

**CHIROPRACTORS REGISTRATION BOARD OF VICTORIA
STANDARDS OF PRACTICE CODES**

POLICY STATEMENT ON OPEN CONSULTING ROOMS

OCTOBER 2007

1. DESCRIPTION

This policy sets out the position of the Board and provides an interpretation of professional conduct issues relating to practise in *Open Plan Consulting Rooms*.

What are ‘Open Plan Consulting Room’?

Consulting rooms where the reception area and/or the patient care areas such as adjusting and treatment rooms are continuous or open and where the activities normally carried out in one area can be observed and/or heard in the other.

Context of this Policy

A Chiropractor registered under the Act is responsible for professional conduct compliant with the legal and professional requirements of this State.

Legislation that impacts on *Open Plan Consulting Rooms* include:

1. *Health Professions Registration Act 2005 (Vic)*
2. *The Health Records Act 2001 (Vic)*
3. *The Information Privacy Act 2000 (Cth)*
4. *Board Codes on Clinical Practice*
 - *Management of Patient Records*
 - *Professional Conduct*
 - *Duration and Frequency of Care*

2. CONDITIONS THAT MUST BE SATISFIED IN CASE OF OPEN PLAN CONSULTING ROOMS

- Patient consent must be obtained and must be based on the patient being provided with appropriate options.
- The flow of information between doctor and patient must be free and unimpeded in order that proper clinical action may be taken.
- No health information may be exposed to third parties either through verbal interchange as in discussion; or via visual transfer as from a computer screen or patient records.

3. INTERPRETATION

Open plan consulting rooms may be seen to impact adversely on the flow of information between Patient and Practitioner, which means that information that may be important to the care or referral of a patient is not provided, or that the patient is not properly instructed on home care, behavioral change etc., resulting in care of a lesser standard than should be provided.

Open plan consulting rooms may be seen to inhibit the application of procedures that could be helpful to the management of a patient and pain relief, which are not applied because of the visual impact on other patients in the area.

Open plan consulting rooms may be seen to expose health information, whether written or oral (and both are covered by the Health Records Act), which means that the Practitioner may be exposing him/herself to action under either the Health Records Act and/or the Privacy Act. What this means is that adequate steps must be taken by the Practitioner to protect the flow of information, including the use and positioning of computer screens etc. as well as any information forthcoming during the actual consultation.