

Guideline C-001
Quality Assurance Committee
Approved by Council: February 28, 1998

Note to Readers: In the event of any inconsistency between this document and the legislation that affects chiropractic practice, the legislation governs.

Intent

To advise members of their obligation to act competently and ethically in the practice of their profession.

Preamble

Chiropractors have been granted the privilege of self-regulation, a privilege that obliges them to act competently and ethically in the practice of their profession. In so doing, they shall maintain recognized standards of chiropractic care while also observing certain professional values. Their commitment to such practice shall ensure public trust, collaboration with their colleagues, and the integrity and dignity of the profession.

The ethical values that guide the profession are identified here. The individual chiropractor acts in accordance with personal interpretation of them, in the situation, under the guidance of the College.

Section 1: Ethical Obligations to the Patient

Ethical chiropractors shall:

1. Practise only within the limits of professional and personal competence, in surroundings that shall not compromise the quality of care offered.
2. Act always with personal integrity while also trying to acquire and maintain the confidence and respect of their patients.
3. Render care to those who seek it, without discrimination on the basis of race, gender and religion, and interact truthfully with their patients.
4. Have the well-being of patients as their paramount objective. They shall attend their patients as often as necessary but shall avoid unnecessary care. They shall:
 - not offer to guarantee a cure to their patients, either verbally or in writing;
 - collaborate with other recognized health care practitioners so the patient shall have the benefit of coordinated team care;

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- never abandon patients without due regard for their welfare once they have been accepted into the practice. If, for any reason, a chiropractor wishes to withdraw from a case (e.g., an issue of self-respect or dignity, or the need for assistance for the patient of someone more skilled), the chiropractor shall give patients sufficient notice of withdrawal of care so as to permit them to secure an alternate care provider, if appropriate;
 - avoid conflict of interest in caring for their patients (i.e., they shall not take physical, mental, social, sexual or financial advantage of patients); and
 - endeavour to ensure, in advance of any examination or treatment, that patients understand any legal responsibility of the chiropractor to third parties (so as to protect the patient's interests).
5. Treat their patients with respect for privacy - physical and psychological.
 6. Ensure that the competent patient has an ongoing opportunity to make an informed and voluntary choice for chiropractic intervention or non-intervention, and ensure that the non-competent patient has a competent substitute decision maker who acts for the patient in making choices that are informed, voluntary, continuing and non-contrary to the previously expressed wishes of the patient. In the absence of such previously expressed wishes, or in the ignorance of them, the chiropractor shall ensure that any decision taken by the substitute decision maker is in the best interest of the patient.
 7. Observe confidentiality with regard to information obtained from patients or from colleagues concerning patients. Such information shall be divulged only with the permission of the patient except when the law requires the practitioner to do otherwise, in circumstances of inter-professional consultation or when the harm of keeping confidentiality is greater than the harm that results from breaching confidentiality. In the latter instance, permission of the patient shall be sought before any breach of confidentiality, and the information given to others shall be limited appropriately.
 8. Treat patients fairly with respect to access to service.

Section 2: Ethical Obligations to Professional Colleagues

Ethical chiropractors shall:

9. Not judge fellow practitioners, their qualifications or the procedures they use, except as may be required in the interests of the health of patients.
10. Work collaboratively with other practitioners/team members in terms of patient care (e.g., information sharing, treatment, consultation and education).

Section 3: Ethical Obligations to the Profession

Ethical chiropractors shall:

11. Conduct themselves with dignity so as to bring honour to the profession.
12. Have one level of billing, except on compassionate grounds or when professional bodies have negotiated fee schedules with different payer agencies. They shall bring their practice to public attention only in accordance with acceptable professional standards and within applicable legislation.
13. Encourage ongoing professional and public education regarding chiropractic practice, and assist in educating new members of the profession.
14. Recognize that ongoing professional research is necessary so as to advance the practice of the profession.

Section 4: Ethical Obligations to the Public

Ethical chiropractors shall:

15. Claim only qualifications possessed, represent accurately the nature of chiropractic treatment, and convey correct information when interpreting scientific knowledge.
16. Comply with all governing legislation (with ongoing attention given to current requirements under the *Regulated Health Professions Act, 1991*, as amended, *Chiropractic Act, 1991*, *Healing Arts Radiation Protection Act*, and the regulations under those acts).
17. Endeavour to improve the standards of chiropractic services within the community.

Section 5: Ethical Obligations to CCO

Ethical chiropractors shall:

18. Comply with the Code of Ethics, by-laws, standards of practice, policies and guidelines duly approved by CCO and report unprofessional conduct on the part of other chiropractors to the appropriate review body of CCO.
19. Cooperate and assist CCO in its professional work.