



TE POARI KAIKOROHITI O AOTEAROA,
THE CHIROPRACTIC BOARD OF NEW ZEALAND

COMPETENCE STANDARDS

FOR CHIROPRACTORS PRACTISING IN AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND



Forword

Te Poari Kaikorohiti o Aotearoa, the Chiropractic Board is pleased to publish updated its competence standards for Chiropractors practising in Aotearoa New Zealand. These replace the *Competency-Based Standards for Chiropractors* published 2010 and are enforceable from 01 April 2024.

Setting professional standards is a key legal function of the Board. Although, they are fully our responsibility, we want the chiropractic profession to aspire to achieve them. To this end we have engaged and consulted since 2020 to develop current standards that can be reasonably expected from chiropractors' practice.

Chiropractic competence is the ability of a registered chiropractor to fulfil the chiropractic role safely and effectively. The Professional Standards detailed in this document are those which the public and the profession may expect a competent Chiropractor to meet. Chiropractors use their knowledge, skills, and judgement in a variety of ways, but must meet the Professional Standards. This revision provides a less prescriptive, more holistic set of standards and competencies for all chiropractors to use and measure themselves against.

Staying competent and registered as a chiropractor in Aotearoa New Zealand

This document describes the actions and abilities you need to stay competent as a Chiropractor and registered with the Board.

It sets out:

- 6 principles which describe the characteristics of a competent chiropractor and the abilities to be demonstrated in practice,
- the definition or introductory statement providing context for the listed competencies,
- 19 competency standards that describe the overarching practices required for chiropractors to work safely and effectively across chiropractic practice,
- 65 indicators that describe examples of behaviours or performance that competent chiropractors would be expected to display.

Your role as a chiropractor in Aotearoa New Zealand

Aotearoa New Zealand is culturally and ethnically diverse, and the many cultures that make up our communities include a variety of approaches and perspectives to healthcare. Each patient and practitioner bring their own culture and experience to a consultation.

Recognising that culture plays an important role in how patients and practitioners interact is the foundation of providing culturally safe care. Culture dimensions may include but are not limited to: Indigenous status, age or generation, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, religious or spiritual belief, and disability. Culture and identities can change over the course of a lifetime.

Culturally safe care involves practitioners recognising the power imbalance between themselves and their patients, and the potential impact of their own culture on the interactions they have with patients. It is important for practitioners to recognise this dynamic and to actively challenge unconscious biases that may influence the way they care for a patient. These biases can contribute to systemic inequality in experiences and outcomes of care for minority groups in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Culturally safe care allows for the patient to be involved in decision-making about their own care so that treatment plans fit within both cultural context and the best clinical pathway. A chiropractor must create culturally safe environments for chiropractic practice and build and maintain relationships with patients from diverse cultural backgrounds.

Te Tiriti o Waitangi

The introduction of the [New Zealand Public Health and Disability Act 2000](#) confirms the place of Te Tiriti o Waitangi within the health sector as fundamental to the improvement of Māori health.

The health and disability system is committed to fulfilling the relationship between the Crown and Māori under Te Tiriti o Waitangi. Meeting our responsibilities as a health system is necessary if we are to realise the aims of [He Korowai Oranga: Māori Health Strategy](#) and achieve outcomes for the health and disability system as a whole.

[Whakamaua Māori Health Action Plan 2020-2025](#) encourages everyone in the health

and disability system, as contributors to Māori wellbeing, to work collaboratively, to think beyond narrow definitions of health and to provide high-quality and effective health services.

Culturally safe and competent care involves ensuring the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi are integrated into chiropractic practice. The Crown affirms that Māori – as tangata whenua – hold a unique place in our country. The Board is committed to ensuring the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi are fully recognised across all elements of chiropractic practice and underpin these professional standards (see the Board's Policy on [Standards on Cultural Competence](#)).

Patient and public expectations of a chiropractor

A key aspect of a chiropractor's professional conduct is ensuring that patients are provided with the information needed to enable informed consent. Chiropractors must ensure that patients are actively involved in their own care.

[The Code of Health and Disability Consumers Rights](#) (the Code) enshrines patients' rights, as well as compliance obligations from the provider. In addition to the Code, in the Board's Code of Ethics provides patient and the public with information on what ethical standards they can expect chiropractors to meet. The Professional Standards are complementary to and reinforce these fundamental rights and obligations.

Public safety is the Board's absolute priority. If a patient believes a chiropractor is not meeting the Professional Standards described in this document, they should raise these concerns with the chiropractor in the first instance. If the matter is not resolved, the patient can: raise the concerns with the chiropractor's employer; report the concern to the Registrar of the New Zealand Chiropractic Board or; report their concern the Office of the Health and Disability Commissioner.

