



Code of Ethics

Chiropractic Association of Ireland

March 2020

Introduction

The Chiropractic of Ireland (CAI) was founded in 1983. It is a voluntary, self-regulatory chiropractic organisation serving chiropractors and the people of Ireland.

The principal aims of the CAI are:

- to set, promote and maintain standards of professionalism amongst chiropractors;
- to establish and maintain government relations by advocating for the chiropractic profession and serving as a source of information for the Irish Parliament;
- to promote the value of evidence-based, patient-centred chiropractic care to the people of Ireland;
- to advocate for chiropractic legislation as a means of protecting patients and the public;
- to advance the chiropractic profession by championing high standards of chiropractic education and continuing professional development; and
- to support the rights of chiropractors to practise autonomously in Ireland as primary contact health care professionals.

Chiropractic

Chiropractic is a health profession concerned with the diagnosis, treatment and prevention of disorders of the musculoskeletal system and the impact of those disorders on the function of the nervous system and on general health. There is an emphasis on manual treatments, including spinal adjustment and other joint and soft tissue manipulation¹.

There are an estimated 120,000 chiropractors around the world. They are predominantly trained in one of over 40 educational institutions that offer chiropractic programmes. There is currently no educational provision for chiropractic in Ireland and most members of the CAI received their chiropractic training in Europe or North America. The training of chiropractors at an accredited chiropractic institution or university takes a minimum of four years, where in addition to learning advanced manual therapy and manipulative skills, chiropractors also receive comprehensive

¹ World Federation of Chiropractic definition (1999)

training in the basic sciences (anatomy, physiology, biochemistry), biomechanics, orthopaedics, neurology, general diagnosis, diagnostic imaging, obstetrics and gynaecology, paediatrics, and elderly care. Upon graduation, chiropractors are recognised as health professionals by law in over 40 jurisdictions around the world. This includes every one of the United States and its territories, every province in Canada, every territory in Australia and European countries including Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Norway, Denmark, Switzerland, Cyprus, Liechtenstein, and Iceland.

Regrettably, chiropractic is not yet legislated in Ireland, meaning that anyone can call themselves a chiropractor. The CAI believes that this is not in the interests of the citizens of Ireland and does not protect patients and the public from unqualified individuals who make -claims of expertise.

About this Code of Ethics

As the national chiropractic association in Ireland, the CAI takes professionalism amongst its members very seriously. Chiropractic is a self-regulating profession in Ireland, meaning that in the absence of legislation it sets its own standards of practice, conduct and competence. While it does not define scope of practice, it expects its members to act within the boundaries of their competence and training.

This document is divided into a number of sections based on principles of good chiropractic practice. The CAI has developed these principles in conjunction with the World Federation of Chiropractic and other authoritative sources of information. The CAI expects its members to adhere to the principles and standards as set out as a condition of continuing membership in the association. Where members fall short of the standards and principles, the CAI operates a Code of Disciplinary Practice which can result in an individual member being disciplined or in an extreme situation, termination of membership.

Professional standards are about values, knowledge, skills and behaviours. As health professionals, chiropractors must practice in a way that respects each of these elements. By putting patients first and by working with other health professionals in the best interests of the patients they serve, CAI chiropractors deliver a valuable service to the people of Ireland.

Definitions used in this Code of Ethics

Words or phrases defined in the Constitution or Articles of Association of the (CAI) shall have the same meaning in this Code of Ethics.

“Code” shall mean the Code of Ethics as set out below;

“Member” shall mean member of the Chiropractic Association of Ireland;

“The Association” or **“CAI”** shall mean the Chiropractic Association of Ireland;

“Chiropractor” shall mean a graduate of any chiropractic educational programme that is accredited by any of the following: Council on Chiropractic Education (USA); European Council on Chiropractic Education (Europe); Council on Chiropractic Education Australasia (Asia and Pacific); or Canadian Federation of Chiropractic Regulatory and Educational Accrediting Boards (Canada);

“Electronic Communications Regulations” shall mean the EC (Electronic Communications Networks and Services) (Data Protection and Privacy) Regulations 2003, S.I. 2003/535;

“GDPR” shall mean the General Data Protection Regulation.

