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### **UPDATED POSITION STATEMENT ON COVID-19**

#### *Chiropractic is an Essential Element of the Public Health Response*

**SeaTac, Wash.:** The situation surrounding COVID-19 is evolving every day and so must the response of the entire healthcare establishment. Hospitals and urgent care centers are inundated right now and thousands of patients of all types have lost access to basic healthcare services.

The WSCA has already called on all Washington chiropractors to remain open and accept patients. We have done so with an eye toward maintaining patient access to chiropractic, and while that is still one of our goals, there is also a bigger picture we must consider. This is a public health emergency and we have an important role to play. In light of the heavy burdens other segments of the healthcare system are currently experiencing, we have a special duty to continue to provide the care that patients need, and cannot receive elsewhere.

Most chiropractic patients present with musculoskeletal conditions, and many do not have primary care physicians. Without their preferred healthcare providers, those patients will either compound the burden on emergency facilities, or they will attempt to treat themselves. Self-diagnosis and treatment are dangerous even in the absence of a public health emergency, and even more so now. Chiropractors are uniquely situated to address these and other cases.

Chiropractors should still use caution. They should follow the best practices outlined by the CDC and refer to their state and county health departments for the latest guidelines. They should perform a differential diagnosis on every patient, not only evaluating them for the condition they present with, but also for potential infection. Patients who are already symptomatic should stay home. All patients should be instructed to wait in their vehicles until called into the office. Adjusting tables and equipment should be sanitized after seeing each patient. They should use personal protective equipment and check every patient's temperature. As portal of entry providers, chiropractors must assess the whole patient and determine what care they need, even if it isn't chiropractic. Patients should be treated as needed, but urgent cases should be prioritized.

State health officials have not restricted chiropractic during this outbreak because the profession is essential to the emergency response. The WSCA urges all chiropractors to continue their work as long as they are safely able to do so. Together, our community will get through this and the WSCA will be there, *helping chiropractors help patients.*

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