

## CODE OF ETHICS



### Guideline G-009

Quality Assurance Committee

Approved by Council: November 29, 2007

Amended: February 14, 2012, November 29, 2018, February 26, 2020 (came into effect April 15, 2020)

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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

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

## DESCRIPTION OF GUIDELINE

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 practice of chiropractic care while also observing 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. These principles are intended to aid chiropractors individually and collectively in maintaining a high level of ethical conduct.

### Chiropractors shall:

1. practise only within the limits of professional and personal competence;
2. practise in surroundings that shall not compromise the quality of care offered;
3. act always with personal integrity while also trying to acquire and maintain the confidence and respect of their patients;
4. render care to those who seek it, without discrimination on the basis of race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, marital status, family status, socio-economic status or disability, and interact truthfully with their patients;

5. have the well-being of patients as their paramount objective and shall:
  - provide appropriate and necessary care;
  - not offer to guarantee a cure to his/her patients, either verbally or in writing;
  - clearly communicate to patients all fees and practices related to chiropractic care, including policies and procedures related to billing arrangements, billing of insurance companies and third-party payors;
  - neither exaggerate nor minimize the gravity of a patient's condition, nor apply pressure or duress to a patient;
  - collaborate with other recognized health care practitioners so the patient shall have the benefit of coordinated team care;
  - never abandon patients without due regard for their welfare once they have been accepted into the practice. If, for any reason, a member 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 member shall give the patient 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, cultural or financial advantage of patients); and
  - endeavour to ensure, in advance of any examination or care, that patients understand any legal responsibility of the member to third parties (so as to protect the patient's interests);
6. ensure that the capable patient has an ongoing opportunity to make an informed and voluntary choice for chiropractic intervention or non-intervention, and ensure that the non-capable patient has a capable 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 member shall ensure that any decision taken by the substitute decision-maker is in the best interest of the patient;
7. respect and maintain privacy and confidentiality with regard to personal health information obtained from patients or from colleagues concerning patients. Such information shall be disclosed only with the consent of the patient (except when the law requires the member 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.
8. not judge fellow members, their qualifications or the procedures they use, including in public forums and social media, except as may be required in the interests of the health of patients;
9. not take over a case which, or recently has been, under the care of another member, except:
  - in an emergency;
  - in consultation with the previous member;
  - when the previous member has relinquished the case; or
  - the patient has stated he/she no longer wishes to attend the previous member;
10. work collaboratively with other members and health professionals in terms of patient care (e.g., information sharing, care, consultation and education);

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11. engage in professional, respectful communications with other members and health professionals and not engage in any in-person or online bullying, intimidation or harassment;
12. only enter contractual agreements, regarding his/her professional services, which have terms that are equitable and agreeable to all parties and maintain professional integrity and offer high quality care.
13. conduct him/herself with dignity so as to bring honour to the profession;
14. have one level of billing, except on compassionate grounds or when professional bodies have negotiated fee schedules with different payor agencies. They shall bring their practice to public attention only in accordance with acceptable professional standards of practice and within applicable legislation;
15. encourage ongoing professional and public education regarding chiropractic practice, and assist in educating new members of the profession;
16. recognize that ongoing professional research is necessary so as to advance the practice of the profession;
17. claim only qualifications possessed, represent accurately the nature of chiropractic treatment, and convey correct information when interpreting scientific knowledge;
18. comply with all governing legislation (with ongoing attention given to current requirements under the *Regulated Health Professions Act, 1991*, as amended, *Chiropractic Act, 1991*, the *Healing Arts Radiation Protection Act*, and the regulations under those acts);
19. endeavour to improve the standards of chiropractic services within the community;
20. 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 members to the appropriate review body of CCO; and
21. cooperate and assist CCO in a timely manner and assist CCO in its professional work.