Matters related to health information privacy and security should be referred to the Office of the Privacy Commissioner. More information regarding the Board's complaint management process is available on the Board's website.

Professional Responsibility

Professional Responsibility requires a chiropractor to comply with all legal requirements, professional standards, and codes of conduct whilst providing chiropractic care. Chiropractors are respectful, ethical, culturally safe, compassionate, and always practise with integrity. This includes being accountable for their actions; and demonstrating conduct, attitudes, and decisions within the chiropractic scope of practice.

Standard 1:

Practice according to Aotearoa New Zealand legal requirements

- 1.1 Complies with relevant New Zealand Chiropractic Board Code of Ethics, scope of practice and policies that regulate chiropractic conduct and practice.
- 1.2 Complies with relevant Aotearoa New Zealand law, codes, standards, and other regulatory policies.

Standard 2:

Demonstrate professional and ethical integrity

- 2.1 Demonstrates self-awareness of the strengths and limitations of their own professional expertise and competence.
- 2.2 Seeks professional support and peer review when necessary.
- 2.3 Applies professional standards, including ethical principles to the practice of chiropractic.
- 2.4 Applies principles of confidentiality and privacy.

Standard 3:

Recognise and implement appropriate strategies to manage physical and mental health and resilience

- 3.1 Demonstrates a practice of self-care by identifying and recognising factors that impact health and well-being and takes appropriate steps to mitigate health risks that affect the ability to provide competent chiropractic care.

Chiropractic Expertise

Chiropractic Expertise directs a chiropractor – with patient consent – to gather and record information to determine if and how they might care for their patient. A chiropractor will adapt care and management to patient needs at all times. This can be done by monitoring and evaluating progress and health outcomes so they can modify care accordingly. This journey is a professional partnership, based on integrity and trust between patient and chiropractor. The patient's needs and best interests are always at the forefront of care.

Standard 4:

Obtain health information

- 4.1 Clearly outlines the need for and process of the chiropractic assessment.
- 4.2 Obtains relevant health history and health status with patient consent
- 4.3 Identifies and considers individual health risk factors and health determinants.
- 4.4 Records and maintains accurate, consistent, and legible patient information, care, and management.
- 4.5 Ensures the safe and secure storage of patient records.

Standard 5:

Obtain informed consent

- 5.1 Obtains and records informed consent from the patient prior to examining or commencing chiropractor care.
- 5.2 Demonstrates respect and understanding when outlining care and management options. This includes likely outcomes, potential risks versus benefits, alternative care possibilities (including no care), costs, timeframes, co-management, or referral where necessary.

Standard 6:*Perform a clinical examination*

- 6.1 Performs a relevant examination in a respectful and conscientious manner.
- 6.2 When appropriate, selects imaging or other procedures to further the understanding of health status and/or working diagnosis based on sound clinical reasoning, relevant clinical practice guidelines, and/or clinical decision-making tools.

Standard 7:*Develop a clinical impression*

- 7.1 Integrates knowledge and interprets clinical information to inform decisions regarding care, management, or referral.
- 7.2 Identifies care and management options.
- 7.3 Formulates a chiropractic care and management plan that is patient-centred and evidenced-informed.
- 7.4 Considers and seeks concurrent care or referral of the patient where appropriate.

Standard 8:*Deliver safe and effective chiropractic care*

- 8.1 Delivers attentive, skilful, safe, and effective care, taking into consideration the individual patient.
- 8.2 Modifies and adapts chiropractic care and management for individuals according to health status, condition, age, and patient preference.
- 8.3 Uses an evidence-informed approach to practice in planning, delivering, and evaluating care.

Standard 9:

Continuously monitor, evaluate, and adapt chiropractic care

- 9.1 Monitors and documents patients' progress towards achieving planned health outcomes.
- 9.2 Reviews and adapts chiropractic care continuously to allow for most effective patient outcomes.
- 9.3 Collaborates with, or refers to, other health care professionals if appropriate and/or if care is not proceeding as expected.
- 9.4 Manages adverse effects of chiropractic care where appropriate by acknowledging, managing, or seeking advice. This includes emergency procedures or referral where necessary

Standard 10:

Utilise health promotion and disease prevention strategies

- 10.1 Integrates clinically applicable prevention, early detection, health maintenance and chronic condition management, where it is clinically relevant to that patient.

Communication and Collaboration

Communication and collaboration ensure that chiropractic care is underpinned by a respectful partnership between the chiropractor and patient. A chiropractor will be a health advocate and work with other professionals, where necessary, and the patient and their family/whānau to achieve the best outcome for their patient.

