



AGENDA ITEM 6.1

TOPIC: Further Information Related to the Proposed Regulatory Exemption for the Performance of Acupuncture

Overview

On November 12, 2024, Transition Council reviewed two separate proposed regulatory exemptions – one for chiropractors and one for persons providing animal rehabilitation.

For more information on this review, please refer to agenda items **6.2** and **6.4** in the November 12, 2024, Transition Council package.

Both of these regulatory concepts contained proposed recommendations related to the ability to perform acupuncture on animals. This included:

Chiropractors	Animal Rehabilitation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must be registered with the College of Chiropractors of Ontario. • Must have completed at least 200 hours of specific training in animal chiropractic which must have included practical experience. • Must have completed at least 35 hours of additional training in chiropractic acupuncture on animals which must have included practical experience. • Must have the knowledge, skill, and judgement to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ perform the authorized activity safely, effectively, and ethically; and ○ determine the animal’s condition warrants performance of the authorized activity based on the known risks and benefits. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must have formal, recognized education in either animal or human anatomy that garners entry into a profession in animal or human medicine. • Must have completed at least 125 hours of training in animal rehabilitation which must have included practical experience. • Must have completed at least 35 hours of additional training in therapeutic acupuncture on animals which must have included practical experience. • Must have the knowledge, skill, and judgement to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ perform the authorized activity safely, effectively, and ethically; and ○ determine the animal’s condition warrants performance of the authorized activity based on the known risks and benefits.

During this review and discussion, Transition Council raised additional questions related to the reasoning and risk analysis behind these proposed recommendations including larger



comments and considerations related to additional training requirements in performing acupuncture on animals.

Additional information related to these questions has been gathered, and Transition Council is now tasked with determining its direction.

History of the College's Work Related to Acupuncture

Current Framework

The *Veterinarians Act* and Regulation 1093 currently outlines an exclusive scope of practice model for veterinary medicine. This means that unless otherwise specifically stated, veterinary medicine may only be performed by a veterinarian or auxiliary working under their supervision and delegation.

Position Statement: Veterinary Acupuncture

Legacy Council began considering the need for clarity related to the regulatory oversight of acupuncture in 2016 following larger series of conversations related to the use of forms of energy in the treatment and/or care of animals and the use of non-conventional therapies in the practice of veterinary medicine. At all times, this overarching and multi-faceted work was focused on risk identification and mitigation related to harm or potential harm to animals and/or the public.

In September 2023, following two years of research and analysis along with the presentation of a risk-based Report, Legacy Council approved the *Position Statement: Veterinary Acupuncture*. This *Position Statement* indicates that the performance of acupuncture on animals is restricted to veterinarians only. For more information on the research behind this *Position Statement*, please refer to the Report attached as Appendix "A".

Progression since Publication

Conversations and research related to the performance of acupuncture on animals continued to evolve following the publishing of the *Position Statement*. Since 2023, College staff have continued to receive and review information related to educational programs available to other non-veterinary animal care providers on the topic.

Veterinary acupuncture courses run independently from veterinary schools have continued to increase along with public demand for treatment. Since the September 2023 Report, new courses have been developed across North America for veterinarians and more recently, for non-veterinary animal care providers such as chiropractors and physiotherapists.

Examples of these courses include those developed and run by the Veterinary Chiropractic Learning Centre (VCLC). A sample course outline from the VCLC has been attached as Appendix "B". This course is available to both licensed chiropractors and veterinarians.



Another course that has been developed is the Small Animal Neuro-Anatomical Acupuncture and Dry Needling Certification, run by the Animal Rehabilitation Division of the Canadian Physiotherapy Association. This course is offered in two parts and is available to individuals with a diploma in physiotherapy who meet other prerequisites outlined in the Course Outlines, attached as Appendix “C”.

Additional Information Gathered Since November 12, 2024

The following information has been compiled based on the overarching questions raised by Transition Council and has been separated by each proposed regulatory exemption for ease of reference.

Chiropractors

Is a chiropractor required to be trained in performing chiropractic acupuncture on humans before they can take training for performing chiropractic acupuncture on animals?

Both the College of Chiropractors of Ontario (CCO) and the Ontario Chiropractic Association (OCA) have confirmed that chiropractors are required to be trained in the performance of chiropractic acupuncture on humans before they can take additional training on animals. For more information on this training, please refer to the VCLC course outline that has already been attached to this cover sheet as Appendix “B”.

Would a chiropractor be required to adhere to any CCO practice standards when performing chiropractic acupuncture on animals?

The CCO has confirmed that chiropractors performing chiropractic acupuncture on animals would be required to adhere with the CCO Standard of Practice on Acupuncture. For more information on these requirements, please refer to the standard that has been attached to this cover sheet as Appendix “D”.

How would a chiropractor mitigate the risks associated with performing chiropractic acupuncture on animals?

Both the CCO and OCA have provided additional information related to risk mitigation strategies related to the performance of chiropractic acupuncture on animals. For more information on these risk mitigation strategies, please refer to the letter received from the VCLC attached to this cover sheet as Appendix “E”. This letter includes a list of risk mitigation strategies and directs attention to pages 11-14 of the full course outline, which has already been attached to this cover sheet as Appendix “B”.



Animal Rehabilitation

The ability to gather information related to the training and risk mitigation possessed by persons offering animal rehabilitation services is more limited due to the variety of different backgrounds that may qualify under the proposed exemption. However, the following information has been gathered from several identified groups who may qualify:

Ontario Physiotherapy Association (OPA)

Following further engagement with the OPA, comments were provided related to the type of qualifications that may be held by those who hold or have held licensure with the College of Physiotherapists of Ontario. These include specific expectations related to patients that experience adverse reactions either during or after the application of a specific treatment inclusive of reporting, referral, and communication requirements.

