



Treatment of Family Members Policy

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline the expectations and requirements for chiropractors in Prince Edward Island (PEI) regarding the treatment of family members or individuals with whom they have close personal relationships. The policy aims to ensure that chiropractors maintain high standards of care, professionalism, and objectivity, particularly in situations where personal relationships could impair judgment.

Objective

1. Establish clear guidelines for chiropractors on when it is appropriate to treat family members or individuals with close personal relationships.
2. Define the circumstances under which treatment may be provided while maintaining the integrity of the doctor-patient relationship and ensuring that professional judgment is not compromised.
3. Ensure that chiropractors understand the importance of maintaining clinical records and adhering to ethical and legal standards, even when treating family members or close personal contacts.

Legislative Authority of PEICA

The PEI Chiropractic Association is responsible for regulating chiropractic practice in PEI, ensuring that public interests and protection are prioritized. As part of this role, the PEICA is tasked with developing and enforcing policies related to the care chiropractors are expected to provide and the management of doctor-patient relationships. Recognizing the challenges presented by treating family members or those with close personal relationships is essential in upholding high standards of care.

Definitions

- **Family Member:**
For the purposes of this policy, a family member is someone with whom the chiropractor has a familial connection, and this connection could impair the chiropractor's ability to maintain objectivity or professional judgment. This includes, but is not limited to, a chiropractor's spouse, children, grandchildren, parents, grandparents, and siblings.
- **Spouse:**
"Spouse" is defined as an individual who is lawfully married to the chiropractor or is in a



conjugal relationship with the chiropractor, which includes an implied or written cohabitation agreement for at least 12 months prior to the initiation of care.

- **Close Personal Relationship:**

A "close personal relationship" refers to a relationship with an individual that could impair the chiropractor's ability to maintain objectivity or fulfill their professional obligations to the patient. Such relationships may affect key aspects of patient care, such as:

- Physical examination, particularly when involving sensitive areas
- Detailed history taking, especially for sensitive information
- Maintaining objectivity when the patient or their contacts attempt to influence care or request documentation, such as for employment benefits or insurance claims

Instances Where Treatment of Family Members or Close Personal Relationships May Be Acceptable

There are situations where providing care to family members or those with close personal relationships may be reasonable, even though such treatment presents potential risks. These instances may include situations where the risks are minimal or where not providing care could result in undue suffering or harm.

1. Treatment of Minor Conditions or Injuries

If a family member requires routine care for a minor condition or injury that does not require significant diagnostic evaluation or extensive chiropractic care, it may be acceptable for the chiropractor to provide treatment. However, the chiropractor must remain mindful that if further care is required, a referral to another provider may be necessary. Examples include:

- Mild sprains/strains requiring advice and minor manual intervention
- Acute minor joint dysfunction without significant orthopedic or neurological findings

2. Treatment in Emergency Situations

In cases where a family member sustains a significant injury or condition where delaying care would result in undue pain, suffering, or deterioration, the chiropractor may provide immediate treatment. The chiropractor can assist with pain management or stabilization until the family member can be referred to another provider. Once the emergency situation is resolved, care should be transferred unless no other treatment options are available.

3. Treatment When No Other Provider is Available



When the chiropractor is the only qualified professional in the area capable of providing necessary care, it may be acceptable for them to administer treatment. In these cases, the chiropractor should document the rationale for providing care and note the lack of alternatives. As soon as another suitable healthcare provider is available, care should be transferred, and the chiropractor should ensure proper referral.

[Obligation to Maintain Sufficient Clinical Records](#)

When treating family members or individuals with close personal relationships, chiropractors must maintain comprehensive clinical records as required by the Chiropractors Act. Given the nature of the relationship, the clinical records must include:

- The indications for care
- The details of the treatment provided
- Any special considerations or risks arising from the personal relationship

[Effective Date and Precedence](#)

This policy is effective as of June 16th, 2025