

ICA POLICY STATEMENT ON
The Practice of Chiropractic
Chiropractic Science, Art, Philosophy
Doctor of Chiropractic
Practice of Chiropractic
Clinical Application of Chiropractic

Throughout its long history, the International Chiropractors Association has sought to educate and inform the public, other health care professions and health policy makers on the principles and definitions of chiropractic in order to foster a broader understanding and acceptance of the profession. Equally important, the ICA has sought to establish standards of ethical, technical and professional excellence as guideposts for the Doctor of Chiropractic.

Vital to these endeavors is a clear, carefully reasoned and concise statement of what the Board of Directors understands the basic principles and definitions of chiropractic to be.

Building upon over a century of growth and experience, and in concert with changing state legislation, court-mandated standards of care and enhanced educational requirements, the Board of Director of the International Chiropractors Association adopts the following statement of the Practice of Chiropractic in an effort to update and clarify the position of the ICA in a rapidly changing health care world.

The Science of Chiropractic

- I. The **SCIENCE** of chiropractic deals with the relationship between the articulations of the skeleton and the nervous system, and the role of this relationship in the restoration and maintenance of health. Of primary concern to chiropractic are abnormalities of structure or function of the vertebral column known clinically as the vertebral subluxation complex. The subluxation complex includes any alteration of the biomechanical and physiological dynamics of contiguous spinal structures which can cause neuronal disturbances.

The Philosophy of Chiropractic

- II. The **PHILOSOPHY** of chiropractic holds that the body is a self-healing organism and that a major determining factor in the development of states of disease or dysfunction is the body's inability to comprehend its environment either

internally and/or externally. Directly or indirectly, all bodily function is controlled by the nervous system, consequently a central theme of chiropractic theories on health is the premise that abnormal bodily function may be caused by interference with nerve transmission and expression due to pressure, strain or tension upon the spinal cord, spinal nerves, or peripheral nerves as a result of a displacement of the spinal segments or other skeletal structures (subluxation).

The Art of Chiropractic

- III. The **ART** of chiropractic pertains to the skill and judgement required for the detection, location, analysis, control, reduction and correction of primarily the vertebral subluxation complex. It also involves the determination of any contraindications to the provision of chiropractic care or to any particular method of adjusting.

The ICA holds that the chiropractic spinal adjustment is unique and singular to the chiropractic profession due to its specificity of application and rationale for application.

The Doctor of Chiropractic

- IV. The **DOCTOR OF CHIROPRACTIC** is a portal of entry, primary health care provider, and, as such, is well educated in the basic, clinical and chiropractic sciences and other health-related areas. This broad range of education is taught within the context of the philosophy of the science, principles, and ethics of Chiropractic.

The Doctor of Chiropractic is trained in physical, clinical, laboratory, analytical and diagnostic procedures, as well as in the monitoring of body functions thus enabling him or her to responsibly and effectively care for his or her patient in health and disease, to engage in timely consultation with other health care professionals, and to refer and accept referrals when in the patient's best interest.

The International Chiropractors Association recognizes that the various state legislatures have the right to grant Doctors of Chiropractic the option to qualify, and thereafter utilize, procedures which are not within the Association's view of the parameters of the clinical application of traditional chiropractic.

While respecting individual and state rights, the International Chiropractors Association holds that it is in the best interest of the Chiropractic profession and the consuming public to advocate and promote a standardized and consistent scope of practice worldwide.

The International Chiropractors Association holds that the best interests of both the public and the chiropractic profession are served by maintaining chiropractic as a separate and distinct, drugless, non-surgical alternative form of health care, and, as such, does not include in its practice any form of allopathic or homeopathic pharmaceutical prescription or surgery.

The Practice of Chiropractic

- V. The **PRACTICE** of chiropractic consists of the analysis of interference with normal nerve transmission and expression produced by abnormalities of one or more vertebral motor units or other skeletal structures and the correction thereof by adjustment of these structures for the restoration and maintenance of health, without the use of drugs or surgery. The ICA considers the therapeutic use of drugs and surgery to be the practice of medicine. The term “analysis” in this context includes the use of x-ray and other analytical instruments generally used in the practice of chiropractic.

Chiropractic care utilizes the inherent recuperative powers of the body for the restoration and maintenance of health through the normalization of the relationship between the spinal musculoskeletal structures and the nervous system. Chiropractic science recognizes that essentially only the body heals and, therefore, holds forth no cure for disease.

The Clinical Application of Chiropractic

- VI. The **CLINICAL APPLICATION** of chiropractic includes the adjustment of the spinal vertebrae, the sacrum, the ilia, the coccyx and other skeletal articulations; the use of analytical and diagnostic x-rays of the skeletal system and of its adjacent tissues; those procedures necessary to interpret disorders of the neuromuscular skeletal system and those conditions related thereto; and the use of physical, clinical and laboratory diagnostic procedures to ascertain the nature of the patient’s problem and respond appropriately so as to secure the optimal care of the patient. Inherent in the concept is the obligation to consult with or refer to other health care providers before, during or after the rendering of chiropractic care, if in his/her professional opinion, it is appropriate and in the best interest of the patient. The Doctor of Chiropractic may elect to use appropriate ancillary and rehabilitative procedures appropriate to the area of subluxation complex dysfunction in the support of the chiropractic adjustment, nutritional advice for the overall enhancement of the health of the patient, and counsel for the restoration and the maintenance of health.