The Certified Chiropractic Therapy Assistant (CCTA) program is designed to enhance the safe and effective application of clinical skills by those assisting the chiropractor in the delivery of chiropractic services. In addition to such administrative duties as may be assigned, the CCTA will have clinical duties and responsibilities.

As provided for by jurisdictional rules and/or regulations, CCTAs will be able to perform objective examination procedures (except for orthopedic and neurological tests), provide a wide array of physiological therapeutics, augment historical and clinical patient information and support the doctor in charting and report generation. CCTAs are not permitted to analyze/diagnose, plan case management or manipulate/adjust. To insure the competency of this expanded role of a chiropractic paraprofessional, additional technical training based on mastery of specific clinical competencies is required.

The program consists of classroom instruction and/or distance education hours.* The educational program provider must document that each student has acquired the following clinical competencies. The program provider must present students with the necessary instruction and opportunities to observe, acquire and practice under supervision, the attitudes, knowledge and skills listed in this section.

(In addition to the didactic instruction, a clinical internship of practical, on-the-job experience is required prior to the issuance of a license/certificate, and fulfillment of such other requirements as the program or regulatory agencies may require.)

A. General Roles, Duties and Responsibilities of the CCTA

The CCTA plays a vital role as a member of the health-provision team. As such, effective team members must possess the appropriate qualities and qualifications related to human relations, education, customer service, business administration and health care delivery.

1. Attitudes

   The student must demonstrate the ability to:

   (a) appreciate the need for compassion and empathy during patient interactions;

   (b) recognize the importance of ethical and honest behavior;

   (c) recognize the importance of maintaining a courteous and gracious professional demeanor; and

   (d) appreciate the need for cooperation and teamwork.

2. Knowledge

   The student must demonstrate the ability to:

   (a) understand the statutory rules and regulations that define the limit and extent to which the CCTA is authorized to participate in a clinical setting;

   (b) understand the clinic policies and procedures that define the role, duties and responsibilities of the CCTA;

   (c) be aware of the unique approach to chiropractic health care and the background of a chiropractic physician; and

   (d) understand the definition of the chiropractic scope of practice within the jurisdiction the student wishes to practice;

3. Skills

   The student must demonstrate the ability to:

   (a) provide compassionate and empathetic chiropractic health care to patients in a clinical setting;

   (b) practice in a responsive, cooperative and courteous manner; and

   (c) comply with jurisdictional scopes of practice, statutory rules and regulations and clinic policies/procedures.
B. Anatomy, Physiology and Medical Terminology

The CCTA must understand basic human anatomy and physiology. Additionally, the CCTA must possess and employ terminology unique to the healthcare setting.

1. Attitudes

The student must demonstrate the ability to:

(a) appreciate the need to have an understanding of basic human anatomy and physiology; and

(b) appreciate the need to possess and communicate basic chiropractic and medical terminology;

2. Knowledge

The student must demonstrate the ability to:

(a) know the human skeletal system, articulation, neuromusculoskeletal system and soft tissue structures;

(b) understand basic human physiology: cardiovascular system, gastrointestinal system; genitourinary system, respiratory system, neurological system, and endocrine and hematological function;

(c) understand bodily planes, positions, ranges-of-motions and movement dynamics; and

(d) know medical terminology, chiropractic terminology, common prefixes/suffixes and descriptions.

3. Skills

The student must demonstrate the ability to:

(a) correctly identify and accommodate for physiological function and anatomical structure/function in a clinical setting; and

(b) document accurately and legibly written reports and oral communications using correct medical terminology;

C. Patient Historical and Clinical Information

The gathering and documentation of historical and clinical information is an important element of patient evaluation. The student is expected to recognize important historical and clinical information and insure that information revealed to him/her during subsequent patient encounters is to be appropriately communicated to the doctor.

1. Attitudes

The student must demonstrate the ability to:

(a) attend to patient comfort and the environment in which the historical information might be revealed;

(b) appreciate the need for empathy, respect and an awareness of the patient's right for privacy and confidentiality;

(c) recognize patient apprehension, and avoid exclamatory, misleading or inappropriate verbal or physical responses; and

(d) recognize the professional and ethical boundaries expected of the doctor/patient relationship.

