

Section 10

PATIENT-DOCTOR RELATIONSHIP STANDARDS

1. Informed Consent

The patient has the right to informed consent regarding procedures, risks and alternatives, and answers to questions with respect to treatment, in terms that they can be reasonably expected to understand. In order to obtain the informed consent of a patient, the chiropractic physician shall explain the following:

- (a) In general terms the procedure or treatment to be undertaken;
- (b) That there may be alternative procedures or methods of treatment, if any; and
- (c) That there are risks, if any, to the procedure or treatment.²⁸ (Legal Type 1)

2. Patient Confidentiality

The patient has the right to expect that all communications and records pertaining to their care will be treated as confidential.^{19,39,40-43,45} The chiropractor shall preserve a patient's medical records from disclosure and will release specific records only on a patient's written consent stating to whom the records are being released or as required by State or Federal law.³⁸ (Legal Type 1)

3. Abandonment

The patient has the right to continuity of care once the doctor has agreed to treat the patient. The chiropractor may terminate the patient-doctor relationship only when the patient has been given reasonable notice.¹⁶ (Legal Type 1)

4. Patient-Doctor Boundaries

With the exception of pre-existing consensual sexual relationships, it is clearly unethical to have sexual contact or a romantic relationship with a patient concurrent with the patient-doctor relationship. Chiropractors shall not engage in any conduct or verbal behavior with or towards a patient that may be reasonably interpreted by the patient as sexual, seductive or demeaning.^{72,73,77-90} (Legal Type 1)

5. Independent Medical Examinations

All independent and second opinion examinations performed by a chiropractor to determine the need for chiropractic care shall include a functional chiropractic analysis.⁹⁶ A copy of the independent report shall be made available, upon request, to the patient, the patient's attorney and the treating doctor.⁹⁹ All independent and second opinion examiners have an ethical obligation to perform an impartial examination. (Legal Type 1)

6. Child and Elder Abuse Reporting

Chiropractors must report child abuse and elder abuse to the appropriate officials.^{63,69} (Legal Type 1)