

Chapter 3

Licensure Requirements for Chiropractic Practice in Canada

In recent years, public accountability related to occupational performance has increased dramatically. With about 30 occupations and 51 trades now being regulated by provincial or federal legislation, testing for licensure and certification is highly scrutinized. This chapter addresses licensure, certification, and testing issues pertaining to these areas.

Licensure and Certification

Although the terms **licensure** and **certification** are often used interchangeably, they are differentiated by their purposes.

Traditionally, licensing has been required by law in order to enter certain professions. It is the most restrictive form of occupational regulation; activities covered by the occupational scope of practice may not legally be performed without prior authorization, which can only be granted by the appropriate government agency.

Certification has typically been a voluntary program that recognizes individuals who have achieved beyond the basic level of competency necessary to practice in a profession. Lack of certification does not usually exclude a person from practice, as occurs with licensure (Johnson and Corgel 1983).

Licensure and certification exams rely on a job analysis to provide evidence that an exam contains appropriate content.

Standards of Testing

With the increased usage of tests in all aspects of society, particularly for licensure and certification, guidelines for test construction have been prepared by the federal government and the private sector. Standards set by the United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and Departments of Labor and Justice are referred to as the *Uniform Guidelines on Employee Selection Procedures (1978)*. Standards prepared by the private sector are titled the *Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing (1985)*.

Currently, both the *Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing* and the *Uniform*

Guidelines on Employee Selection Procedure are utilized by the Canadian government in determining licensure guidelines. These two documents have been quoted and followed extensively in both the Ontario government report in 1990 titled *Access Report on Trades and Professions*, and the *Alberta Report on Foreign Qualifications*.

The *Standards for Educational And Psychological Testing* authored by the American Educational Research Association, the American Psychological Association, and the National Council on Measurement in Education, and the *Uniform Guidelines on Employee Selection Procedures* are in agreement that, in order for licensure examinations to be valid, they should be based on a job analysis. The *Uniform Guidelines* state:

“Any validity study should be based upon a review of information about the job for which the selection procedure is to be used ... Any method of job analysis may be used if it provides the information required for the specific validation strategy used.”

Content-related validity in a licensure exam is evidence that the tasks addressed in the exam appropriately reflect the tasks required for successful job performance. Content validity evidence relies upon a job analysis, as indicated in the *Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing*:

“Job analyses provide the primary basis for defining the content domain. If a single examination is used in the licensure or certification of people employed in a variety of settings and specializations, a number of jobs may need to be analyzed. Although the job analysis techniques are comparable to those used in employment testing, the emphasis for licensure and certification is limited appropriately to knowledge and skills necessary to protect the public...”

Licensing Requirements

The power to license rests in the provinces which have an exclusive right to license health care professionals. The purpose of licensing, according to the *Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing*, is to protect the public. This text states:

“Licensing requirements are imposed to ensure that those licensed possess knowledge and skills in sufficient degree to perform important occupational activities safely and effectively.”

As a general rule, only those applicants who satisfy the provincial prerequisites are allowed to take the provincial licensing examination. Criteria established by provincial regulatory agencies surround training and experience, minimum age, years of formal education or academic degrees, a period of residency within the province, and evidence of good moral character.

In fulfilling the purpose of protecting the public, licensure laws enacted by provinces “assure the qualifications of new practitioners and discourage incompetent and unscrupulous practice of the occupation” (Fortune 1985). This is accomplished through several processes, including extensive testing for licensure, active peer review programs, continuing education programs, and the provincial licensing authorities' discipline of practitioners who fail to meet recognized standards.

Canadian Chiropractic Examining Board

To facilitate meeting the responsibilities of testing required for licensure, organizations such as the Canadian Chiropractic Examining Board (CCEB) have been established. The CCEB was created in 1962 to administer licensure examinations that would be accepted by the Canadian Provincial Chiropractic Examining Boards. CCEB examinations are administered at CMCC in Toronto, Ontario; Calgary, Alberta; and both Palmer College of Chiropractic in Iowa and Los Angeles College of Chiropractic in Los Angeles. (Examinations are held in the United States locations when there are sufficient applicants.)

The examinations assess an individual's knowledge of anatomy, physiology, diagnosis and symptomatology, microbiology and public health, neurology, pathology, X-ray, chemistry, and chiropractic practice. The exams are offered in April of each year.