This information was provided with the additional acknowledgement that registration with the College of Physiotherapists of Ontario (CPO) would not be required to qualify under the regulatory exemption and that the CPO does not assume any oversight of their registrants practice on animals.

Acupuncture Community

In recent months, the College has been made aware of interest amongst persons possessing training in acupuncture in humans in also being able to provide these services to animals. Some of these individuals belong to the larger traditional Chinese medicine and acupuncture community.

In previous conversations with the College of Traditional Chinese Medicine Practitioners and Acupuncturists of Ontario (CTCMPAO), the CTCMPAO has confirmed that the registrants of the CTCMPAO are not permitted to perform acupuncture on animals. The CTCMPAO has indicated a preliminary willingness to consider potential amendments to this positioning based on the development of new structures under the *Veterinary Professionals Act, 2024* but have not provided any suggestion related to interest in providing professional oversight of their registrants in this area.

The College has also had preliminary conversations with the association known as Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCMO) as well as other individuals who offer or are interested in offering acupuncture to animals both within and outside of Ontario. Through these conversations, the College has been provided information related to one animal acupuncture course being offered in the United States for licensed acupuncturists that includes approximately 160 hours of training. More information on this course can be found here.



The College's research in this area is ongoing and further conversations related to risk mitigation and management are required.

Discussion

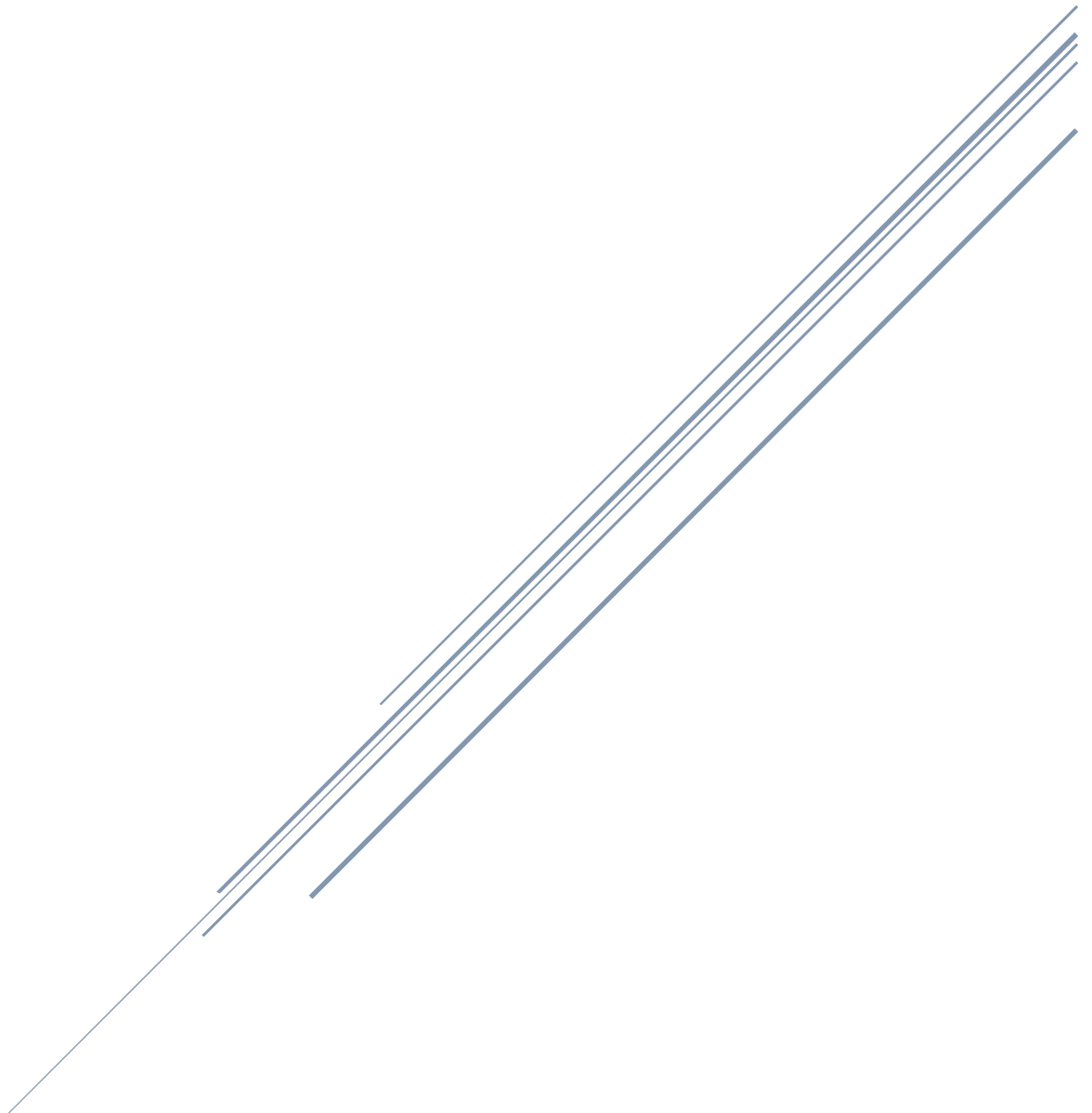
Transition Council is asked to review this additional information as well as the original cover sheets related to a proposed regulatory exemption for both chiropractors and for non-veterinary animal care providers and determine its direction related to its proposed inclusion in a regulatory concept related to the authorized activity model.

Attachments:

1. Appendix A - September 2023 Research Report and References – Veterinary Acupuncture
2. Appendix B - Veterinary Chiropractic Learning Centre Course Outline
3. Appendix C - Animal Rehab Division Course Flyers
4. