



Nova Scotia College of Chiropractors

Scope of Practice

Approved by
the Board of
the NSCC

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4

Intent

1. To provide guidance to members and the public about the expectations of the Nova Scotia College of Chiropractors (the “NSCC”) concerning members as providers of chiropractic services to patients and as responders to general health-related questions from patients and the public.
2. The NSCC recognizes that:
 - a) as a regulated health profession its paramount obligation is to serve and protect the public interest, and to respect and acknowledge the role of public health and other regulated health care providers respecting care and treatment outside the scope of the practice of chiropractic;
 - b) chiropractors (members) are primary health professionals who provide care within the chiropractic scope of practice and see patients with a variety of conditions, who may also have co-morbidities;
 - c) members are required to practice within the definition of chiropractic set out in the *Chiropractic Act* and within the scope of practice set out in this policy in providing patient-centered care;
 - d) members use a variety of diagnostic and therapeutic procedures in providing chiropractic care to patients; and
 - e) members are primary contact portal of entry health professionals who are frequently asked general health-related questions by patients.

Description of Standard

Practising Within the Chiropractic Scope of Practice

3. All activities and services performed by members must relate to the chiropractic scope of practice and authorized acts as set out in this policy and the *Chiropractic Act*:
4. “Scope of Practice of the profession” means the roles and functions authorized for members of a regulated health profession by that profession’s governing statute (Regulated Health Professions Network Act, SNS 2012, c48).
5. In the *Chiropractic Act*, SNS 1999, c.4, section 2(c) defines chiropractic as follows:

“chiropractic” means professional services usually performed by or under the supervision of a chiropractor and includes:

- i. diagnosis, examination and treatment of persons principally by hand and without the use of drugs or surgery of the spinal column, pelvis, extremities and associated tissues; and
- ii. such services as approved by the regulations.

Authorized Acts

6. In the course of engaging in the practice of chiropractic, a member is authorized, subject to the terms, conditions and limitations imposed on his or her certificate of registration, to perform the following:
 - a) communicating a diagnosis identifying, as the cause of a person’s symptoms,
 - i. a disorder arising from the structures or functions of the spine and their effects on the nervous system, or
 - ii. a disorder arising from the structures or functions of the joints of the extremities;
 - b) moving the joints of the spine beyond a person’s usual physiological range of motion using a fast, low amplitude thrust; and
 - c) putting a finger beyond the anal verge for the purpose of manipulating the tailbone.

Expectations of a Chiropractic Visit and Use of Diagnostic and Therapeutic Procedures

7. The NSCC regulates the full range of chiropractic approaches and a member must always practice within the chiropractic scope of practice. The NSCC recognizes that patients present with a variety of co-morbidities and conditions. As such, a member is required to perform the following, which is to be clearly and legibly reflected in the patient health record:
 - a) a consultation related to the patient’s presenting condition and/or goals;
 - b) an assessment of chiropractic conditions related to the spine, nervous system and joints;
 - c) a diagnosis or clinical impression related to the chiropractic scope of practice;
 - d) recommendations for care, including possible referral to an appropriate health care provider if necessary; and
 - e) obtaining of informed consent.
8. On each patient visit the member must allow sufficient time to:
 - a) provide relevant, safe, supportive and patient-centered quality care within the chiropractic scope of practice, and related to the patient’s condition and goals;
 - b) conduct outcome measures, assessment and reassessment of progress related to the patient’s presenting condition and goals, as required; and

- c) document legible and accurate, individualized and personalized notes capturing the unique aspects of that particular patient encounter.
- 9. A member must take reasonable steps to ensure that when providing chiropractic care, any proposed diagnostic or therapeutic procedures to be used for the benefit of a patient relate to the chiropractic scope of practice.
- 10. For a diagnostic or therapeutic procedure to be acceptable for clinical purposes, it must be taught in the core curriculum, post-graduate curriculum or continuing education division of an accredited educational institution.
- 11. In order to perform a diagnostic or therapeutic procedure, a member shall:
 - a) achieve, maintain and be able to demonstrate clinical competency (e.g. examination, certification, or proof of training) in the diagnostic or therapeutic procedures; or
 - b) be fulfilling the requirements to achieve clinical competency and have informed the patient that they are fulfilling the requirements to achieve clinical competency.
- 12. A member must obtain the patient's consent to the use of the diagnostic or therapeutic procedure. Consent must be:
 - a) fully informed;
 - b) voluntarily given;
 - c) related to the patient's condition and circumstances;
 - d) not obtained through fraud or misrepresentation; and
 - e) evidenced in a written form signed by the patient or otherwise documented in the patient health record.
- 13. If a proposed diagnostic or therapeutic procedure does not relate to the chiropractic scope of practice, a member should not use the diagnostic or therapeutic procedures in their professional capacity.
- 14. In providing patient care, a member may use adjunctive diagnostic and therapeutic procedures that are in the public domain. This includes, but is not limited to, providing nutritional counselling, prescribing orthotics, giving advice on lifestyle and exercise, providing therapeutic modalities, and other therapies.

Matters Outside of the Chiropractic Scope of Practice

- 15. A member is restricted from treating or advising outside the chiropractic scope of practice.
- 16. The Nova Scotia College of Chiropractors recognizes that vaccination and immunization are established public health practices in the prevention of infectious diseases. Vaccination is not within the scope of chiropractic practice. The appropriate sources for patient consultation and education regarding vaccination and immunization are public health authorities and health professionals with the scope of

practice that includes vaccination. Members must not express views, or treat or advise patients or prospective patients, with respect to vaccination which includes, but is not limited to:

- a) counselling or providing information to patients or prospective patients with respect to vaccination;
- b) conducting seminars on vaccinations; and
- c) providing information on vaccination on a member's website or social media account.

17. Members must refer patients who ask questions related to vaccination to a health professional who has the act within their scope of practice, such as a member of the College of Physicians & Surgeons of Nova Scotia, or a member of the Nova Scotia College of Pharmacists.

Responding to General Health-Related Questions

18. In responding to general health-related questions by patients or the public that relate to acts outside the chiropractic scope of practice (including but not limited to prescribing of medication) a member must:

- a) advise the patient or member of the public that the performance of the act is outside the chiropractic scope of practice and the patient requires the care or would be more appropriately treated by a health professional who has the act within their scope of practice;
- b) respond in a professional, accurate and balanced manner in the context of providing primary health care to the patient consistent with the chiropractic scope of practice;
- c) encourage the patient to be an active participant in their own health care which allows the patient to make fully informed decisions concerning their health care; and
- d) record this communication in the patient health record.

Implications of Failure to Comply

19. Members are reminded that they may be the subject of an inquiry, complaint or report concerning the provision of chiropractic services or discussions related to general health-related questions from patients. All complaints regarding disciplinary matters are investigated by an investigation committee of the NSCC to ensure the member's compliance with all relevant standards of practice. In exercising its discretion, the investigation committee may consider if:

- a) the diagnostic or therapeutic procedure related to the chiropractic scope of practice for the benefit of the patient;
- b) the member achieved, maintained and can demonstrate clinical competency in the diagnostic or therapeutic procedure; and
- c) the discussions with the patient relating to general health-related questions were consistent with this standard of practice.