Province Licensing

Within Canada, the provinces remain the final authority for granting a license to practice chiropractic. Each province has its own legislation regarding licensure requirements as well as other areas pertaining to chiropractic.

The obtaining of passing scores from examinations produced by the CCEB is required for licensure in each province. In addition to the CCEB examinations, each province may conduct oral, psychomotor, or written examinations that assess physical examination skills, adjusting technique, radiographic interpretation, and case history-taking skills. A brief description of the chiropractic licensing requirements in each of the ten provinces and the Yukon Territory follows (a complete explanation of provincial licensing requirements may be obtained by contacting the provincial licensing boards).



Figure 3.2
The number of licensed chiropractors in each of the 10 provinces.

Alberta

Chiropractic has been practiced in Alberta since 1918. A total of 381 chiropractors were licensed and practicing in this province when the survey was administered.

The requirements for licensure include: graduation from an accredited chiropractic college; obtaining passing scores on the CCEB and the provincial examinations; Canadian citizenship or residency; and providing satisfactory evidence of good moral character.

Alberta chiropractors are primary contact providers and have a portion of their fees reimbursed by the provincial government. After reaching the limit of coverage, the patient may utilize private insurance. Full coverage is available through the workers' compensation program.

British Columbia

Chiropractic has been practiced in this province since 1919 although it was not legislated until 1934. During the administration of the survey, there were 485 licensed chiropractors who served over three million people.

In order to obtain a license to practice chiropractic, an individual must: be a Canadian citizen or landed immigrant; be a graduate of a CCE-accredited chiropractic college; have completed a minimum of two years of pre-chiropractic university study (or equivalent); and have passed both the CCEB and provincial examinations.

Partial coverage of chiropractic services exists through the provincial medical plan and through the workers' compensation program.

Manitoba

Chiropractic has been practiced in Manitoba since the 1930s, although the first chiropractic legislation was not passed until 1945. The population of Manitoba is approximately 1.1 million with 132 licensed chiropractors.

Requirements for licensure to practice chiropractic include: graduation from a CCE-accredited chiropractic college, and having passed both the CCEB and provincial examinations. The chiropractic specialty programs recognized by the provincial government include radiology and orthopedics.

Partial coverage of chiropractic services is available through the provincial health program. Chiropractic is fully covered by both the workers' compensation program and the compulsory auto insurance plans. Recent provincial studies estimate that 13% of the population in this province utilized chiropractic services during 1992. (This is the highest utilization of chiropractic services reported by any of the provinces.)

New Brunswick

The New Brunswick Chiropractors' Act, Constitution, and Bylaws were incorporated in 1958 and at this printing are in the process of being amended. Approximately 800,000 people live in this province which has 31 licensed chiropractors.

The requirements for licensure include: graduation from a CCE-accredited chiropractic college; obtaining passing scores on both the CCEB and provincial examinations; obtaining membership in the Canadian Chiropractic Association and the New Brunswick Chiropractors' Association; and providing two letters of reference. Annually, each member is required to show proof of professional liability coverage with the Canadian Chiropractic Protective Association or another insurance company where coverage equals or exceeds that of the Canadian Chiropractic Protective Association.

Since chiropractors are primary contact practitioners, no referral is required to see a chiropractor for workers' compensation benefits. Blue Cross offers policies designed for seniors with some policies providing partial reimbursement for a limited number of visits. Veterans may be authorized for coverage of chiropractic services through the Department of Veterans Affairs health care program. The Royal Canadian Mounted Police also provides a health care plan that covers chiropractic services.

Newfoundland and Labrador

Chiropractic was first introduced in the province of Newfoundland and Labrador in the late 1950s. This was the last province to receive a charter, which was granted July 1, 1992. There were 11 practicing chiropractors in Newfoundland and Labrador when the survey was administered.

As of this printing, the Rules and Regulations that accompany the Chiropractic Act are pending approval from the Department of Health. Licensing requirements for the practice of chiropractic in this province have been enacted with the following requirements: graduation from a CCE-accredited chiropractic college; successful completion of the CCEB examinations; and meeting “other requirements which may be prescribed by the regulations.”

Government reimbursement under Medicare for chiropractic services is not available; and coverage through the workers’ compensation program is under negotiation. Reimbursement for chiropractic services is partially covered for individuals currently employed in the province.

