

Newfoundland and Labrador Standard of Practice for The Provision of
Dry Needling and Needle Based Acupuncture as Adjunctive
Modalities in Chiropractic Clinical Practice.

Dr. Carl Eustace

Education Committee Chair, NLCB

Table of Contents

| | |
|--------------------------|---|
| Definitions | 3 |
| Purpose and objective | 3 |
| Training Requirements | 3 |
| Equipment | 4 |
| Insurance | 4 |
| Record keeping | 4 |
| Advertising | 5 |
| Grandfathering provision | 5 |
| Enforceability | 5 |

Definitions

For the purposes of this standard of practice, the following definitions will apply:

Acupuncture is a modality of treatment, directed by a qualified health care provider, that involves inserting thin needles into specific points on the body to stimulate nerves, muscles, and connective tissue to relieve pain and other health issues.

Dry needling is a modality of treatment, directed by a qualified health care provider, that uses thin, solid needles to penetrate the skin and target underlying myofascial trigger points and other soft tissues to provide pain and spasm relief.

Purpose and objective

The purpose of this standard of practice is to provide clear guidelines with respect to the practice of acupuncture and dry needling within the chiropractic profession of Newfoundland and Labrador, to promote safety, efficacy, and compliance with regulatory standards. Chiropractors are required to familiarize themselves with these guidelines to uphold the integrity of chiropractic care and patient welfare.

A chiropractor will only be entitled to perform needle-based acupuncture or dry needling within their office on fulfillment of the prerequisites and procedures set out in this standard of practice.

Chiropractors who use acupuncture or dry needling within their practice must ensure that they are administering it within the chiropractic scope of practice and based on a chiropractic consultation, examination, diagnosis or clinical impression and prescribed plan of care.

Training Requirements

Performing the act of dry needling is considered, by the NLCB (Newfoundland and Labrador Chiropractic Board), to pose an equivalent level of risk to the public as needle-based acupuncture. As such, they require a similar *level* of adherence to the educational competency and professional requirements as outlined within this practice standard. With this in mind, the following are the requirements for chiropractors who wish to utilize acupuncture and dry needling as part of their chiropractic practice:

A chiropractor who is on the general or courtesy register and demonstrates competence through the successful completion of an educational program in needle acupuncture or dry needling, approved by the NLCB, and has received notification from the registrar that their needle acupuncture or dry needling authorization has been approved may, in the practice of chiropractic, and in compliance with regulatory requirements, be authorized to perform *and supervise* the restricted activity of invading body tissue below the dermis or mucous membrane for the purpose of needle acupuncture or dry needling.

Registrants must provide, upon request by the Registrar of NLCB, evidence of completing a minimum of 200 course hours in an acupuncture training program approved by the NLCB, a

minimum of 50 of hours of which must have been done in person during the clinical portion of their course.¹

Similarly, upon request by the Registrar of NLCB, registrants should provide evidence of completing a minimum of 50 course hours in a dry needling training program approved by the NLCB, a minimum of 24 hours of which must have been done in person, during the clinical portion of their course.²

The registrant must provide evidence to the NLCB that their acupuncture training has been received through an accredited program such as those offered at Council on Chiropractic Education (C.C.E.) accredited institutions, through the Acupuncture Foundation of Canada Institute, or other program(s) approved by the NLCB.

Equipment

While utilizing needle-based acupuncture or dry needling in their practice, the practitioner must ensure that the following supplies are maintained within the clinical space:

1. single-use (disposable) sterile acupuncture needles;
2. An appropriate sterilization apparatus for needle injectors where appropriate;
3. A patient audible safety alert device;
4. Protective gloves;
5. Alcohol swabs/ betadine swabs/ stanhexidene swabs; and
6. A hazardous waste disposal container.

The registrant must adhere to aseptic techniques and infection control standards including sterilization, hand hygiene, barriers, decontamination, and environmental control consistent with guidelines from the Public Health Agency of Canada.

Liability Coverage

The practitioner utilizing needle-based acupuncture or dry needling as an adjunctive procedure in their practice must provide evidence that they have professional liability coverage specifically for acupuncture; to the satisfaction of the Registrar of the NLCB.

The registrant must assess the risks and benefits associated with needle-based acupuncture or dry needling and communicate these to patients under their care. The regulated member must also establish and apply critical event management procedures for potential adverse events associated with the use of needle-based acupuncture or dry needling in practice.

Needle based acupuncture and dry needling require specific informed consent, which may be combined with appropriate and current chiropractic informed consent forms such as those designed by the Canadian Chiropractic Protective Association.

¹Similar to the 200 hour Level I and II Acupuncture Canada course in acupuncture.

² Similar to the Level I Dry Needling course from Acupuncture Canada.

Record keeping

The practitioner must maintain patient records pertaining directly to the provision of acupuncture and/or dry needling, and obtain signed *informed consent* directly pertaining to acupuncture and/or dry needling and be able to provide these records, upon request by and to the satisfaction of the Registrar of the NLCB.

Advertising

Practitioners regulated by the NLCB must represent themselves as chiropractors authorized to use acupuncture or dry needling in clinical practice, as part of a broader chiropractic treatment plan of care outlined within the framework of the Chiropractors Act, 2009 (SNL 2009, c C-14.01) and associated regulations and by-laws of the NLCB, and not as a stand-alone plan of care.

As well, Chiropractors must avoid any representations, including for billing purposes, that would lead a member of the public to believe that they are an “Acupuncturist”, as this is a protected title reserved for a member of the College of Traditional Chinese Medicine Practitioners and Acupuncturists licensed through the Newfoundland and Labrador Council of Health Professionals (NLCHP) and who are regulated under the Newfoundland and Labrador Health Professions Act, SNL2010 Chapter H-1.02.

The general public may also confuse titles such as “acupuncture provider” and “acupuncture clinic” as a variation of “acupuncturist”. Therefore, it would be more accurate for a member to list acupuncture as an adjunctive therapy that is provided, in the context of providing chiropractic care.

In addition, practitioners regulated by the NLCB must not list or promote acupuncture as a specialty or use terms such as “specializing” or any other term that would lead the public to believe that the practitioner is a specialist unless that practitioner is a member of a specialty college recognized by the Federation of Canadian Chiropractic (FCC).

Finally, certificates of acupuncture and/or dry needling training must be visibly displayed at the practitioner's place of work.

Grandfathering provision

Chiropractors who were actively using acupuncture and/or dry-needling as an adjunctive therapy and in good standing with the NLCB prior to the effective date of this standard of practice for needle-based acupuncture or dry needling may be exempt from the requirement to complete the two hundred hour training course for acupuncture, or the fifty hour course for dry needling, described under this standard of practice if the Registrar and/or the Continuing Education Committee are satisfied that they meet a minimum level of competency to safely administer these modalities. Those practitioners shall be considered qualified and authorized to practice under their prior certification and experience, on an individual basis, within the discretion of the Newfoundland and Labrador Chiropractic Board, based upon the member's level of training and experience in using those modalities in clinical practice.

Enforceability

Any complaints alleging a breach of this Standard of Practice by a registrant will be investigated pursuant to the provisions of the Chiropractic Act, 2009 (SNL 2009, c C-14.01) .

In the interest of public protection, the chiropractor's authorization to practice under this standard may be immediately suspended pending the outcome of the investigation, within the discretion of the registrar or the CAC.

This Standard of Practice comes into effect on October 31, 2025. In the event of any conflict between this standard and the Chiropractic Act, 2009 (SNL 2009, c C-14.01) or its associated regulations, the Act and regulations shall take precedence.