“Health Professions” means any member of a medical health or health profession registered by legislation in the Republic of Ireland (e.g. under the Health and Social Care Professionals Act 2005) and members of professions as yet unregulated e.g. chiropractors, osteopaths, acupuncturists;

“Standards of Practice” means the Chiropractic Association of Ireland Standards of Practice;

“The Executive” shall mean the Executive as defined in the Articles of Association of the CAI;

“Third Party Payers” shall mean any club/ company or individual who pays or contributes towards the payment of patient fees such as a health insurance provider, solicitor, sporting club or such like.

Interpretation: If there is any conflict between the Code and/or the Constitution and/or Articles of Association of the CAI, the Articles of Association of the CAI will prevail.

Any reference to laws or legislation shall refer to applicable laws and legislation of Ireland.

Professional Duties

The CAI expects that its members will:

- make the care of their patient of paramount concern;
- be competent and keep their professional knowledge and skills updated;
- take prompt action if they feel the safety of their patient is being compromised;
- establish and maintain good relationships with patients and colleagues in their own and other health disciplines;
- act with honesty and integrity to maintain public trust in them and the chiropractic profession.

This Code of Ethics has four sections, which set out the values and behaviours that the CAI expects of its members. As chiropractors, the CAI expects that its members will use their professional judgment and expertise when applying the principles to the circumstances of their work and practice.

The four sections contained in this Code of Ethics are:

- A. Knowledge, skills and performance
- B. Safety and quality of care
- C. Communication, partnerships and teamwork
- D. Maintaining trust.

A. Knowledge, skills and performance

1. Chiropractors must be competent in all areas of their work.
2. Chiropractors must keep their professional knowledge and skills up to date.
3. Chiropractors must take part in continuing professional development activities that maintain and develop skills and performance
4. Chiropractors should be familiar with guidelines and developments affecting the profession that affect their work.
5. Chiropractors must maintain awareness of, and comply with, all legislation that is relevant to their work, including security of patient and employee data.

6. Chiropractors must recognise and work within the limits of their competence.
7. Chiropractors must provide a good standard of practice and care. If their work involves the assessment, diagnosis or care of patients, chiropractors must:
 - a. Undertake an adequate assessment, taking into account their case history, their views and values and the outcome of any physical examination and investigations;
 - b. Provide advice and education that will help the patient in managing their condition;
 - c. Refer to another health profession when clinically indicated.
8. When caring for patients, chiropractors must:
 - a. Only commence treatment after they have assessed the patient, excluded contraindications and made a diagnosis;
 - b. Provide optimal care based on the best available evidence of effectiveness;
 - c. Take necessary measures to relieve suffering and promote self-management;
 - d. Consult colleagues where appropriate;
 - e. Respect a patient's right to seek a second opinion;
9. Chiropractors must be satisfied that they have obtained informed consent prior to undertaking assessment or care. In the case of persons under the age of 18 years, it is necessary that a parent or guardian is present and also understands the justification provided for assessment and care. The parent or guardian are to give consent.
10. Chiropractors must make records that accurately reflect their interactions with patients. Clinical records, however recorded, should be legible and attributable and completed as soon as possible after the interaction has taken place. All records, including clinical and financial records are considered to be the property of the chiropractor (or in the event that a chiropractor is employed, the employer and/or their clinic). In the event that a patient, or a person lawfully acting on their behalf, requests copies of their records, chiropractors must comply with all relevant legislation.
11. Clinical records should include:
 - a. Relevant clinical findings
 - b. Decisions made and actions agreed
 - c. Any information given to patients

- d. Any examination or investigation findings
 - e. Any treatment given to the patient
 - f. Individual's name completing the record.
12. Chiropractors must maintain data securely and confidentially and comply with all relevant legislation. In the event of their retirement or death, they should make provision to ensure that every reasonable effort is made to advise patients that their records may be transferred to another health provider. In the event that a patient cannot be contacted, provision should be made to store records securely for a period of 8 years.
13. Chiropractors must retain records for a minimum of eight (8) years from the date of their last attendance for assessment or care, including in the event of their death. In the event that the person was aged 17 or younger at the date of their last attendance for assessment or care, records should be retained until the 26th birthday.

B. Safety and quality

14. Chiropractors should regularly reflect on their standards of practice and care.
15. Chiropractors should take note of feedback received from patients and colleagues and reflect on their performance accordingly.
16. Chiropractors must have in place measures to mitigate risk of adverse events and report any adverse events to the CAI when they occur.
17. Chiropractors must take prompt action if they think that patient safety, dignity or comfort may be compromised. This may include matters related to premises or the conduct or performance of colleagues.
18. Where a chiropractor has concerns about the conduct or performance of a colleague, they should consult with colleagues or with the CAI and take such action as is appropriate to address the risk to patients.
19. Where a chiropractor considers that their fitness to practice may be impaired through poor health or if they know or suspect that they may have a condition that is contagious, they must seek medical advice without delay.