2. Knowledge

The student must demonstrate the ability to:

(a) recognize changes in patient presentations or health status during the course of care and apply the appropriate depth and breadth of questioning; and

(b) understand and recognize non-verbal diagnostic clues observed during the history.

3. Skills

The student must demonstrate the ability to:

(a) actively listen and communicate with the patient at an understandable level; and

(b) accurately record and/or communicate to the chiropractor historical and clinical information in an organized manner.
D. Examination of Vitals

The examination of "vitals" is an element of an overall physical evaluation that focuses on and monitors over time the essential clinical status of the patient. The student is required to elicit accurate feedback on a patient’s height, weight, temperature, blood pressure, heart rate, respiration rate by selecting and applying appropriate examination procedures, including essential instruments and equipment.

1. Attitudes

The student must demonstrate the ability to:

(a) recognize patient apprehension, and avoid exclamatory statements and physical responses that may exacerbate patient concern;

(b) understand the importance of maintaining a clean and safe environment and follow accepted hygienic procedures; and

(c) recognize the professional and ethical boundaries expected of the doctor/patient relationship.

2. Knowledge

The student must demonstrate the ability to:

(a) understand and conduct the appropriate examination;

(b) select appropriate procedures, instruments and equipment for use in the examination; and

(c) recognize normal, variant and abnormal findings;

3. Skills

The student must demonstrate the ability to:

(a) develop objective data from the physical examination appropriate to the health status and the chiropractic care of the patient;

(b) obtain and record vital signs and examination findings in an organized manner;

(c) use examination instruments, equipment and procedures in an accurate, safe, appropriate and hygienic manner;

(d) recognize and accurately record significant non-verbal signs and behaviors exhibited by the patient;

(e) conduct an examination which provides for efficient patient positioning and comfort; and

(f) provide appropriate and understandable explanations and instructions to the patient relative to the use of procedures and instruments.

E. Emergency Care

CCTAs may encounter clinical and environmental situations - within and outside the office setting - that require immediate attention, and must develop the ability to identify an emergency or life-threatening situation and apply the necessary care or procedures.

1. Attitudes

The student must demonstrate the ability to:

(a) recognize the responsibility to provide emergency care procedures; and

(b) recognize the need for a prompt critical appraisal and response to an emergency situation.

2. Knowledge

The student must demonstrate the ability to:

(a) recognize an emergency or life-threatening situation;

(b) understand current emergency care and first aid procedures, equipment and instruments;

(c) monitor the effect of emergency care on the patient;

(d) understand the legal implications associated with providing emergency care; and

(e) determine the availability of local emergency care resources and select the appropriate services.

3. Skills

The student must demonstrate the ability to:

(a) utilize emergency care procedures and equipment effectively in providing first aid and basic cardiac life support;

(b) remain calm, reassure and communicate with the patient, and elicit additional help, as needed;

(c) recognize the need for assistance in an emergency situation and effectively communicate and collaborate with other health care professionals; and

(d) perform appropriate reporting, recording and follow-up procedures.
F. Record-Keeping and Documentation

Record-keeping and documentation is that element of case management in which proper documentation of the patient's evaluation, clinical care and other transactions are recorded, accurately and legibly maintained and appropriately reported.

1. Attitudes

The student must demonstrate the ability to:

(a) recognize the need to ensure that all records relevant to the patient's care and management contain legible, accurate, complete and current information;

(b) recognize the patient's right to privacy and ensure that information from the record is released only upon legal and/or written authorization;

(c) be willing to respond to requests for patient records, or information from patient records, in an adequate and timely manner;

(d) recognize the need to ensure patient record security and confidentiality;

(e) be sensitive to the interests that patients may have in accessing their records, and follow accepted legal guidelines when it is deemed necessary to provide or withhold specific information regarding the patient; and

(f) recognize the need to keep abreast of current trends and technologies for record-keeping, communications and data transfer.

2. Knowledge

The student must demonstrate the ability to:

(a) be aware of and follow accepted procedures and protocols when requesting patient records or information from other health care providers or agencies;

(b) know what elements of the record must be released to the patient, or other health care providers or agencies, and those elements that can be legally withheld;

(c) know and understand those elements essential to the patient record including demographic data, clinical findings and patient care information, financial transactions, reports, correspondence and communications;

(d) be aware of accepted methods and legal requirements for record maintenance, storage and security;

(e) be aware of the need to provide a key with records if abbreviations or symbols are used; and

(f) use accepted coding systems for diagnosis and clinical procedures.

