable to the practice of chiropractic must be approved by the Board prior to use in the practice of the chiropractor;
- 3.3. The chiropractor must demonstrate to the Board competence in the use of research or experimental techniques. If a new technique, method, device or appliance is approved for use in the practice of the chiropractor for research or experimental purposes, then the patient's informed consent must be obtained and the patient will not be charged for such procedures except as may be approved by the Board.

4. Professional Fees

- 4.1. The welfare of the patient will always be paramount and expectations of remuneration, or lack thereof, should not in any way affect the quality of service rendered to the patient;
- 4.2. When determining fees to the patient, consideration will be given to the chiropractor's professional service and the patient's ability to pay. Fees will be discussed with the patient prior to treatment. Treatment should always be based on clinical necessity. The chiropractor should not discount fees or provide gratuitous treatment to the public as a marketing or advertising technique, as doing so may induce care that is unnecessary;
- 4.3. When requested by the patient, assistance will be given by supplying information concerning his or her diagnosis and treatment plan, which may enable the patient to receive benefits to which he or she may be entitled;
- 4.4. It is not unethical to dispense items providing it does not create a conflict of interest, they serve the best interests of the patient, clinical value has been demonstrated, and the item is available at a fair market price;
- 4.5. No gift should be accepted if there are attached conditions which may affect the acceptable professional standards of practice.

5. Addressing the Patient and the Public

- 5.1. A chiropractor, in any mode of communication, should strive to make it clear that his/her comments are personal and not necessarily representative of all chiropractors, unless expressly authorized to comment on behalf of an established chiropractic organization;
- 5.2. A level of competence greater than that actually held, according to accepted standards, will not be indicated;
- 5.3. Specialization – A member:
 - a) shall not use the title “specialist” or any similar designation suggesting a recognized special status or accreditation on any letterhead or business card or in any other marketing activity, unless such academic accreditation has been bestowed upon him or her and has been recognized by the Canadian Federation of Chiropractic Regulatory Boards (CFCRB) and/or the Nova Scotia College of Chiropractors; and
 - b) shall take all reasonable steps to discourage use, in relation to the member, by another person, of the title “specialist” or similar designation suggesting a recognized special status or accreditation on any marketing activity, unless such academic accreditation has been bestowed on him or her and has been recognized by the CFCRB and/or NSCC.

6. Advertising

- 6.1. These regulations apply to any marketing activity undertaken or authorized by a member in respect of his or her chiropractic services;
- 6.2. Definitions
 - a) “advertisement” means the use of space or time in any public medium, or the use of a publication such as a brochure or handbill, to communicate with the general public or segment thereof, for the purpose of promoting professional services or enhancing the image of the advertiser;
 - b) “marketing activity” includes but is not limited to:
 - i.) an advertisement;
 - ii.) any publication or communication in any medium with any patient, prospective patient, or the public generally, in the nature of an advertisement, promotional activity or material, a listing in a directory, a public appearance or any other means by which chiropractic services are promoted;
 - iii.) contact with a prospective patient initiated by a member; or
 - iv.) the display or distribution of any chiropractic educational or other material.
- 6.3. The most worthy and effective advertising is the establishment of a well merited reputation for professional ability;
- 6.4. Advertising should have the support of the profession and provide information that will enhance the ability of the public to make informed choices concerning health care;

- 6.5. Advertising must maintain the high standards of the profession and protect the public from irresponsible and misleading statements. It must be truthful and verifiable and should not create unjustified expectations or claim definite results;
- 6.6. Chiropractors will not allow their names to be used in publicity associated with unethical office management or practice building courses, testimonials or chiropractic technique courses;
- 6.7. A chiropractor contemplating endorsing a product, company, or service should do so only if it reflects favorably on the profession and the policies of the Nova Scotia College of Chiropractors are upheld. The names of professional bodies may not be used in conjunction with the endorsement without their expressed written consent.
- 6.8. A Chiropractor will not claim professional superiority, make invidious remarks respecting other practitioners, their services or their products, or make claims respecting products or services that are not provided as promised;
- 6.9. The chiropractor will respect this Code of Ethics, the Clinical Guidelines for the Practice of Chiropractors in Canada, and the provincial licensing body regulations and guidelines concerning practice advertising;
- 6.10. All advertising/marketing material shall adhere to the guidelines and templates approved by the Board. Any material not addressed by the guidelines or templates shall be submitted to the Advertising Review Committee appointed by the Board for approval prior to use.

Article III– Duties of the Chiropractor to Society

1. Community

- 1.1. The chiropractor will strive to improve the standards of chiropractic services and health care in the community.
- 1.2. The chiropractor will accept full share of the chiropractic profession's responsibility to society in matters relating to spinal and public health, health education, and legislation affecting the health or well-being of the citizens of the community.

2. Consultation

- 2.1. A chiropractor will request the opinion of an appropriate chiropractor or health care practitioner acceptable to the patient when diagnosis or treatment is difficult or obscure, or when the patient requests it. Having requested the opinion, the chiropractor may make available any relevant information and will clearly indicate whether the colleague is to assume the continuing care of the patient during this illness.
- 2.2. The chiropractor will, when a colleague has requested an opinion, report in detail findings and recommendations to the attending chiropractor or health practitioner and may outline the opinion to the patient. Care of the patient will be continued only at the specific request of the attending chiropractor or health care practitioner, and with the consent of the patient.

3. Patient Care

- 3.1. A chiropractor shall cooperate with those individuals who, in the opinion of the chiropractor, may assist in the most appropriate care of that patient;
- 3.2. A chiropractor may make available to a colleague, at the request of the patient, a report of findings and treatment of that patient;
- 3.3. Health services to a colleague shall be provided without fee, unless specifically requested to render an account;
- 3.4. The chiropractor who at any time is practicing outside the traditional office, such as a health and/or sport club or nursing home, shall protect the doctor-patient relationship by performing in a manner consistent with proper professional services. A case history, examination, proper records, and suitable facilities for treatment are mandatory. It should be determined whether the individual is under the care of a colleague, and if so, extend no care prior to consultation with the first chiropractor unless requested to do so by the individual.