

Australian Chiropractors Association: Policy on Chiropractic Practice, Scope & Terminology.

Policy Committee

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Definition of Chiropractic

Chiropractic is - A health profession concerned with the diagnosis, management and prevention of mechanical disorders of the musculoskeletal system, and the effects of these disorders on the function of the nervous system and general health. There is an emphasis on manual treatments including spinal adjustment and other joint and soft-tissue manipulation.

Chiropractors in Australia are:

- ▶ Registered primary health care practitioners who deliver care in accordance with the national law.
- ▶ Required to comply with regulated standards of conduct and competence, as are all regulated health professionals.
- ▶ Primary contact health care practitioners competent in, and responsible for, diagnosis, management and care of their patients.
- ▶ Educated within tertiary institutions which are accredited by CCEA, delivering graduates with the competency necessary to register as a chiropractor. This education underpins the following attributes that contribute collectively to the uniqueness of the chiropractic profession:
 - ▶ a) Places an emphasis on a healthy spine as a tenet for good health.
 - ▶ b) Has a unique focus on the relationship between structure (primarily the spine) and function (as coordinated by the nerve system) and how that relationship affects the preservation, restoration and promotion of health.
 - ▶ c) Provides delivery of health care, without drugs or surgery, with recognition of the inherent recuperative power of the body to heal itself.
 - ▶ d) Recognises that health is more than the absence of disease.

- ▶ e) Has an integrative approach incorporating patient information, thorough examination and imaging where indicated, to formulate individualised, patient-centred management plans.
- ▶ f) Has its basis in a blending of musculoskeletal & holistic approaches, which includes the pathogenic model of disease within a broader salutogenic model. This translates to not only helping patients with managing their presenting complaints, but also providing wider options for health optimisation and disease prevention.
- ▶ g) Has special expertise in determining where, how, and when to deliver chiropractic adjustments.
- ▶ h) Has special expertise in determining which style and combination of chiropractic care to provide.

The great strength of chiropractic lies in a culture of:

Professionalism where a symbol of practitioner maturity is aspiring to the attributes of a professional such as competence, skill, a high standard of care, altruism, accountability, responsibility, excellence, duty, honesty, integrity, respect for others and self-reflection.

Tolerance where understanding and accepting differences between chiropractors is a strength, subject to standards being met.

Diversity where within the profession there are chiropractors with different cultural backgrounds, varied scope, practice styles, and methods, enabling the harnessing of strengths and customisation to suit the individual needs of patients.

Practising in an evidence informed manner where advancing knowledge, research information and practitioner experience are incorporated to continuously inform each patient interaction.

Patient-centred care where the intersection of professionalism and diversity of technique provides for clinical encounters which are strongly patient-centric. Patient care is uniquely tailored to individual patient circumstances, characteristics and preferences.

Results where high satisfaction has been a consistent characteristic of patient experience.

Scope of practice

While scope is not defined by Australian law, all registered health care professionals are expected to embrace a scope of practice that is underpinned by their tertiary qualifications and consistent with any additional training they may have, as long as they maintain competency.

Terminology

Most terminology used by the chiropractic profession is consistent in use and definition among all health professions.

As with all specialised areas of health there is a unique lexicon that allows for clear communication and understanding of uniquely chiropractic tenets.

This lexicon is mostly used for communicating between members of the chiropractic community and for communicating concepts with patients. It is also used as a component of patient notes.

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For the Australian Chiropractic Association

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