The principle of communication and collaboration requires a chiropractor to communicate in an effective, appropriate, and respectful manner at all times. Chiropractors put patient needs and culturally safe communication and collaboration at the forefront of their practice. A patient will be given time to consider, discuss and understand their options before they proceed with chiropractic care. Additionally, a chiropractor may recommend working with other professionals – when the patient consents – to provide the most appropriate care.

Standard 11:

Use professional, appropriate, effective, and clear communication

- 11.1 Manages information to meet legal obligations and professional standards.
- 11.2 Listens; responds; and demonstrates effective, safe, and appropriate verbal and non-verbal communication and interpersonal skills.
- 11.3 Communicates with patients and family/whānau in an appropriate, empathetic, inclusive, and empowering manner.
- 11.4 Adapts written, verbal, and non-verbal communication to reflect culture, comprehension, age and health literacy of patients and relevant others
- 11.5 Ensures patient is aware of all aspects of healthcare for best and/or desired clinical outcomes, including costs.

Standard 12:

Engage in collaborative and patient-centred care in a manner that the patient determines is culturally safe

- 12.1 Applies a patient-centred approach to care by recognising and responding to diversity in the population.
- 12.2 Works effectively and collaboratively with patients and their family/whānau in a manner that acknowledges and respects the patient's dignity, culture, rights, and goals of chiropractic care.
- 12.3 Provides an opportunity for patients, family/whānau, and other health providers to express their opinions and views on care and give them appropriate consideration.

Standard 13:

Record information factually and accurately maintain clear and concise records to ensure security and confidentiality

- 13.1 Obtains and records informed consent as outlined in the NZCB Code of Ethics.
- 13.2 Complies with all applicable confidentiality, privacy, and security requirements in relation to recorded information.
- 13.3 Adapts to advancing technology to proactively maintain and enhance safety and security of personal information, as outlined in the Privacy Act 2020.
- 13.4 Ensures all healthcare records are a factual, complete, and timely record of the care that is delivered.
- 13.5 Records clinical data, outcomes, and other information appropriately, accurately, legibly and in patient-centred language where practicable.

Standard 14:

Establish and maintain collaborative working relationships

- 14.1 Establishes and maintains professional relationships characterised by trust, respect, empathy, and safety.
- 14.2 Values and is knowledgeable of the roles, expertise, and skills of other members of the health care community.
- 14.3 Collaborates with health professionals, clients, and other stakeholders to establish and achieve common goals.
- 14.4 Endeavours to address barriers to constructive professional collaboration.

Scholarship

Scholarship is integral to the ongoing development of best practice when providing chiropractic care. In a profession whose technical knowledge continues to expand, a chiropractor must demonstrate a lifelong commitment to continuing education.

The principle of scholarship requires a chiropractor to routinely critically appraise and summarise evidence and evaluate their practice. A chiropractor will be a self-directed learner and reflective practitioner.

Standard 15:

Ownership of self-directed learning

- 15.1 Demonstrates responsibility for self-reflection and can identify ongoing learning needs and undertakes relevant action to address them.
- 15.2 Applies continuing professional development and life-long learning, as outlined in the Continuing Professional Development Policy.
- 15.3 Demonstrates awareness of evidence informed care in respect to technologies and advancements in chiropractic practice.
- 15.4 Uses education to empower themselves and others.
- 15.5 Audits and monitors adherence to standards.
- 15.6 Facilitates safe and effective learning with other professionals, students, patients, and relevant others, with consideration of their level of knowledge, health literacy, and role.

Management and Leadership

Management and Leadership includes risk management, quality assurance, and continuous improvement. A chiropractor must be able to demonstrate effective management skills and leadership and encourage a work environment that supports the health and safety of the practice environment.

Chiropractors are proactive and constructive when faced with potential or actual conflict, including interactions outlined in the NZCB Code of Ethics. Chiropractors identify both problems and solutions, so they may lead change that contributes to a safe, effective, efficient, and professional practice.

Standard 16:

Provide a safe and appropriate environment

- 16.1 Complies with work health and safety obligations and legislation relevant to their practice and environment.
- 16.2 Applies principles of risk management and quality improvement.

Standard 17:

Deal effectively with actual and potential conflict

- 17.1 Demonstrates understanding of complaints processes and communicates these effectively.
- 17.2 Applies a constructive, proactive, and professional manner when dealing with actual, perceived and potential conflicts.
- 17.3 identifies problems and solutions and applies this to their professional practice.

