

Practice Standards

College of Acupuncture of Prince Edward Island

These Practice Standards have been approved by the College of Acupuncture of Prince Edward Island and are enforceable under the discipline process of the College.

In all communication, representation, advertising and promotion, whether verbally, written, in print, or in social media, registrants of the College may refer to themselves as “Acupuncturist”, or “Registered Acupuncturist”. The designation, “R.Ac.” may be appended to the registrant’s name. The terms “Licensed”, “Regulated” or “Certified” may also be used. These are the only terms, credentials and references permitted under the College’s Regulations and no one in Prince Edward Island but registrants of the College may refer to themselves as such.

1. Competence

Competence refers to the combined knowledge, skills, attitudes and judgment required to provide professional services. The term “Traditional Chinese Medicine” encompasses all substyles which have developed from the great body of Chinese Medicine.

Registrants may practice within any of a number of distinct styles of acupuncture including, but not limited to Chinese, Japanese, Korean and Vietnamese styles.

Registrants may also practice any number of microsystems including those of the ear, hand, foot and scalp.

Registrants

- base their practice on the distinct body of knowledge of Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) and on content from other related health sciences, including but not limited to,
 - Yin and Yang,
 - The Five Phases (Wu Xing),
 - The Six Conformations (Liu Qi) and the Six Stages of Qi Transformation (Liu jing),
 - Eight Principles Pattern Discrimination (Ba Gang Bian Zheng),
 - Qi, Blood and Body Fluids Pattern Discrimination (Qi, Xue, Jin Ye Bian Zheng),
 - Viscera and Bowels Pattern Discrimination (Zang Fu Bian Zheng),
 - The Twelve Main Channels, the 8 Extraordinary Vessels, the Divergent Channels, the Sinew Vessels,
 - Disease Evil Cause Pattern Discrimination (Bing Yin Bian Zheng),
 - Externally Contracted Febrile Disease Six Channel Pattern Discrimination (Liu Fen Bian Zheng),
 - Externally Contracted Febrile Disease Four Aspects Pattern Discrimination (Wei, Qi, Ying, Xue Bian Zheng),
 - Three Burners Pattern Discrimination (San Jiao Bian Zheng),
 - The Seven Emotions,

- identify patient's actual or potential diagnoses through TCM differential diagnosis, differentiate syndromes, plan interventions, perform planned interventions and evaluate client outcomes,

- use assessment skills central to TCM, namely inspection, listening, inquiry, palpation and physical assessment, to gather information about patient status,
- plan care based on assessment findings, diagnoses, differentiation of syndromes and patterns, cause(s) and extent of disturbance,
- perform planned interventions in accordance with the body of TCM principles, theories, procedures, and these practice standards,
- evaluate patient response to interventions and revise the interventions as necessary,
- document timely and accurate reports of relevant observations,
- actively pursue continuing education to maintain and enhance competence in existing and emerging areas of their practice, including but not being limited by minimum regulatory requirements for continuing education,
- take appropriate actions which may include referral to another health care provider when they do not have the required competence to deliver quality patient-centred care,
- maintain their own physical and mental well-being.

2. Advertising and Promotion

Advertising and Promotion refers to any messaging under the registrant's control that communicates information about the registrant, the registrant's practice, services offered by the registrant, and fee information.

Advertising and Promotion must, to the highest degree possible, be

- factual,
- accurate,
- verifiable,
- understandable,
- professionally appropriate, and
- limited only to services the registrant is competent to perform.

Advertising and Promotion must not include any information that

- is misleading,
- includes non-relevant, false, or unverifiable information,
- generates unrealistic expectations,
- makes unsubstantiated claims,
- guarantees a successful outcome,
- directly questions or undermines the competence of other providers or the services of other clinics or facilities.

3. Communication

Registrants effectively and responsibly communicate with their patients, and where necessary, their families, caregivers, and other third parties such as other professionals and insurance providers.

Registrants recognize that good communication skills are essential for

- establishing rapport and trust with the patient,
- formulating an assessment,
- delivering information,
- striving for mutual understanding, and
- facilitating a shared plan of care.

Registrants must provide clear and understandable information to the patient where and when appropriate, prior to, during and after treatment.

