

The Code of Conduct for Chiropractors

The Code of Conduct for Chiropractors was developed by the Chiropractic Board of Australia (the Board). It requires every practitioner to provide safe and effective health services within an ethical framework determined by National Law and the Board.¹

The Code of Conduct guides the expected standards of behaviour of all chiropractors, therefore all CAA members must be familiar with this code and apply the guidance it contains to their professional practice at all times.

In addition to the Board's Code of Conduct, all CAA members have agreed to the following requirements as a condition of their membership of the association to maintain a higher level of professional competence, conduct and ethics.

Care of infants and children

Best practice requires:

- placing the interests and wellbeing of the paediatric patient² first;
- ensuring there is informed consent from the paediatric patient's parent or guardian;
- carefully explaining the risks of care and alternatives to care to the parent or guardian; and
- identifying any 'red flags' particular to the paediatric patient and investigating, managing, co-managing or referring to an appropriate health practitioner.

The Chiropractic Board of Australia emphasises best practice approaches to providing chiropractic care to children as published in peer reviewed literature and this evidence should be used to guide clinical practice and ensure chiropractors provide safe care.

Chiropractors are taught a range of techniques and should modify all care to suit the age, presentation and development of the patient.

When providing chiropractic care to infants and young children, practitioners must have a good understanding of the principles of public health including disease prevention and health promotion. Chiropractic care includes the provision of advice on physical activity and posture, nutrition, injury prevention and a healthy lifestyle. Effective collaboration with other health practitioners is a fundamental aspect of good practice.

Immunisation

The CAA supports the Australian government's view that immunisation is an important health care initiative. It is outside the scope of practice for chiropractors. When considering immunisation, patients should consult with either their GP or Maternal and Child Health Nurse for further information.

Advertising

The Code of Conduct for Chiropractors requires every practitioner to provide safe and effective health services within an ethical framework determined by National Law and the Chiropractic Board of Australia. Practitioners have a professional responsibility to be familiar with the Code and to apply the guidance it contains.

With respect to advertising, this means all practitioners must comply with:

- all relevant consumer protection legislation, and state and territory fair trading Acts and, if applicable, legislation regulating the advertising of therapeutic goods; and
- standards, guidelines and policies of the Board including the National Board's Guidelines on advertising regulated health services, (the Advertising guidelines).³

Practitioners who practise as private practitioners are regarded as carrying on a business and are therefore subject to the provisions of the Competition and Consumer Act 2010 governing the practice of traders. This can include misleading and deceptive conduct, and is enforced by the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission.⁴

All claims in advertising must comply with National Law. The Chiropractic Board of Australia stipulates that advertising claims which are contrary to high level evidence are unacceptable because these statements may be easily misinterpreted or de-contextualised and therefore mislead members of the public.⁵

High level evidence will usually take the form of meta-analyses, systematic reviews or one or more high quality and well respected and acknowledged studies. All practitioners should be familiar with and understand the Statement on Evidence-based Practice published by the Chiropractic Board of Australia in December 2015.⁶

For more information on advertising

- The [Code of Conduct](#) for chiropractors
- The [Guidelines for advertising regulated health services](#) applies to all registered health practitioners and anyone advertising a regulated health service
- The ACCC outlines [how health practitioners can work within the Competition and Consumer Act 2010](#) to protect both themselves and their patients
- The [Health Practitioner Regulation National Law](#), as in force in each state and territory (National Law) - section 133 addresses advertising
- The Board's [Newsletter](#), featuring information about advertising requirements, September 2015
- The Board's [Statement on Evidence-based Practice](#), December 2015
- The Board's [Statement on Advertising](#), March 2016
- The Board's [Position Statement on The Advertising Provisions of the National Law](#), April 2016
- The Board's [Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQ\) on Advertising for Chiropractors](#), May 2016

Visiting health facilities and credentialling

The obligation to collaborate professionally with other practitioners involved in the management of a patient also applies when visiting a healthcare facility. A CAA member who visits a healthcare facility such as a hospital or community health centre to provide care to a patient must:

- first seek permission to access the facility and provide care;
- adhere to and follow the policies and procedures of the facility;
- communicate effectively with other practitioners involved in the management of the patient;
- keep the facility informed of any care;
- maintain professional indemnity insurance (PII) coverage that covers care in that facility, and
- keep adequate records.

The CAA supports the position of the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care with regards to credentialling. This is a process used to verify the qualifications and experience of practitioners to determine their ability to provide safe, high quality health care services within a specific health care setting. Credentialling is part of a wider organisational quality and risk-management system designed primarily to protect patients.⁷

References

1. Available at: <http://www.chiropracticboard.gov.au/Codes-guidelines/Code-of-conduct.aspx>
2. Paediatric patients are any infants, children and young people aged up to 19 years as defined by the [Royal Australasian College of Physicians](#).
3. Available at: www.chiropracticboard.gov.au under Codes and guidelines.
4. See for example, <http://www.accc.gov.au/business/professional-services/medical-professionals>
5. See <http://www.chiropracticboard.gov.au/News/Newsletters/September-2015.aspx>
6. Available at <http://www.chiropracticboard.gov.au/Codes-guidelines/FAQ/Conduct-performance/Evidence-based-practice.aspx>
7. Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care at <https://www.safetyandquality.gov.au/our-work/credentialling/>