

1. Foreword

For over twenty years, the administration of chiropractic specialties in Canada had been carried out by the Canadian Chiropractic Association (CCA) through a special committee. In the mid 90's the CCA launched a review of its mandate and concluded that as a member service and advocacy organization engaged in promoting the profession, it was inappropriate to act as the body responsible for the recognition and administration of specialty designations.

In June 1996 the CCA decided to relinquish the task of administering specialties and undertook a study to identify the chiropractic organization best suited to take over this responsibility.

After considering all the organizations within the profession, the CCA's Board of Governors came to the conclusion that the Canadian Federation of Chiropractic Regulatory Boards (CFCRB) would be the logical body to assume responsibility for the administration of specialties. The CFCRB submitted a proposal to the CCA which, after much consultation, was accepted as being the most appropriate solution.

Reasons for the creation of a Specialties Transition Committee

After discussion between the CCA and the CFCRB, it was agreed that the CFCRB would establish a Specialties Transition Committee to carry out certain necessary tasks: conduct an in-depth study of the current situation; establish an infrastructure to oversee chiropractic specialties; and establish common standards for current and any future specialty colleges.

Mandate of the Specialties Transition Committee

From the outset, the Specialties Transition Committee

was given the mandate of establishing a Specialties Standing Committee and defining the criteria for a specialty college, including basic standards applicable to all colleges for the certification of a chiropractic specialist.

Within the framework of this mandate, the transition committee must define the accreditation process to be used in judging the status of current colleges plus any future applications to create new specialty colleges.

The Specialties Transition Committee is also responsible for establishing:

1. The definition of a chiropractic specialist;
2. The education and training required to obtain specialist certification;
3. The continuing education requirements to maintain specialist certification;
4. The research requirements to maintain specialist certification;
5. Recommendations for the creation of a CFCRB Specialties Standing Committee;
6. Mechanisms for granting or refusing specialist certification.

For the purposes of the accreditation process, the Specialties Transition Committee will:

- (a) provide the CFCRB Specialties Standing Committee with an organizational structure which operates at arm's length from the programmes and colleges it is accrediting;
- (b) draft a clear description of the accreditation process;
- (c) establish standards of accreditation – these should be published and must include organizational and educational principles relating to:
 1. the administrative structure,
 2. the committee's goals and objectives,
 3. the content and organization of the academic environment,
 4. physical, technical and human resources;

*CFCRB Specialties Committee
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- (d) obtain appropriate expert input from each discipline regarding academic and clinical content and resources;
- (e) ensure that the residency programme being accredited is sponsored by an organization with a clearly defined educational mission;
- (f) ensure that the peer-reviewed process of accreditation occurs on a regular basis and includes visits to the sites at which the programme is being delivered; that this review is conducted in a manner that is free of intimidation, and includes input from and meetings with residents/students, teachers, and administrators; and that this review also includes a mechanism for constructive criticism to be relayed to the programme administrators;
- (g) define categories or levels of accreditation approval or censure in order to promote the continuing improvement of the programmes under review;
- (h) ensure that the accreditation process includes a description of an appropriate mechanism for appeal;
- (i) ensure that the accreditation standards and processes are grounded in principles of quality, equity, and natural justice.

With regard to the certification process, the committee will have to discuss both the certification of a specialist and certification in continuing education. The legislative recognition of specialties is the responsibility of the provincial regulatory boards. These boards will have to be encouraged to ask their respective provincial governments for legislative recognition.

2. Background of current chiropractic specialties

Introduction

In Canada, chiropractic specialties developed under the wing of the Canadian Chiropractic Association (CCA). This was only natural as, for many years, the CCA was the only national chiropractic organization with the necessary human and financial resources to nurture and support the development of such an important aspect of the profession.

Over the years, the different specialties grew larger and larger, eventually reaching the stage where they wanted a more independent status. In order to ensure that they would maintain a certain degree of uniformity, the CCA

encouraged them to work together to develop consistent standards.