Registrants communicate clearly, effectively, professionally, and in a timely manner to support and promote quality services. This includes

- using respectful, open, clear, and honest communication in all professional interactions whether via spoken, written, or social media delivery,
- communicating effectively with patients to promote their understanding of proposed services including active listening, use of plain language, and encouraging questions,
- identifying potential barriers to effective communication and making a reasonable effort to address these barriers,
- documenting communications accurately, clearly, and professionally.

Registrants will not intentionally or knowingly mislead patients on any aspect of their care.

4. Consent and Confidentiality

The College requires that registrants have patients read and sign a general consent form before starting treatment. The consent form should be in clear, easy-to-understand language. The consent form should

- clearly state the patient's right to withdraw consent at any time,
- articulate the registrant's cancellation policy,
- guarantee confidentiality
- list all treatment modalities that may be used in treatment and clarify that the patient has a right to refuse any treatment modality,
- list clinic hygiene practices including single use sterile needles,

- refer the patient to the College website address for access to the Full **Standards of Practice** and **Code of Ethics** required by the Regulated Health Professions Act and under which Registrants are bound.

The signed and dated consent form is to be kept in the patient's file.

Registrants must have the patient's written consent before sharing personal health information with any third party, unless the disclosure is made pursuant to the *Health Information Act*, or any other enactment or by order of a court to disclose the information.

Registrants are bound by the confidentiality of all communication between registrant and patient and unless specific consent is given by the patient to divulge aspects of that communication to a specifically identified third party in a specific instance, that confidentiality will be fully honoured at all times.

5. Diagnosis and Treatment

Registrants

- are healthcare professionals who possess a fundamental body of knowledge and skills based in the principles and practices of TCM,
- apply these particular knowledge and skill sets to provide effective patient care through the differential diagnosis and treatment of patients,
- undertake diagnosis in Chinese Medicine through inspection (including traditional tongue diagnosis), listening (including auditory and olfactory), inquiry, palpation (including pulse-taking, and palpation of points, abdominal zones and channels) and physical assessment,

- provide treatment using a variety of tools and techniques including acupuncture with needle insertion, acupuncture with contact needling, contact moxibustion, electro-acupuncture, dry needling, cupping, network vessel pricking with lancets, plum blossom needling, magnets and other polarity agents, press balls, press tacks, sound, intradermals, gua sha dermal scraping, East Asian body work including tui na, acupressure, qi gong exercise, herbal therapies, nutritional supplementation, dietary and lifestyle counselling,
- do not provide diagnosis within the framework of modern biomedicine or any medical framework other than that of TCM unless they are additionally and separately qualified and licensed to do so,
- re-evaluate and monitor patient's responses throughout the course of interventions, making adjustments and discontinuing services that are no longer required or effective,
- make appropriate referrals when patient's needs are best addressed in collaboration with or by another provider.

6. Fees

Registrants

- set fees and charges that are reasonable for the service provided,
- may post a written fee schedule listing the fee for each service provided , charges for administrative services (such as copying records, completing forms,

preparing reports), late payment or interest charges, and charges for cancellations or missed appointments,

- must include, in any invoices or receipts for treatment
 - business name, address, phone number,
 - name of the person who provided the service and College registration number,
 - the invoice date and, if different, each date that the services were provided,
 - identification of the person receiving services from the registrant,
 - billed amount for the services.

7. Conflict of Interest

Registrants must ensure that patient's interests are always prioritized. Registrants are in a conflict of interest where it can reasonably be seen that they have a personal interest influencing their advice or conduct towards a patient.

The registrant shall avoid any situation that may give rise to a conflict of interest.

If a registrant discovers that they are in a conflict of interest, they must take appropriate steps to resolve or manage it. This could require ending the therapeutic relationship but depending on the circumstances, it may be appropriate to take one or more of the following steps:

- provide full disclosure of the conflict to the patient and other interested third parties,
- reaffirm to the patient that they have the right to decline services at any time, and suggesting alternatives,
- document steps in the patient's record to address the conflict.

8. Patient Records

Registrants shall do the following in connection with patient records:

- maintain the confidentiality of patient records and store records in a secure place,
- use the World Health nomenclature of acupuncture points (Geneva 1989 Revised), either alphanumeric or Chinese phonetic (pinyin) or both,
- retain all informed consent forms for each patient as part of the patient record,
- securely retain the patient record for at least seven (7) years after the patient receives treatment from or consults with the registrant,
- release patient records only as required by law or as authorized by the patient,
- document, in treatment notes, the main complaint, secondary complaints, diagnosis and assessment, clinical findings, signs and symptoms, changes in patient priorities or complaints during the course of treatment, treatment principle(s), acupuncture points used and all treatment modalities used.

