

Chiropractic in Canada: Ontario Legislation

Editorial Staff

Editor's note: This is a letter sent to "DC" by David Chapman-Smith, secretary-general of the World Federation of chiropractic to clarify some points of the Ontario legislation.

Your item "Chiropractic in Canada," (October 11, 1991) refers to new legislation and may suggest that chiropractors can only perform the two licensed acts mentioned. This is quite wrong. If so the new law would of course be an extremely narrow and unacceptable one. A full explanation of the new law would require a lengthy article but essential features are:

- Ontario has passed a package of health disciplines legislation which comprises a Regulated Health Professions Act, with standard regulatory provisions which apply to all 24 health disciplines governed by the new law, and separate pieces of legislation that apply to each profession, including a Chiropractic Act.
- Many of the professions recognized are regulated for the first time in Ontario, including audiologists, dental hygienists, medical technologists, midwives, and speech pathologists.
- The legislation recognizes that five professions are capable of performing a diagnosis (others can work directly with the public but can only "assist") and entitled to use the title "doctor" -- these being chiropractic, dentistry, medicine, optometry, and psychology.
- The new principle behind the law is that everyone, whether a health professional or not, should be able to perform many health care acts. However, some health care acts, where there is significant risk of harm, are controlled and can only be performed by those professions specifically authorized to perform them. Two such controlled acts are diagnosis -- limited to the five professions already mentioned -- and manipulation. Manipulation, meaning high-velocity techniques as opposed to mobilization or massage, can only be performed by chiropractors, medical doctors, and physical therapists.
- The word 'licence' appears nowhere in all the new literature, which is a sign of the times likely to be repeated elsewhere. The government has been concerned to remove the impression that it is granting any license or monopoly or property right to various health professions. All, including medicine, are merely regulated.

Further information on this law can be obtained from the Ontario Chiropractic Association, 5160 Explorer Dr., Unit 30, Mississauga, Ontario L4W 4T7 Canada. Tel: 416-629-8211; Fax: 416-629-8214. Executive Director Mr. Peter Waite, C.A.E.

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