Wishing to relinquish its role in the oversight of specialties, in November 1997 the CCA's Board of Governors agreed to a transitional process that would eventually permit the CFCRB to assume full responsibility for the administration of specialty issues. To facilitate this transition, the CCA also voted to fund the transition process for the first two years. It was agreed that each of the five specialty colleges would have representation on the Specialties Transition Committee.

There are currently five specialty colleges in Canada recognized by the CCA. These colleges, which are responsible for training chiropractic specialists in five different scientific fields, are: the College of Chiropractic Sciences, the College of Chiropractic Sports Sciences, the Chiropractic College of Radiology, the College of Chiropractic Orthopedists, and the College of Chiropractic Rehabilitation Sciences.

The College of Chiropractic Sciences

The College of Chiropractic Sciences was established in 1975 and certified its first two specialists in 1978. Since then, many of its fellows have gone on to become teachers and researchers. Fellows of the College of Chiropractic Sciences have been called upon by chiropractic and government agencies and insurance companies as chiropractic specialists on numerous occasions. They have served the chiropractic profession as expert resources in education, research, and on political and socio-economic issues affecting chiropractic practice. The majority have also been actively involved in the development and conduct of continuing education programmes, thereby advancing chiropractic clinical competency, including risk management in clinical decision making. As well, fellows of the college have been utilised as a resource by various non-chiropractic elements of society, including other health care professions, government agencies, the legal profession and private industry.

From the very start, the college has required candidates for specialist certification to complete a two-year residency programme. Initially, they had to complete this programme at CMCC. From 1996 to 1999 a residency programme was offered at the LACC as well.

In 1978, the year it certified its first specialists, the college established a compulsory continuing education

programme. All fellows must attend 30 or more hours of courses every two-year calendar period. This requirement is rigorously applied, and those who failed to meet it have always been stripped of their fellowship. In order to apply for reinstatement, they must provide proof of continuing education hours satisfactory to the college's board of directors.

As an alternative to attending 30 hours of courses, fellows have always been allowed to submit proof, every two years, that they have done one of the following: taught postgraduate or continuing education programmes; written a paper suitable for publication; attended university level classes that have relevance to chiropractic; or successfully completed an examination specifically set by the college's examination committee for the purpose of re-certification.

Over the years, many of the college's fellows have become teachers at CMCC. More recently, many more have gone on to use their research skills. Today, 80% of chiropractic research in Canada and 30% world-wide, is done by fellows of the college. For the past 20 years, they have played a large role as consultants to governments, insurance companies, the WCB and other organizations.

The current trend is towards more emphasis on graduate and postgraduate work at universities. Today 25% of the college's fellows have master's or doctoral degrees, and within the next five years the proportion should rise to 50%.

In 1980, a programme was established to transfer some residents from CMCC to the University of Saskatoon. This programme continued until 1995, when it was discontinued.

CMCC and LACC have formal multi-disciplinary programmes which include research and the writing of scientific reports. The University of Saskatoon programme has been replaced with the McMaster University programme and other shorter programmes.

At one point, the college also established a four-year weekend programme. It ran only once, and only 5 of the 17 chiropractors who initially registered in the programme went on to become fellows. There are no plans to run this programme again.

The College of Chiropractic Sciences has 51 fellows world-wide, most of whom are in Canada. All of the fellows held a full-time position at CMCC for two years.

The College of Chiropractic Sports Sciences

This college started in the late 70s as a field programme leading to certification for chiropractors in private practice. The field programme was eventually changed to a three-year programme, with 100 hours of courses a year, leading up to a fellowship examination. About four participants were granted honorary fellowships and a few were grandparented. The college established its residency programme in the mid-90s.