Cultural Safety

In the Aotearoa New Zealand context, *cultural safety* begins with the recognition and integration of the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi into care. Upholding Te Tiriti o Waitangi is central to cultural safety and ensuring the health and disability system delivers more equitable outcomes for Māori. Achieving Māori wellbeing goals and aspirations in a mana enhancing way, are priorities across the whole health and disability system. Shifting cultural and social norms is key to reducing health inequities and health loss for Māori.

A chiropractor who provides culturally safe care uses their awareness and skills to ensure that chiropractic care is accessible, and beneficial for patients and family/whānau from all cultural backgrounds. A chiropractor must recognise the impact of their own culture on the interactions they have with patients and recognise where power imbalances may exist to enable a more accurate picture of the patient and family/whānau health needs. Culturally safe practice means delivering chiropractic care in line with the patients' values and beliefs.

Standard 18:

Demonstrate an understanding of the importance of Te Tiriti o Waitangi

- 18.1 Demonstrates an understanding of Te Tiriti o Waitangi, the historical context of Te Tiriti o Waitangi, and its place in the wider health system (He Korowai Oranga, Whakamaua).
- 18.2 Understands there are inequitable health outcomes for Māori, the impacts of racism, colonisation and power imbalance on Māori, and the current state of inequitable access to care and hauora outcomes.
- 18.3 Understands Māori and other cultural protocols of and approaches to wellness and health. Continually builds knowledge of these models with the aim of integrating them into practice.
- 18.4 Develops an understanding of Māori language and the ability to incorporate the basics of the Māori language into practice.

Standard 19:

Demonstrate culturally competent professional practice

- 19.1 Understands cultural safety is essential to improving health outcomes for all patients and integrates culturally appropriate care into their practice.
- 19.2 Demonstrates the ability to build relationships across different cultures and practices in a culturally appropriate manner.
- 19.3 Understands and appreciates the importance of language and behaviour as a pathway to cultural awareness.
- 19.4 Demonstrates a critical awareness of their own inherent personal and professional cultural biases, paradigm, and perspectives.
- 19.5 Understands that a lack of cultural knowledge may impact on the delivery and quality of care for patients and family/whānau.
- 19.6 Can collaborate with other health providers on culturally competent practice.

Appendix 1: Development and review proces

Background

The first School of Chiropractic in New Zealand was established by the New Zealand Chiropractors Association in Auckland in 1993. The Chiropractic Board recognised that the School needed a standard upon which to establish its training programme and could either develop its own standards or adopt/modify existing competencies developed by another chiropractic regulatory body. The Board adopted the Australian Chiropractic Competency-based Standards (which Aotearoa New Zealand chiropractors had contributed to) and modified them for use in Aotearoa New Zealand.

The competencies were adopted by the Board on 12 February 1998 and further ratified in February 2006. This document was further altered to incorporate Aotearoa New Zealand legislative changes and was adopted in its present form in 2010.

2020-2021 Review

The Board formed a Competency-based Standards Review Committee (known as the Review Committee) made up of:

- Two chiropractors
- Two lay members
- A representative from the NZCC
- A representative from the NZCA,
- Administrative/regulatory input (i.e., the General Manager/Registrar);

In 2020-2021, the Competency-based Standards Review Committee (known as the Review Committee) examined the Professional Standards for Chiropractors (2010). The Review Committee performed a comparative analysis by reviewing international

Chiropractic Professional Standards, such as those from Australia and the United Kingdom. The following standards informed much of the Committee's comparative analysis:

- Chiropractic Accreditation & Competency Standards CCEA 2017
- The Code – Standards of conduct, performance, and ethics for chiropractors (General Chiropractic Council UK, 2016)
- Professional standards & competencies for Dieticians (Dieticians Board 2017)
- Physiotherapy practice thresholds in Australia & Aotearoa NZ (May 2015)
- Competence standards for the Pharmacy profession (2017)

The Review Committee also sought information on trends for competency standards, which helped inform some of the key approaches outlined in the context section.

The review concluded that the Professional Standards for Chiropractors needed to be more flexible, contemporary, patient-centred, and holistic.

The Review Committee worked to define common principles, inspired largely by the Dietician's professional standards and competencies, and collaborated on draft content. The revised Professional Standards were developed with the intention of wide consultation with registered chiropractors and other stakeholders and interested parties.

Following consultation and consequent revisions, the Professional Standards will be presented to the Board for review and sign off. The intention is to publish the new Professional Standards in 2023.





Acknowledgment

The Board would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who over the past few years worked on these standards. Especially the Competency-based Standards Review Committee members and Allen + Clarke.

