

Standard of Practice S-017  
Quality Assurance Committee  
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*Note to Readers: In the event of any inconsistency between this document and the legislation that affects chiropractic practice, the legislation governs.*

## Intent

Chiropractors have been using acupuncture treatments for many years as an adjunctive therapy for their patients. The use of acupuncture, as an adjunctive therapy, requires a high degree of skill and is not without risk. This standard of practice outlines the elements necessary to maintain a high level of skill in the application of acupuncture as an adjunctive therapy in the chiropractic practice.

## Objectives

- To assist members who intend to provide acupuncture services as an adjunctive therapy to their patients.
- To remind members of their duties, obligations and scope of practice when providing acupuncture services as an adjunctive therapy to their patients.

## Description of Standard of Practice

### Consideration of Public Safety

Members are reminded that the use of any acupuncture procedure or protocol may have significant benefits for patients, but also carries some risk. As such, members must be:

- skilled at prevention of infection and familiar with clean needle techniques;
- aware of any and all contraindications to the use of acupuncture;
- trained in the appropriate responses to accidents and untoward reactions;
- aware of precautions necessary to prevent injury.

Members are required to obtain patient consent prior to treatment by acupuncture that is:

- fully informed;
- voluntarily given;
- related to the patient's condition and circumstances;
- not obtained through fraud or misrepresentation; and
- evidenced in a written form signed by the patient or otherwise documented in the patient's health record.

Members are reminded that this standard should be read in conjunction with standard of practice S-013: Consent. Members should refer to the World Health Organization's (WHO) *Guidelines on Basic Training and Safety in Acupuncture, 1999* (WHO Guidelines), for a more in-depth discussion of prevention of infection, contraindications, accidents and untoward reactions, and injury to organs.

### **Educational Requirements in Establishing Degree of Skill**

To practise acupuncture as an adjunctive therapy in the context of their chiropractic practice, members must have completed specific acupuncture training as taught in the core curriculum, post-graduate curriculum or continuing education division of one or more colleges accredited by the Council on Chiropractic Education Inc., or in an accredited Canadian or American college/university, or in an accredited school of acupuncture<sup>1</sup>.

CCO adopts the WHO Guidelines that a combined (clinical and academic) minimum of 200 hours of formal training is required for those members who intend to use acupuncture as an adjunctive procedure in their primary practice.

### **Grandparenting Clause**

Chiropractors who have actively practised acupuncture as an adjunctive therapy in their chiropractic practice for a minimum of five consecutive years immediately before the enactment of this standard of practice will be deemed to have met the qualifications to practise acupuncture as an adjunctive therapy, as outlined above.

Actively practising acupuncture as an adjunctive therapy means performing 150 acupuncture treatments per year for each of the last five years within a chiropractic practice.

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### **Professional Liability Protection**

Members must provide evidence, satisfactory to the Registrar, of carrying professional liability insurance in the applicable minimum amount per occurrence and minimum aggregate amount per year, including coverage for claims after the member ceases to hold a certificate or membership in a protective association that provides equivalent protection unless, the applicant is, or will be when registered, an employee of a member, a health facility or other body that has equivalent professional liability insurance coverage or membership in a protective association that provides equivalent protection.

## Legislative Context

### Controlled Acts

Currently, acupuncture is exempted from paragraph 7 of subsection 27(2) of the *Regulated Health Professions Act, 1991 (RHPA)* dealing with controlled acts.

CCO recognizes that under existing legislation in which acupuncture is exempted by regulation from being characterized as a “controlled act,” no one profession has exclusive jurisdiction over the technique or methodology, and that many chiropractors have and continue to provide acupuncture treatments to the benefit of their patients.

### Scope of Practice

Members who use acupuncture as an adjunctive therapy are reminded that the scope of practice of chiropractic is defined in section 3 of the *Chiropractic Act, 1991*:

3. The practice of chiropractic is the assessment of conditions related to the spine, nervous system and joints and the diagnosis, prevention and treatment, primarily by adjustment, of:
  - (a) dysfunctions or disorders arising from the structures or functions of the spine and the effects of those dysfunctions or disorders on the nervous system; and
  - (b) dysfunctions or disorders arising from the structures or functions of the joints.

## Conclusion

Identifying and complying with safeguards will ensure safer administration of this form of treatment. Therefore, risks to the public will be minimized and the benefits of safe, effective therapeutic treatment will be maintained.

This standard should be read in conjunction with standards of practice S-001: Professional Portfolio, S-011: Dual Registrants, and S-013: Consent.

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<sup>1</sup>Examination, certification or other proof of clinical proficiency is required.

<sup>2</sup>The course should comprise at least 200 hours of formal training, and should include the following components:

1. Introduction to traditional Chinese acupuncture
2. Acupuncture points
  - location of the 361 classical points on the 14 meridians and the 48 extraordinary points;
  - alphanumeric codes and names, classifications of points, direction and depth of insertion of needles, actions and indications of the commonly used points selected for basic training.
3. Applications of acupuncture in modern Western medicine
  - principle clinical conditions in which acupuncture has been shown to be beneficial;
  - selection of patients and evaluation of progress/benefit;
  - planning of treatment, selection of points and methods of needle manipulation, and the use of medication or other forms of therapy concurrently with acupuncture.
4. Guidelines on safety in acupuncture
5. Treatment techniques
  - general principles;
  - specific clinical conditions.