The college currently has 282 members, including 42 fellows. There are four levels of members. Level 4 is the fellowship level, which requires successful completion of the three-year programme of 100 hours a year, plus the fellowship examination, or successful completion of the residency programme and the examination. Level 3 is the associate level, which does not require passing the fellowship examination. Levels 2 and 1 correspond to the second and first year of the programme.

The programme for chiropractors in private practice will not be renewed, and only the programme including a residency period will lead to specialist certification. The members of the college, who must obtain re-certification annually, work in a variety of field services, teaching, research, etc.

The College of Chiropractic Sports Sciences has established ties with the Sport Medicine Council of Canada.

The Chiropractic College of Radiologists

This college was established in 1971 and incorporated in 1981. It has 26 members, 19 of whom practise full-time.

In the beginning the college offered a three-year field programme for chiropractors in private practice. It involved long hours of work and written papers, and U.S. examinations were used for certification purposes. About ten years ago, the field programme was replaced with a two-year residency programme, which has since been extended to a three-year programme. It is offered by CMCC in English only, but the college is exploring the possibility of establishing a French language residency programme at UQTR in Quebec. Several chiropractic institutions in the United States offer a similar residency programme. Further information is available at www.ccrCanada.ca.

The College of Chiropractic Orthopedists

The speciality of chiropractic orthopedics started in Cali-

fornia the 1960s and was established in Canada in the fall of 1993. The College of Chiropractic Orthopedists has 9 fellows and 18 associates. To date, no residency programme is available in Canada. The college approached the Canadian Memorial Chiropractic College in 1996 with a view to creating a residency programme, but due to insufficient funds and a lack of space at CMCC the project had to be abandoned.

Training in this specialty is offered at two chiropractic colleges in the United States: the National College of Chiropractic (NCC) and the Los Angeles College of Chiropractic (LACC). Courses are currently offered to non-resident pupils in Canada under the responsibility of the LACC. The chiropractic orthopedics programme is a four-year programme of 100 hours per year, for a total of 380 hours. Residency in the United States is for two years. Courses are largely taken through U.S. organizations. Written examinations are followed by oral examinations one year later, and only 5% of candidates pass the first time. Every candidate can rewrite the written examination up to three times.

A proposal for re-certification every seven years is being considered in the United States and, if adopted, would likely be implemented in Canada as well.

Chiropractors in private practice wishing to obtain certification in this specialty must complete a four-year course involving 380 hours of courses. Those registered in a full-time programme must complete a two-year residency, and both categories must pass the examinations of the American Board of Chiropractic Orthopedists. Today, the college grants a FACCO to chiropractors having a DABCO, but not the other way around.

The College of Chiropractic Rehabilitation Sciences

Rehabilitation sciences is a brand-new chiropractic specialty on which an initial report was presented in 1998. It was established in the United States in 1982 and, following the U.S. lead, the CCA set up the Council on Physiological Therapeutics and Rehabilitation in the mid-80s. A programme in chiropractic rehabilitation was instituted in Canada in 1995. It was a three-level programme involving 300 hours of courses which could be followed at any CCEC accredited college, and the examinations were standardized by the NBCE. Today responsibility for standardizing examinations rests with the CCA Rehabilitation Council. Candidates for certification in this

specialty must follow a 350-hour postgraduate programme, write a thesis and take examinations.

To date, the college has certified about 30 specialists: 16 passed the examination and 14 were grandparented. As well, about 100 chiropractors have passed the necessary course to obtain a certificate of studies in this specialty. The college is currently studying the possibility of establishing a residency programme, while continuing to offer courses leading to a certificate for all interested chiropractors.

The college approached CMCC with a view to offering this programme in association with it, but CMCC declined because it lacked the necessary funds and space.

There are currently about 100 chiropractors across Canada enrolled in the programme. The college has 30 fellows: 14 were grandparented (most have a fellowship in another discipline), and about 16 other chiropractors passed the three U.S. Board examinations, wrote a thesis and passed the Canadian examinations.

