

Intraoral Treatment of TMJ and Adjacent Tissues, and Internal Coccyx Manipulation in Pediatrics: A Position Statement from the Current Alaska State Board of Chiropractic Examiners

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A recent inquiry was received by the Board as to the legitimacy of Chiropractic Physicians in the State of Alaska performing intraoral TMJ and related tissue treatment, and the attitude of the Board as to the appropriateness of internal coccyx adjustment in pediatrics. The Board responds:

Core chiropractic training specifically addresses the Temporomandibular Joint (TMJ) as one of many joints in the body that is appropriate to manipulate, and chiropractic students are taught under direct clinical supervision how to adjust this joint for a multitude of conditions, as well as treat the surrounding tissues. An intraoral approach is one of the techniques learned and practiced by Chiropractic Physicians. This Board asserts that Chiropractic Physicians in the state of Alaska are qualified to address the TMJ and adjacent tissues through an intraoral approach, not respecting any claims of exclusivity by any other professional group.

Adjustment of the coccyx is taught as core methodology at all chiropractic schools as an integral portion of spinal health and care. All chiropractic students are taught to manipulate the coccyx, utilizing external and internal techniques under direct clinical supervision. Chiropractic students are required to demonstrate proficiency in these

techniques as prerequisite to graduation. This Board asserts it is within the scope of practice for Chiropractic Physicians in the State of Alaska to manipulate the coccyx both externally and internally, of adults, adolescents and pediatrics, as clinical judgement may dictate.

Given that position, internal coccyx adjustment is a delicate procedure both physically and emotionally, and great care should be exercised to make sure the patient and their attendant understand fully the objective and scope of the procedure. Education with models, diagrams or video presentations helps the patient to understand the procedure. Appropriate gowning and lubrication are paramount. Consideration of a child's size and the practitioner is critical, and large fingers would be appropriate for referral to a female chiropractor or OB/GYN. Appropriate clinical practice dictates at least one other individual should accompany the patient and physician in the treatment room, and the recommendation of this Board is that a Clinical Assistant familiar with the procedure should be present with the patient and parent. Always use your best clinical judgement.