



THE STATE
of **ALASKA**
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COVID-19

Telemedicine in Chiropractic Practice in Alaska

&

Advertising Related to COVID-19 in Alaska

A Position Statement

**By the Current Alaska Board of Chiropractic
Examiners**

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Defining Telemedicine

From March 17, 2020 Medicare Telemedicine Health Care Provider Fact Sheet:

Medicare Coverage and Payment of Virtual Services

INTRODUCTION:

Telehealth, telemedicine, and related terms generally refer to the exchange of medical information from one site to another through electronic communication to improve a patient's health. Innovative uses of this kind of technology in the provision of healthcare is increasing. And with the emergence of the virus causing the disease COVID-19, there is an urgency to expand the use of technology to help people who need routine care, and keep vulnerable beneficiaries and beneficiaries with mild symptoms in their homes while maintaining access to the care they need. Limiting community spread of the virus, as well as limiting the exposure to other patients and staff members will slow viral spread.

Under President Trump's leadership, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) has broadened access to Medicare telehealth services so that beneficiaries can receive a wider range of services from their doctors without having to travel to a healthcare facility. These policy changes build on the regulatory flexibilities granted under the President's emergency declaration. CMS is expanding this benefit on a temporary and emergency basis under the 1135 waiver authority and Coronavirus Preparedness and Response Supplemental Appropriations Act. The benefits are part of the broader effort by CMS and the White House Task Force to ensure that all Americans – particularly those at high-risk of complications from the virus that causes the disease COVID-19 – are aware of easy-to-use, accessible benefits that can help keep them healthy while helping to contain the community spread of this virus.

Medicare and private insurance companies are making similar allowances such as waiving deductibles and copays for telemedicine interactions. Each practitioner is responsible to learn and understand the policies and procedures of the insurance companies they work with.

CHIROPRACTIC SCOPE OF PRACTICE IN ALASKA

AS 08.20.230 **Practice of Chiropractic.** The practice of chiropractic (1) addresses ramifications of health and disease *with a special emphasis* (not exclusive) on biomechanical analysis, interpretation and treatment of the structural and functional integrity of skeletal joint structure and physiological efficiency of the nervous system as these matters relate to subluxation complex....”

AS 08.20.100 **Practice of Chiropractic.** (b) A person licensed under this chapter may

(1) analyze, diagnose, or treat the chiropractic condition of a patient by chiropractic core methodology **or** by ancillary methodology;

(2) accept referrals for treatment by chiropractic core methodology or by ancillary methodology;

(3) consult on chiropractic matters;

(4) Refer patients to other health care professionals;

(5) perform within the scope of chiropractic practice, physical examination of children for school physical examination and preparticipation for physical examinations for sports and school activities;

(6-11);

AS 08.230.900 (6) “chiropractic core methodology” means the treatment and prevention of subluxation complex by chiropractic adjustment as indicated by a chiropractic diagnosis and includes the determination of contra-indications to chiropractic adjustment, the normal regimen and rehabilitation of the patient, and patient education procedures; chiropractic core methodology does not incorporate the use of prescription drugs, surgery, needle acupuncture, obstetrics, or x-ray for therapeutic purposes;

(7) “chiropractic diagnosis” means an examination of a patient conducted by a chiropractor...;

(8) “chiropractic examination” means an examination of a patient conducted by a person licensed under this chapter...;

AS 08.20.900. Definitions. (1) “ancillary methodology” means employing within the scope of chiropractic practice, *with appropriate training and education* (italics added), those methods, procedures, modalities, devices, and measures commonly used by trained and licensed health care providers...;

TELEMEDICINE WITHIN SCOPE OF ALASKA CHIROPRACTIC PRACTICE

All chiropractic physicians in Alaska have the privilege and obligation to diagnose all conditions of the human body through the process of examination. Chiropractic physicians may order all diagnostic tests, including taking and interpreting X-rays, interpreting advanced imaging, ordering, taking and interpreting clinical labs, and so forth.

Telemedicine has been adopted by the Federal Government and other major health insurance providers as an acceptable alternative to patients being physically present in the doctor’s work place for (1) examination and reevaluation for ongoing care, (2) dispensing home care/exercise instruction, and (3) consulting and

prescribing medications and durable medical goods (braces and splints). These services are well within normal functions and practice of chiropractors;

Telemedicine can be restricted by health insurance providers to established doctor-patient relationships that began by direct examination in clinical offices. Medicare and Medicaid and other major health care providers have extended that privilege to conducting the initial contact--history, examination and treatment to be conducted via telemedicine, thereby allowing the doctor-patient relationship to begin over extended physical distance. Allowing health care professionals to initiate the doctor-patient relationship for COVID-19 from a distance and continue treatment through telemedicine is appropriate given the nature of the virus and attempts to limit its spread. All other conditions should have the relationship established by personal examination.

Reviewing the extensive training in all aspects of diagnosis--imaging and laboratory sciences--Chiropractic Physicians are significantly better qualified than nurse-practitioners or physician's assistants and at least equally trained as medical doctors to render accurate diagnosis in a telephonic healthcare relationship, and well-qualified to either treat or refer patients for appropriate care.

Telemedicine is well within the scope of practice for chiropractic physicians. The board reminds those who engage in this service to remember appropriate documentation is required from a legal and compensation standpoint. Proper E&M.

Additionally, regular review of state medical and CDC procedures for healthcare provider and patient safety and properly examining, testing, treating and referring patients with conditions related to COVID-19 is the responsibility of the treating chiropractic physician.

Advertising Related to COVID-19

Currently, no research-supported cures or preventions exist for the novel COVID-19 virus. Neither the FDA nor the CDC have authored any support or approval for any nutritional, homeopathic, pharmaceutical or procedural treatment that prevents, mitigates or cures COVID-19.

Advertising that any medical or ancillary treatment, procedure or regimen can or will boost an individual's immune system to prevent contraction, imply that a certain concoction will mitigate, or a procedure will cure COVID-19 is considered by this board and the State of Alaska to be false advertising, and subject to prosecution.

As the chiropractic profession, we may not advertise or inform patients on our web sites, through social media or in person that immediate chiropractic treatment or ongoing care imbues the immune system with any extraordinary strength or endurance, that chiropractic adjusting "releases white blood cells" or "empowers

the immune system". No significant scientific research can be found supporting such positions. Please represent the best of ethics and science of our profession and not make inappropriate or false claims to our patients or to the public.