

October 3, 2018

Registrants, please read this letter and the attached policy notice carefully. It contains important information that may require your immediate attention.

Background

You may have seen recent media reports regarding misleading and unsubstantiated claims about the efficacy of treatment made by chiropractors as well as by other health service providers. The public, other health professionals and our own registrants have voiced concerns about treatment claims that are contrary to acceptable evidence.

Patients expect to receive effective care based on the best available evidence combined with clinician skills and training and patient preference. An evidence-informed approach to healthcare promotes an attitude of inquiry in health professionals:

Why am I providing this service in this way?
Is there acceptable evidence that can guide me to a better patient outcome?

The position of the College of Chiropractors of BC (the “CCBC”), in alignment with the Ministry of Health and other regulated health professionals, is solidly on the side of evidence-informed healthcare.

As the regulator for the chiropractic profession, the CCBC suggests that BC chiropractors consider three questions before making any claims about the benefits of treatment:

Do the claimed benefits related to care fall within the chiropractic scope of practice?
Are such claims accurate, verifiable, truthful and not misleading?
Are such claims supported by acceptable evidence?

Board Actions

To address these concerns the CCBC Board has taken the following steps:

- (1) In late 2017, the Board approved changes to the CCBC’s Professional Conduct Handbook (the “PCH”), adding section 14.1(f) and Appendix “N”. Section 14.1(f) provides that “[c]hiropractors must not advertise health benefits of their services when there is not acceptable evidence that these benefits can be achieved.”
- (2) On August 15, 2018, following a review of related literature and actions undertaken in other jurisdictions, the Board approved the attached “Efficacy Claims” policy.

The “Efficacy Claims” policy states as follows:

Due to the absence of acceptable evidence supporting such claims, **registrants must NOT represent** to patients or the public that chiropractic:

- (a) can be used to treat diseases, disorders or conditions such as: Alzheimer's disease, cancer, diabetes, infections, infertility, or Tourette's syndrome, or
- (b) has any beneficial effect on childhood diseases, disorders or conditions such as: ADHD (or ADD), autism spectrum disorders including Asperger syndrome, cerebral palsy, Down syndrome, fetal alcohol syndrome, or developmental and speech disorders.

The above list of diseases, disorders or conditions is neither final nor conclusive. Absent acceptable evidence, registrants are not free to make claims about the effectiveness of chiropractic in treating a disorder, disease or condition simply because it is not included in the list.

The full policy is attached, and we encourage you to read it carefully.

What You Need to Do

As a CCBC registrant you are required to immediately review your website(s) and social media accounts and remove any materials that include representations that do not comply with the “Efficacy Claims” policy. This includes blogs, posts, messages, videos, downloadable PDFs and links to other sites, posts and messages. It also includes printed materials, brochures and posters displayed or available in your offices.

All such materials must be removed immediately regardless of when they were created or posted.

You have until **November 1, 2018** to remove ALL materials that do not comply with the policy.

College Follow-up

The CCBC will be completing a thorough review of registrants’ online marketing material to ensure that unsubstantiated claims of efficacy are not being made about the disorders, diseases or conditions listed in the “Efficacy Claims” policy, and information about vaccination and immunization is not being published.

Materials, links or posts identified in the review that may offend the “Efficacy Claims” policy will be forwarded to the Inquiry Committee for investigation and possible disciplinary action.

During its review of online marketing material, the CCBC will also be looking for information on vaccination that may offend section 9.5 of the PCH. That section states:

The prevention and treatment of infectious disease is not within the scope of chiropractic practice. Accordingly, British Columbia chiropractors must not provide any professional advice or counseling to patients in relation to vaccination issues. Patients with vaccination questions should be advised to contact their local public health officials.

Because of the adoption of this policy, registrants may not:

- a) Counsel patients with respect to immunization and vaccination
- b) Conduct seminars as a chiropractor about immunization and vaccination
- c) Supply immunization information (electronic, paper or verbal) in your clinic or in any other venue where you are acting as a chiropractor
- d) Provide immunization information on your public website

Tips and Tools for Ensuring Compliance

Here are some tips and tools that you may find useful in ensuring that your website(s), social media and other online materials comply with the requirements of the “Efficacy Claims” policy, as well as section 9.5 of the PCH concerning vaccination:

- carefully review the content of all your online materials,
- search your online materials for the terms found in the “Efficacy Claims” policy and section 9.5 of the PCH as follows:
 - Google search your website using the "site:" function.
 - <https://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/how-to-do-a-google-site-search>
 - search Facebook pages by term using “choose a source”
 - <https://www.howtogeek.com/282908/how-to-use-facebooks-search-to-find-anyone-or-anything/>
 - search twitter pages with filters for tweets
 - <https://help.twitter.com/en/using-twitter/twitter-search>
- contact your IT providers for specific assistance and explanations;
- delete all older posts on your social media accounts.

Thank you for your attention.

Yours sincerely,

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