The chiropractic rehabilitation sciences programme is currently run through the CMCC's postgraduate department in conjunction with the ACCES, and a residency programme is offered at Palmer College of Chiropractic.

3. Regulatory Board Regulations and Provincial legislation governing chiropractic and other specialties

Postgraduate programmes in chiropractic, including programmes in a chiropractic specialty, are not recognized by all of the provinces of Canada. Indeed, only five provinces – Alberta, British Columbia, Newfoundland, Nova Scotia and Saskatchewan – currently recognize such programmes. The Government of Quebec is currently studying the question. Alberta and Saskatchewan recognize all five specialty colleges.

Only four provinces include special regulations for postgraduate programmes in their chiropractic act: British Columbia, Newfoundland, Quebec and Saskatchewan.

Only one province, Newfoundland, officially recognizes postgraduate programmes in chiropractic. Quebec is currently studying the question.

Current recognition mechanism

1. Canada-wide organization, e.g. RCPS

Establishes certification and admission standards

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2. Chiropractic regulatory board

Ratifies standards for specialties in its regulations

*

3. Provincial government

Approves

- (a) Have a clear definition of its specialty;
- (b) Be incorporated as a non-profit corporation by the Government of Canada;
- (c) Have an accredited postgraduate residency programme in at least one CCEC accredited institution, or its equivalent;
- (d) Establish an equivalency programme for non-residency candidates;
- (e) Be composed of at least:
 - an executive committee comprising at least three members elected by the fellows of the specialty college either at a general meeting of the college or by mailed ballot to all fellows;
 - an examining committee, with at least three members, must have the same examination for both resident and non-resident candidates, and must have procedures for appeal. It must also submit to the CFCRB Specialties Standing Committee an annual report which will include a review of examination procedures, number of candidates and failure rate;
 - a peer review committee with at least three members;
- (f) Appoint a representative to the CFCRB Specialties Standing Committee;
- (g) Organize a programme for the maintenance of the certification of fellows.

4. Standards for accreditation of a specialty college

Accreditation process for a specialty college

The minimum standards for the accreditation of a specialty college by the CFCRB Specialties Standing Committee are as follows.

A chiropractic specialty college must:

Specialties Status

Province	Recognition by provincial regulatory board	Regulations governing postgraduate training	Government recognition
Alberta	yes	no	no
British Columbia	yes	yes	no
New Brunswick	no	no	no
Newfoundland	yes	yes	yes
Nova Scotia	yes	no	no
Ontario	yes	no	no
	clin. sc., sports, x-ray		
PEI	no	no	no
Quebec	in process	yes	in process
	X-ray & clin. sc.		
Manitoba	no	no	no
Saskatchewan	yes	yes	no

Any new group whose application to create a specialty college is not approved by the CFCRB Specialties Standing Committee can appeal to the CFCRB Board, which will decide whether or not to overturn the recommendation of the Standing Committee. This will provide independent oversight.

Definition of chiropractic specialty

The definition is formulated in terms of the chiropractic profession.

A specialty is a discipline recognized by the chiropractic regulatory boards for which a chiropractor has acquired postgraduate qualification, in a separate and distinct body of knowledge in a particular branch of the chiropractic arts and sciences, which focuses on diagnostic and/or therapeutic acts.

Specialist certification is acquired by completing a full-time residency programme in a CCEC accredited chiropractic institution or its equivalent and by passing the examinations required by the specialty college in question. Each specialty discipline is regulated by its respective specialty college.

Common standards for the recognition of a specialist

If specialties are to be recognized by the public and other professions in the health field, not to mention other chiropractors, they have to demonstrate that there is a serious process required to qualify as a specialist.