9. Safety

Registrants ensure the safe and hygienic operation of their clinic in the following specific areas:

- General Clinic Housekeeping
 - a routine schedule is maintained for cleaning of all clinic surfaces.
- Clinical Contact Surfaces
 - cleaned daily with disinfectant,

- treatment tables are covered with new table paper or sheets for each patient.
- Hand Hygiene
 - hand washing is performed before and after all patient care and treatment.
- Clean Needle Technique which consists of the four-fold adherence to
 - hand hygiene,
 - single use factory-sterilised needles,
 - establishment of a clean field, and
 - safe disposal of needles after treatment.
- Safe Handling of Sharps and Disposal
 - disposal of used sharps immediately after treatment,
 - disposal in a puncture-proof, rigid container identified for sharps disposal.
- Cleaning of Equipment and Instruments
 - including but not limited to cupping cups, electric stimulation clippers, needle trays, forceps, tweezers.

To meet these requirements, registrants will be guided by the specifications detailed in the ***Safety Handbook for Alberta Acupuncturists (2024)***. This Handbook is available online at the College of Acupuncturists of Alberta website, acupuncturealberta.ca > College > Governance Documents > Other.

10. Draping

Registrants must equip their practice with adequate and clean draping materials for patients to use when treatment requires the removal of clothing.

Treatment typically does not require access to body areas beyond what can be achieved through removal of socks, footwear, gloves, scarves, neckwear, hats, headwear, sleeve or pant rolling and abdominal or back exposure. Where it is

necessary for additional clothing to be removed, registrants must explain the purpose of requiring the patient to undress and options available for draping. They will also

1. give the patient the opportunity to refuse to undress and/or drape,
2. leave the examining room while the patient undresses and drapes,
3. maintain the dignity of the patient at all times,
4. ensure the patient is draped appropriately for the needs of the treatment and the individual patient.

11. Misconduct

Registrants must refrain from any conduct that does or could result in the harassment and abuse of patients; including within physical, emotional, verbal, sexual or financial domains.

Harassment is any single or repeated occurrence of inappropriate conduct, comment, display, action or gesture or incidents of bullying that the registrant knows or ought reasonably to know could have a harmful effect on the patient's psychological or physical health and safety.

Harassment includes conduct that is based on any personal characteristic such as, but not limited to, race, creed, religion, colour, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, pregnancy, marital status, family status, disability, physical size or weight, age, nationality, ancestry or place of origin.

Harassment also includes any inappropriate sexual conduct that is known or ought reasonably to be known to the registrant to be unwelcome, such as, but not limited to sexual solicitation or advances, sexually suggestive remarks, jokes or gestures, circulating or sharing inappropriate images or unwanted physical contact.

Registrants must not commence a sexual relationship with a patient for the duration of the therapeutic relationship, even if the patient agrees to or seeks to initiate the relationship. The therapeutic relationship may extend beyond the period of active treatment, depending on:

- the nature of the therapeutic relationship,
- the risk of enduring power imbalance between the registrant and patient, and
- dependence of the patient on the registrant.

12. Collaborative Practice

Registrants shall know their own abilities and limitations in relation to the risks of treating diseases and make appropriate judgments about whether to treat or refer to another health care provider where appropriate. They shall promote collaborative practice with patients, other health care professionals and other stakeholders to support the delivery of integrated, quality, patient-centred care.

Registrants shall:

- take appropriate steps to address complex situations which may include seeking consultation or supervision, or referring the patient when the registrant recognizes unusual difficulty to resolve a situation because it is beyond their competency,
- not discourage the patient from consulting with another health care professional for a second opinion, at any time either before or during a course of treatment,
- consult with or refer a patient to another appropriate health care provider in a timely manner if the condition for which the treatment is intended fails to improve or worsens beyond reasonable expectations or when aspects of patient's goals are best addressed by another health care provider,

- immediately refer the patient to a physician or nurse practitioner or other appropriate health care provider if immediate medical treatment is required or any complication arises out of treatment,
- work and communicate effectively with patients, health care providers and other stakeholders to facilitate collaboration and coordinate care,
- treat patients, health care providers, and other stakeholders with dignity and respect at all times.

Updated by Council for the College of Acupuncture of Prince Edward Island.

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