

Standard of Acceptable Care in Chiropractic Practice

Approved: 4/21/2023

(replaces Standard of Acceptable Care Position Statement and Scope of Practice position statements)

Chiropractic is a healthcare profession that acknowledges the self-healing capacity of the human body. Chiropractors do not utilize prescription medication or surgery.

It is the position of the Board that North Carolina Doctors of Chiropractic are trained in physical examination, diagnosis, differential diagnosis, treatment, management, reassessment and referral. They possess the training to identify a patient's health problems and either treat or refer, as warranted.

It is the position of the Board that it is within the chiropractic scope of practice to use diagnostic methods including but not limited to blood and urine evaluation, diagnostic imaging, electro-diagnostic studies, orthopedic and neurological examination, meridian procedures, and nutritional deficit assessment.

It is the position of the Board that it is within the chiropractic scope of practice to use therapeutic procedures including but not limited to spinal and extremity adjustments, soft tissue techniques and rehabilitative activity, durable medical equipment, physiological therapeutics, acupuncture (after meeting requirements of 21 NCAC 10 .0208), dry needling (see Dry Needling Position Statement), and nutritional management. Nutritional supplements and other natural substances are those described in 21NCAC 10 .0209.

Chiropractors use chiropractic spinal adjustments and a broad array of adjunctive non-surgical and non-pharmaceutical modalities to promote health and reduce illness. These adjunctive modalities may have wide applications that reach outside of the neuromusculoskeletal realm. Chiropractors are trained to diagnose outside of the neuromusculoskeletal realm, and they may provide support for health problems that fall outside this area. For example, chiropractors may provide nutritional support to correct digestive problems.

In most cases a chiropractic treatment plan will include chiropractic spinal and/or extremity adjustments and related soft tissue treatment, but a chiropractor may develop a treatment plan that does not include spinal or extremity adjustments. For example, a patient may wish to see a DC only for nutritional support or for a specific therapy such as acupuncture. In those cases where a chiropractic physician is not providing chiropractic spinal adjustments, a DC is still responsible for taking a history and performing an examination that is appropriate to the condition being addressed, including possible differential diagnoses.

It is the position of the Board, in an environment of ever-evolving treatments, that all licensees are required to educate themselves through formal, post-graduate education/training with

respect to procedures, technologies, modalities and other treatments that are new to them. Training and continuing education should be adequate to perform all such treatments at accepted and prevailing standards of care. Patient harm can occur when licensees practice outside areas in which they were formally trained and are unable to meet applicable standards of care.

When appropriate, the Board will publish Position Statements on procedures, technologies, modalities and treatments to provide specific guidance to licensees.

**It is also prudent for DCs to confirm that their liability insurance provides coverage for any new procedures, technologies, modalities or treatments they intend to perform.

Statutory Authorities:

§ 90-143. Definitions of chiropractic; examinations; educational requirements.

(a) "Chiropractic" is herein defined to be the science of adjusting the cause of disease by realigning the spine, releasing pressure on nerves radiating from the spine to all parts of the body, and allowing the nerves to carry their full quota of health current (nerve energy) from the brain to all parts of the body.

90-151. Extent and limitation of license.

Any person obtaining a license from the North Carolina State Board of Chiropractic Examiners shall have the right to practice the science known as chiropractic, in accordance with the method, thought, and practice of chiropractors, as taught in recognized chiropractic schools and colleges, but shall not prescribe for or administer to any person any medicine or drugs, nor practice osteopathy or surgery. (1917, c. 73, s. 12; C.S., s. 6722; 1933, c. 442, s. 3; 2021-120, s. 1(a).)

§ 90-154.2. Unethical conduct.

Unethical conduct is defined as:

- (1) The over-utilization or improper use, in the providing of treatment, physiological therapeutics, radiographics, or any other service not commensurate with the stated diagnosis and clinical findings. This determination shall be based upon the collective findings and experience of the Board utilizing the best available, relative information and advice. There must be a rationale for the services provided the patient.