

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

SPINAL SCREENINGS

MAY 2007

1. INTRODUCTION

Within these guidelines a spinal screening shall be construed as being a general observation only of a person's spine, or parts of a spine, in a non-clinical environment, using, but not limited to, equipment and procedures such as weight scales, postural analysis equipment and visual / palpatory assessments.

Under no circumstance should any diagnosis be offered or treatment provided during a spinal screening. It is imperative that a full case history and examination of the patient be provided in a clinical setting prior to any diagnosis or treatment.

2. AIM

These guidelines are designed to assist practitioners, wishing to become involved in the activity of spinal screenings, to develop an understanding of the requirements for the conduct of spinal screenings in a professional and responsible way that will both protect the public of Victoria and present the profession in a positive light. Compliance with the guidelines does not represent endorsement by the Board.

3. GENERAL COMMENTS

Spinal screenings are considered to be a form of chiropractic advertising. Practitioners involving themselves with spinal screenings would be well advised to fully acquaint themselves with the *Health Professions Registration Act 2005, Section 94*, and the Board's Advertising Guidelines (May, 2007).

It is generally understood and accepted that spinal screenings may be conducted in various locations and for different reasons.

Common locations might include public displays and exhibitions, open days, natural/alternative health forums, suburban shopping centres, major shopping malls and schools. Given the public nature of these events, it is essential that practitioners are dressed in an appropriate manner so as not to bring the profession into disrepute.

It is acknowledged that there is a need for public education in health related matters. It is also acknowledged that spinal screenings may assist in public education, thus providing a valid reason for their conduct.

It is also recognised that the commercial element of practice building may be the reason for the conduct of spinal screenings, particularly when carried out by, or for, a single practitioner. Any practice building benefit, however, can be justified only in the presence

of honest representation of clinical findings and facts that are relevant to the routine Chiropractic practice of the practitioner.

4. PERFORMANCE OF SPINAL SCREENINGS

Note: Any person conducting a spinal screening, whether representing their own clinic or not, shall be clearly identified by a name tag. The clinic involved with the spinal screening shall also be clearly identified by signage.

- (a) Who may conduct spinal screenings –
 - (i) Registered chiropractic practitioners
 - (ii) Registered persons of similar education acting for a registered chiropractor e.g. osteopath
 - (iii) Students of chiropractic who have successfully completed and passed 80% of their course of study (e.g. the first four years of a five year course) and who are in the presence of a registered chiropractor

- (b) Who may not conduct spinal screenings on behalf of and under the supervision of a registered chiropractor–
 - (i) Lay persons
 - (ii) Students of chiropractic who have not successfully completed 80% of an accredited course of study.

- (c) During the conduct of spinal screenings no attempt should be made to –
 - (i) Offer a definitive diagnosis or any form of treatment
 - (ii) Deliberately create a false outcome of the screening
 - (iii) Engender fear in the mind of the participant
 - (iv) Promise or guarantee any cure or favourable outcome from any recommended treatment
 - (v) Use equipment and/or procedures that do not constitute an integral part of the routine practice of the chiropractor.

5. PAYMENT FOR SPINAL SCREENINGS

- (a) No fee is permitted to be charged for spinal screenings outside of a chiropractor's office.
- (b) A donation may be requested from participants of spinal screenings conducted for the benefit of, or under the auspices of, the Australian Spinal Research Foundation (ASRF) or other charitable organisations. Should a donation be offered, it is to be immediately receipted, in full, in the participant's name as a personal donation to the ASRF or the charity involved.

- (c) A pre-paid fee for a subsequent examination at a chiropractor's clinic is not permitted to be collected at a spinal screening since it could impose undue pressure on members of the public, be considered unacceptable pressure selling, is not in line with the spirit of public education and would suggest that the screening in a public place provided a diagnosis and was therefore the practice of chiropractic in an inappropriate setting.