

Public protection is everyone's responsibility

While we often think of the statutory regulators as having the responsibility to protect the public, the reality is that there is a duty binding on all stakeholders.

The International Chiropractic Regulatory Society is the association of those involved directly as well as peripherally with the protection of the public. Regulation is not limited to issuing licenses and ensuring compliance with the code of conduct. The “machine” has many moving parts, and is constantly evolving.

Here are a few of the latest trends and projects underway throughout the world:

Equality, diversity and inclusion

The Black Lives Matter movement has provided a long-overdue platform to discuss racial inequality. This important conversation continues to expand to create greater awareness of the isolation that has affected many marginalized communities. Some regulatory agencies are looking toward requiring sensitivity training of licensed professionals as part of required continuing professional development. Ensuring culturally safe and respectful practice is essential. Every action that can be taken to better involve patients actively and effectively in their own health care positively impacts the entire chiropractic profession. Your ideas are welcome to improve the framework of regulation to support this critical effort.

Competency standards

How can regulators (and more importantly the public) know what constitutes competent practice once the practitioner is licensed or registered? Does a break in active practice pose a risk to patients? How long of a hiatus is a concern? Technology changes daily, enhancing diagnostic capabilities, record keeping, and practice itself: how important is it for seasoned practitioners to be “fluent” in technology? What constitute best practices in diagnostic imaging? These and other

competency requirements are under review in many jurisdictions.

How should chiropractic be taught, and how do we measure educational effectiveness?

Educational programs are easing back into some in-person instruction as the threat posed by the pandemic becomes more manageable. But some surprisingly novel and effective outcomes were discovered via the necessary distance learning we were thrown into. How can we make some educational lemonade out of these trying times? Of course, the responsibility for ensuring educational effectiveness lies with the institutions and the accrediting bodies, but legislation places the ultimate accountability with the regulatory boards.

Many other challenges must be faced directly if we are to ensure that the public is protected: evaluating evidence in practice, securing informed consent, providing privacy to patients to maintain their dignity, developing collaborative practice with other professions, integrating chiropractic into the care of animals, enhancing postgraduate training, and streamlining practitioner mobility are just a few of the current issues.

In the meantime, we welcome a number of new educational programs, emerging accreditation in South America, and the formal launch of registration of chiropractors in Malaysia. Regulatory boards are constantly developing new systems and resource materials to help practitioners comply with their legal obligations. Visit us at www.chiroregulation.org for more information.

Thank you to Donna Cohen, Executive Director of ICRS, for providing this report.