In order to be recognized as a specialist, a chiropractor must have:

- (a) completed at least a two-year, full-time postgraduate residency programme offered by a CCEC-accredited chiropractic college or its equivalent whose content has been ratified and approved by the specialty college;
- (b) met the eligibility requirements to sit for fellowship examinations;
- (c) shown an advanced level of proficiency by obtaining a grade of at least 80% in each examination subject;
- (d) written four scientific book reviews of publishable quality;
- (e) written four case reports of publishable quality;
- (f) written one literature review manuscript of publishable quality;
- (g) completed one major research project of scientifically admissible quality.

Common requirements for maintenance of specialist certification

Members of a specialty college must annually fulfil one of the following requirements as approved by their specialty college:

1. Teach at least a 12 hours per year in a postgraduate programme;
2. Teach a minimum of 12 hours a year to undergraduate students;
3. Write a paper suitable for publication of not less than 2000 words;
4. Write and submit for evaluation two case reports;
5. Attend a scientific symposium.

Fellows who have not met their currency requirements as determined by the executive committee of their college will be designated as “inactive” members and will not be eligible to vote. Inactive members who have been so classified for a period of at least two years will be liable to suspension by vote at a college annual general meeting. Each college will establish a protocol for allowing “inactive” member to regain active status.

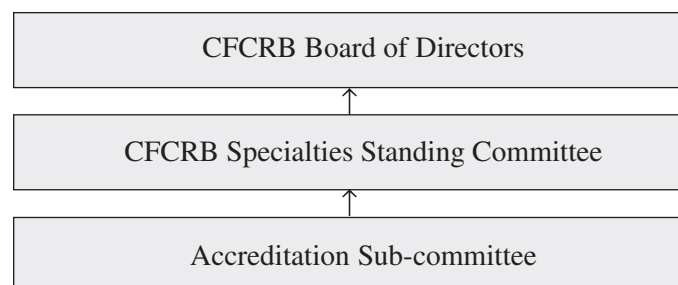
5. National and provincial standards for recognizing specialists and the creation of the CFCRB Specialists Standing Committee

Levels of recognition

There are two levels of recognition for specialists: provincial recognition and Canada-wide recognition.

Provincial legislation grants the provincial regulatory boards the power to make regulations governing the professions. To be certified as a specialist, a practitioner must obtain the basic chiropractic degree and then complete the

Organization chart of CFCRB Specialties Standing Committee



residency requirements or equivalent and pass the examinations for the specialty in question. The practitioner then gets recognition for that specialty in that province.

The provincial regulatory bodies will still make the final determination of how chiropractors can legally refer to themselves.

Composition of CFCRB Specialties Standing Committee

1. Standing Committee

The Standing Committee will include one person nominated by each accredited specialty college, one lay person appointed by the CFCRB from a list of nominees submitted by the accredited specialty colleges, and a chairperson who will be a chiropractor who does not have a specialty designation and who is appointed by the CFCRB Board of Directors.

The functions of the Standing Committee will be to:

- (a) oversee the activities of accredited colleges and review reports annually from each college;
- (b) oversee the accreditation process for new applicants;
- (c) undertake legislation recognition activities;
- (d) ensure that each college maintains a continuing education programme;
- (e) report to the CFCRB Board of Directors.

2. Accreditation Sub-Committee

The Accreditation Sub-Committee will include one person nominated by each accredited specialty college. These persons will not also serve on the Standing Committee.

This sub-committee will be responsible for dealing with new groups applying for accredited status as a specialty college. It will receive application forms, determine if the accreditation process should be initiated, and appoint the members of the accreditation panel.

The Accreditation Sub-Committee will review the application forms, which will include detailed information on the minimum standards required for the accreditation of a specialty college by the CFCRB Specialties Standing Committee. The sub-committee will also examine whether there is a perception of conflict of interest with an existing accredited specialty college (such a perception should be noted on the application form). The accreditation process will follow the CCEC model. The sub-committee will not

recommend the accreditation of a new specialty college if its residency programme in a CCEC accredited institution is not in place.

