



14 March 2019

Australian Chiropractors Association response to CBA interim policy on spinal manipulation for infants

The Australian Chiropractors Association is disappointed by the temporary restriction placed on chiropractors providing spinal manipulation to treat children under two years of age. This move was announced today by the Chiropractic Board of Australia (“CBA”), pending an independent expert review by Safer Care Victoria.

The independent review into paediatric Chiropractic care was announced by Australian health ministers last week. We welcome this review as we anticipate that it will demonstrate that there is limited evidence of harm arising from chiropractic care for children and such care is highly valued by parents across this country. We look forward to participating in this inquiry and highlighting the benefits that chiropractic care delivers to millions of Australians of all ages each year.

The Victorian Health Minister has initiated an unusual step in the process of health care regulation in Australia by targeting a single profession. Chiropractic should not be singled out for age-related regulatory restrictions when medical practitioners, physiotherapists and osteopaths can all provide similar care. There is an existing system of regulation dealing with risk which is, and continues to be, effective.

We note the position statement of the CBA that the role of the Board is to protect the public by setting standards, Codes and Guidelines to ensure that only health practitioners that are suitably trained and qualified to practice, in a safe, competent and ethical manner, are registered. We also accept that it is appropriate for regulators to act to restrict patient harm when there is credible evidence of demonstrable risk. However, when no such harm has been reported or demonstrated, informed patient choice should be a priority.

There is little evidence of harm associated with paediatric spinal manipulation therapy, and in Australia, chiropractors provide care to more than 30,000 children (0-18 years old) every week. We firmly believe that chiropractors should remain an important part of a child’s healthcare team.

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Media Contact: Ariel Tate | 0423 639 993 | ariel.tate@chiropractors.asn.au