20. Chiropractor shall not instruct lay members of the public in chiropractic joint adjustments. The only exception is when acting as an instructor at or for a chiropractic undergraduate program approved by the CAI.

C. Communication, partnership and teamwork

21. Chiropractors must communicate effectively with their patients, listen to and respect their views, and answer any questions they may have about their care in a way that they can clearly understand.
22. Chiropractors must be considerate to patients' families and carers.
23. Chiropractors must be accessible to patients whenever they have concerns or questions about their care.
24. Chiropractors must respect the skills and contributions that colleagues and other health professionals bring to the care of patients.
25. Colleagues must be treated fairly and with respect.
26. Chiropractors must be aware of how their behaviour may impact their patients and colleagues.
27. If chiropractors' hand over the care of a patient to a colleague or other health professional they must share all relevant information.
28. Chiropractors must be respectful and considerate to patients.
29. Chiropractors must treat patients as individuals and respect their privacy and dignity.
30. Chiropractors must respect patients and not discriminate against them based on race, gender, sexual orientation or religious beliefs.
31. Chiropractors must work in partnership with patients, sharing with them information they want or need to make decisions about their care. This may include:
- a. Their condition, its likely progression, and the options for care, including all risks and uncertainties;
 - b. Their progress, both with and without care;
 - c. Who is responsible for their care and what arrangements are in place in the absence of the chiropractor in charge;

32. Chiropractors must treat all information about patients as confidential. This duty extends to after the patient's death. There are exceptions to the duty of confidentiality but chiropractors should consult the CAI if requested to disclose confidential information about a patient.
33. Chiropractors must support patients in caring for themselves to empower and improve their health.

D. Maintaining Trust

34. Chiropractors must not use their professional position to pursue a sexual or improper emotional relationship with a patient or someone close to them.
35. Chiropractors must not express their personal beliefs (including political, religious or moral beliefs) to patients in ways to exploit their vulnerability or are likely to cause them distress.
36. The investigations or treatment provided by a chiropractor must be based on the assessment and the likely effectiveness of the treatment options available.
37. Chiropractors must not unfairly discriminate against patients by allowing their personal views to affect their professional relationships or the treatment to be provided.
38. Chiropractors must take all steps physically possible to accommodate the needs of patients with disabilities.
39. Chiropractors must respond promptly, fully and honestly to complaints and apologise when appropriate.
40. Chiropractors should only end a professional relationship with a patient when a breakdown of trust has been such that good clinical care can no longer be provided.
41. Chiropractors must maintain levels of professional indemnity cover as dictated by the CAI in case of claims made in respect of care provided; failure to do so may incur immediate loss of membership in the CAI.
42. Chiropractors must at all times ensure that their conduct justifies the trust of their patients.

43. Chiropractors must always be honest about their qualifications and expertise. They must not use the title 'Doctor' unless they make it clear that they are a doctor of chiropractic and not a medical doctor (unless they hold dual qualification).
44. Chiropractors must be honest and trustworthy in all communications with patients. They must make clear the limits of their knowledge and skills.
45. When communicating publicly or publicising their practices, chiropractors must maintain patient confidentiality and act in accordance with advertising guidelines and regulations. Information must be honest, decent, legal and truthful. It must not exploit patients' vulnerability or lack of knowledge about health or health matters. All members must make it very obvious in their advertisements that they are a chiropractor.
46. Chiropractors must be honest and trustworthy when writing reports, completing or signing forms.
47. Chiropractors must be honest and trustworthy when giving evidence to courts or tribunals.
48. Chiropractors must inform the CAI immediately if, anywhere in the world, they have accepted a caution, or have been charged or found guilty of a criminal offence. They should also inform the CAI if a finding has been made in respect of their professional conduct.
49. Chiropractors must be honest in all financial and business dealings with patients, insurers, organisations and other individuals.
50. Chiropractors must not allow business interests to impact on their way they care for patients.
51. Chiropractors must not ask for, accept or offer any gift or inducement that may be seen to affect the way in which they care for patients or refer patients for other care or investigations

End of Code