The Accreditation Sub-Committee will recommend to the CFCRB Specialties Standing Committee for approval residency programmes which have the following minimum components:

Programmes which:

- are in a CCEC accredited institution;
- are at least two calendar years in length;
- have core courses in the following areas:
 - (a) research, critical appraisal and use of health care literature,
 - (b) research methodology and biostatistics,
 - (c) teaching methodology and learning theory,
 - (d) graduate student and advanced graduate student seminars.

6. Conclusion

In order to dissipate the confusion which currently exists in the public mind, the specialty colleges will have to stop issuing certificates for courses which do not lead to specialist certification. As well, the chiropractic regulatory boards will have to be encouraged to make sure that courses offered outside a specialty programme lead not to a certificate, but rather to recognized credits in continuing education.

We identified four points that have a vital bearing on the recognition of chiropractic specialties by the health care community. These points are challenging, and their resolution will require all parties involved to show great flexibility of judgement and a firm determination to promote chiropractic specialties efficiently and effectively.

These points are:

1. The need for a clear definition of each specialty. This definition should highlight the specialty's particularity while making it plain that it does not encompass a major portion of the profession's field of intervention;
2. It must be ensured that young specialties become firmly established in Canada as quickly as possible. If not, they will find themselves confronted with a double standard with, on the one hand, a residency programme in an accredited chiropractic institution and, on the other hand, a field programme for chiropractors in

private practice. Although this problem still exists today in some specialties. Every effort should be made to eliminate the equivalency option as soon as possible.

3. Specialists must have proper training in the critical appraisal of scientific literature, and practical knowledge of research methodologies.
4. Approaches should be made to the provincial regulatory boards and provincial governments without delay, while ensuring that the boards have the necessary human and financial resources to advance the profession's cause.

It must also be remembered that all the structures for chiropractic specialties were developed before the federal and provincial governments signed the Agreement on Internal Trade, which calls for the free circulation of professionals. It is important that all chiropractic licensing board and provincial government action be administered in accordance with the requirements of this agreement.

Appendix A

Background to professional certification in Canada

As far as the recognition of specialties in disciplines other than chiropractic is concerned, several provinces have regulations governing medicine and dentistry.

In Quebec, dentists must have completed a postgraduate programme offered and approved by their regulatory board. Physicians must have completed a specific postgraduate programme and passed the examination of the Medical Council of Canada.

In Ontario, dentists must have completed a specific specialty education programme and passed the qualifying examination. Physicians must have completed a specific postgraduate programme and passed the examination of the Medical Council of Canada.

Manitoba has no specific regulations governing dentists. Physicians must have completed a postgraduate clinical training programme at an approved university.

In Saskatchewan, dentists must have met the requirements established by the council and hold a valid specialist certificate. Physicians must have completed a recognized postgraduate programme and passed the examinations set by the Medical Council of Canada.

Alberta has no specialties regulations for either dentists or physicians. The province recognizes dental specialists as well as post graduate specialty programmes.

In British Columbia, dentists must have obtained a postgraduate degree in a relevant specialty from a university approved by the Canadian Dental Association. As well, they must have successfully completed the Council's specialty examination. Physician must be fellows of the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons.

In Newfoundland, dentists must have completed a specific postgraduate programme approved by the regulatory board in a recognized specialty. They must also have successfully completed the examination set or approved by the regulatory board. Physicians must be graduates of an approved faculty or school of medicine as well as fellows of the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons.

In Nova Scotia, dentists must hold a postgraduate degree, in a specialty recognized by the regulatory board, from an institution approved by the Canadian or American dental association. As well, they must hold a specialist certificate issued by the National Dental Examining Board and the Royal College of Dentists of Canada. Physicians must hold a qualification in a specialty in which the RCPS of Canada grants degrees.

The Yukon Territory has no specialty regulations for dentists. It requires physicians to be certified by the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons.

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Become a member of the Canadian Chiropractic Research Foundation