3. Skills

The student must demonstrate the ability to:

(a) contribute to the patient record in a manner that is accurate, legible, complete and current, and is neither inflammatory, prejudicial nor degrading to the patient;

(b) enter additional clinical findings, clinical perceptions and impressions, patient progress, and follow-up in a manner that is legible, accurate, organized;

(c) record relevant patient communications accurately and legibly; and

(d) enter, store, secure and maintain patient data in keeping with existing compliance standards.

G. Ethics and Professional Boundaries

Individuals participating in the provision of health care have an obligation to the patients they serve. A CCTA must be of high moral and ethical character and provide professional services in an environment of honesty and integrity and non-discrimination.

1. Attitudes

The student must demonstrate the ability to:

(a) recognize the ethical standards expected of a care-provider;

(b) be aware of the ethical standards expected in a clinical setting; including, but not limited to accuracy in clinical charting, HIPAA or other federal or state/provincial requirements for privacy, potential conflicts of interest when treating friends and relatives, avoiding dual relationships; and sexual boundaries;

(c) recognize the importance of learning, developing and maintaining high standards of ethics and integrity in personal behavior, both inside and outside the office; and

(d) recognize the potential influence and harm caused by improper or illegal use of alcohol and drugs; effects of domestic and workplace violence; professional boundaries and harassment inside and outside of the professional office setting.
2. Knowledge

The student must demonstrate an understanding of:

(a) the ethical standards expected of a CCTA in a clinical setting;

(b) the ethical standards expected of a CCTA for the billing of professional services to either patients or third parties; and

(c) The laws relating to drug and alcohol use, violence in the workplace, professional boundaries, and harassment.

3. Skills

The student must demonstrate the ability to:

(a) successfully complete the academic work and challenges of the CCTA in a manner consistent with expected standards of ethics and integrity; and

(b) successfully complete the clinical requirements of the CCTA in a manner consistent with the responsibilities and expectations of the chiropractor and their patients.

H. Physiological Therapeutics and Rehabilitation

CCTA care may include the use of procedures and modalities which may be employed for the purpose of case management, rehabilitation, or wellness care. Mastery in the use and clinical application of those procedures and modalities includes, but is not limited to: therapeutic ultrasound, electrical stimulation, biofeedback, diathermy, cryotherapy, thermotherapy, light therapy, traction, exercise therapy, rehabilitation essentials, soft tissue therapy and other common chiropractic modalities.

1. Attitudes

The student must demonstrate the ability to:

(a) appreciate the need to explain what will be done when administering therapies, discuss risks, and recognize the potential for patient apprehension and concern;

(b) be aware of the need to accommodate patient privacy and modesty in the course of administering therapies;

(c) be aware of the need to reassess and modify therapy procedures appropriate to the needs of the patient; and

(d) understand the importance of equipment maintenance and hygiene.

2. Knowledge

The student must demonstrate the ability to:

(a) understand the principles, physiological effects, and application of various therapeutic procedures commonly used in a chiropractic setting;

(b) recognize the clinical indications and rationale for selecting a particular therapeutic procedure;

(c) understand the selection and use of equipment and instruments necessary to administer therapeutic procedures;

(d) recognize the contraindications, and potential complications, of therapeutic procedures; and

(e) know how to clean equipment and recognize when maintenance or repair may be required.

3. Skills

The student must demonstrate the ability to:

(a) apply appropriate therapeutic instruments or procedures;

(b) communicate necessary information to the patient concerning the application of therapeutic procedures;

(c) obtain authorization from the chiropractor to modify the application of a therapeutic procedure where indicated by a change in the patient's physical and clinical status;

(d) record accurately appropriate information relative to the use of therapeutic procedures;

(e) discuss potential immediate or delayed reactions or responses to therapeutic procedures;

(f) provide patient education, assist in device applications:

(g) monitor home care compliance and/or referral compliance; and

(h) keep equipment clean and in good working order.