

*Approved by
the Board of
the NSCC*

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Revised

Pages

These principles are intended to help individual chiropractors and, as a collective, to promote a high level of professional conduct. They are not immutable laws, for the ethical practitioner needs no such laws, but principles by which a chiropractor may determine the propriety of conduct in relationships with patients, colleagues, members of other healthcare professions, and with the public. This also extends to a professional's digital presence including but not limited to social media platforms and websites.

The Chiropractor's Responsibility to Patients

A chiropractor should:

- Consider above all the well-being of the patient and in all manner of examination, diagnosis, and treatment, shall strive to do no harm. Chiropractic treatment should be expressly intended not to leave the patient in a worse state than if no treatment had been performed. Should harm occur, the chiropractor should disclose it to the patient without reasonable delay and to others as required.
- Respect the principles of informed consent by explaining service options, risks, benefits, costs, potential outcomes, possible consequences of refusing treatment or services, and by avoiding coercion. Chiropractors should not participate in any plan, scheme or arrangement which would limit or interfere with any person's freedom or ability to choose a chiropractor.
- Neither exaggerate nor minimize the gravity of a patient's condition, nor offer any false hope or prognosis and will ensure that the patient, or the person(s) responsible for the patient, has sufficient knowledge of the findings or the condition to make decisions regarding the patient's best interests.
- Protect patient information in accordance with privacy legislation except when release of this information is required by law or authorized by the patient. If requested, a chiropractor must make patient information, including their file, accessible to the patient within a reasonable period or as prescribed in legislation and should allow for a patient to make corrections to their records if they are determined to be inaccurate, incomplete or if the information is ambiguous.
- Not discontinue care unless it is justifiable or reasonable and, in such cases where their condition warrants continued care, shall refer the patient to another qualified health professional and shall document the acceptance of this referral before discontinuing care.

- Attend to their patient as often as is necessary to ensure continued favorable progress but should always avoid contraindicated or unnecessary care including the prescription of unwarranted diagnostic procedures.
- Protect their professional independence by avoiding all situations which would lead to a conflict of interest. Any real or perceived conflict of interest should be disclosed prior to initiating care or making recommendations. Any prescription and/or dispensing of items and services should have demonstrated clinical value and be available at a fair market price. When a conflict of interest is identified following the initiation of care, the chiropractor should promptly inform the patient. If resolution is not achieved, the therapeutic relationship should be terminated, unless doing so would cause harm to the patient in which case the therapeutic relationship should be terminated as soon as an alternate care provider is available.
- Not accept gifts from patients if the gift is of a nature that may compromise the doctor/patient relationship or be contrary to acceptable professional standards of practice.
- Not treat any individual with whom their relationship is such that it may reasonably be expected to impair their clinical judgement or otherwise compromise patient care other than if care is deemed urgent or where the services required are not reasonably able to be provided by another chiropractor due to geographic barriers. In instances where a chiropractor must provide care to an immediate family member based on an urgent need, there should not be a fee associated with this care.
- Clearly communicate to patients all fees and practices related to chiropractic care, including policies and procedures related to billing arrangements, insurance, and third-party payors.
- Act in a respectful manner and not refuse care or treatment to any patient on the prohibited grounds of discrimination as specified in the Canadian Human Rights Act as well as on the grounds of social or health status.
- Demonstrate sensitivity toward individual patients, respecting and taking into consideration their unique rights, needs, beliefs, values, culture, goals, and environmental context, as well as understand how their own culture and beliefs influence his or her interactions with patients.
- Understand the colonial history of Canada and acknowledge the impacts of government policies on the current state of health for Indigenous Canadians (TRC CTA #18).

The Chiropractor's Responsibility to Colleagues

A chiropractor should:

- Practice only within the limits of their professional scope and personal competence and, when indicated, should collaborate with and/or refer to other qualified health care practitioners so the patient shall have the benefit of coordinated team care.
- Provide an alternative treatment option through referral to another chiropractor or qualified health care provider/chiropractor if the therapeutic relationship is compromised in any manner.
- Make available to a colleague, with the consent of the patient, a report of their findings and treatment of that patient.
- Refrain from making statements about chiropractors or health care providers, or their treatment, which questions their competence or undermines their credibility.
- Support the opportunity of their colleagues to obtain recognition and health privileges in their community appropriate to their professional qualifications.
- Take responsibility for activities related to the practice of chiropractic delegated to those individuals employed by or under direct supervision of the chiropractor.
- Be professionally and morally responsible for addressing incompetent, unsafe, illegal, or unethical practice of any qualified health care provider and legally responsible for reporting conduct that puts the patient at risk to the appropriate authority/ies.

The Chiropractor's Responsibility to the Profession and Society

A chiropractor should:

- Provide care in accordance with accepted professional standards, aligned with principles of evidence-based practice and respecting all applicable legislation.
- Strive to integrate current research and best practices with clinical expertise and patient preferences/needs to reach best outcomes for the patient.
- Enhance their expertise through lifelong acquisition and refinement of knowledge, skills, abilities, and professional behaviors.

- Endeavour to improve the standards of chiropractic services within the community they serve and where barriers exist that limit patient access to appropriate and necessary care, advocate for changes that are necessary to promote optimal patient health.
- Contribute to the development of the profession through such activities as support of research, mentoring, and student supervision.
- Not enter contractual agreements, regarding their professional services, which are contrary to legislation, jeopardize the integrity of the profession or the quality of care to patients, or take advantage of the weakened state of a patient, a colleague, or a member of the public.
- Be truthful and forthright in all professional matters. They should not share or promote false or misleading information with patients, the public or other professionals.
- Recognize their professional responsibility to society related to the respect of public health, health education, environmental protection, and legislation impacting the health or well-being of the community and public.
- Only claim qualifications possessed, represent accurately the nature of chiropractic treatment, and refrain from conveying information that lies outside their scope of practice or that could reasonably be considered as false or untrue when interpreting scientific knowledge.
- Become familiar with the signs of abuse and to report suspected cases to proper authorities in compliance with applicable laws.
- Refrain from harassment, abuse or discrimination of patients, colleagues, employees, or students.
- Attend to their own health and well-being.