

28 April 2016

Statement from the CAA

The Chiropractors' Association of Australia (CAAN) has sought clarification from the RACGP about statements attributed to Dr Evan Ackermann, chair of the RACGP expert committee on quality care, in the Australian Doctor. As a profession, chiropractors are committed to providing Australians with the best available research to make an informed decision regarding chiropractic care and receive the most current recognised treatments. There is a significant body of evidence and research both in Australia and Internationally about the role and effectiveness of chiropractic care. The evidence base continues to develop and CAAN commissioned independent research through the University of Technology Sydney and currently supports four PhD studies in Australia. The Code of Conduct for chiropractors within the National Regulation and Accreditation Scheme (the National law) has its basis in an international review of effectiveness. CAAN works with AHPRA and the Chiropractic Board of Australia to ensure professional conduct standards with minimal public harm and risk, and with beneficial outcomes for patients. CAAN has confidence in the National Regulation and Accreditation Scheme and is a stakeholder along with the other registered health professions in ensuring it meets its Objectives.

Patients who engage chiropractors are highly satisfied and this is achieved through a patient centric approach and an informed consent process. Chiropractors bring the entire continuum of evidence to their practice. This includes evidence informed practice, practitioner experience and patient outcome; CAAN supports research, practitioner education and public education to enable this to occur on a day to day basis.

There is a significant body of Australian and world-wide research in and about chiropractic that supports its place in health care. If the same lens and bar was applied to all health professions that is being focused on chiropractors, the public discussion would shift and people would be asking questions of interest and balance of all health interventions not just chiropractic. There are many current and past cases of significant harm in other health professions, both systemic and in isolation, that are before AHPRA and are subject to government inquiry. Chiropractors provide a low risk modality of treatment but like all health professions, it has its risks and these are considered when treatment is provided. If the current focus of levels of evidence in intervention is applied equitably to all health professions, then there will be concerns with the role or treatments that some health professions have in the ongoing care of the public. This has been exemplified by recent government reviews.

Chiropractors represent 1% of the registered Australian healthcare workforce and deliver patient centric services to over 300,000 Australians every week who seek choice in their healthcare. These services are delivered with minimal public harm by university educated, registered healthcare providers who understand the privilege and obligation that is inherent in patient care. As in all professions, there are some practitioners who may not practice at the standard required and CAAN works with the regulatory bodies to ensure this is minimised. CAAN encourages the same scrutiny to be applied to all and to enable Australians to pursue chiropractic care as part of an integrated approach to their healthcare.

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