Nova Scotia

The first Constitution for the Nova Scotia Chiropractic Association was formulated in 1953. Since that time, regulatory legislation has included passage of the Chiropractic Act in 1972. The population of Nova Scotia is about 900,000. There were 22 licensed practitioners in this province when the survey was distributed.

According to the licensing authority in Nova Scotia, the requirements for licensure include: graduation from CMCC, or a chiropractic college in the United States which is fully accredited by the CCE, or a chiropractic college in another country which is recognized within its own jurisdiction and which is approved by the Nova Scotia Board of Chiropractors; successful completion of the CCEB and provincial examinations; establish a chiropractic practice in Nova Scotia within three years of the examination date; a minimum age of 21 years; proof of Canadian citizenship or of entitlement to work in Canada; and registered membership in the Nova Scotia and Canadian Chiropractic Associations.

At this time, no government reimbursement for chiropractic services is available. The workers’ compensation program offers injured workers twenty treatments, with an additional ten treatments upon request and approval.

Ontario

Chiropractic has been practiced in Ontario since 1903. Currently, 1299 licensed chiropractors serve an estimated 8.5 million people.

Until recently, chiropractic was practiced and legislated under the Drugless Practitioners Act. New legislation called the Regulated Health Professions Act will govern each major health profession, including chiropractic. The Regulated Health Professions Act is expected to take effect December 1993.

Licensure requirements to practice chiropractic include: graduation from a CCE-accredited chiropractic college, and having passed both the CCEB and provincial exams.

Partial reimbursement for chiropractic services is available through the provincial government. Chiropractic has been covered by the workers’ compensation program since 1935. Recent studies estimate that 8-11% of the population utilized chiropractic services in any given year.

Prince Edward Island (PEI)

There has been a chiropractic presence on this island of 131,000 people since the early 1920s. PEI is the smallest of the Canadian provinces and, at this time, only three chiropractors practice there.

Licensing requirements to practice in this province are: graduation from an approved chiropractic college; successful completion of the CCEB exams; and membership in the Canadian Chiropractic Association, Canadian Memorial Chiropractic College, and in the PEI Chiropractic Association. No provincial exam is offered.

No government reimbursement for chiropractic services is presently available although chiropractic has been included in the workers' compensation program for the past 30 years.

Quebec

Chiropractic was legalized in the province of Quebec in 1974. The population of this province is about 7,000,000, with the number of licensed and practicing chiropractors at the administration of the survey being 773.

The requirements for licensure include: having graduated from a CCE-accredited college; successful completion of the CCEB examinations or Parts I, II, and III of the National Board of Chiropractic Examiners (USA) exam; and passing scores on the provincial exams in chiropractic and X-ray. Both provincial examinations are administered by the comité d'admission.

Chiropractic specializations are not yet recognized by the government; however, they are recognized by the licensing board. No government reimbursement for chiropractic care is available; however, most insurance companies provide partial reimbursement for chiropractic services. To obtain workers' compensation coverage, the injured worker must have a prescription for chiropractic services from a medical physician.

Saskatchewan

Chiropractic became a licensed profession under the Chiropractic Act in 1943. Prior to this time, chiropractic was practiced partially under the Drugless Practitioners Act. There are approximately 992,500 people living in Saskatchewan with 124 practicing chiropractors.

Practitioners wishing to obtain a license to practice must: be a graduate of a CCE-accredited chiropractic college; be a member in good standing of his/her association, if in practice in another province or state; and have passed the CCEB and provincial examinations.

Chiropractic was fully covered by medicare for 18 years until September 1992, when legislation was enacted requiring patients to pay for a portion of each treatment. A yearly global capitation system of payment was also instituted. Chiropractic treatments are fully covered by the workers' compensation plan and the provincial automobile insurance plan.

Territory Licensing

The only territory that currently requires licensure to practice chiropractic is the Yukon Territory. Licensure for the Yukon Territory is governed by the province of British Columbia. Requirements for licensure to practice chiropractic include: successful completion of the CCEB and British Columbia provincial examinations. Chiropractors do not need to be full-time members of the British Columbia College of Chiropractors but do need to maintain an associate status.

As of this printing, there are no licensure requirements to practice in the Northwest Territory.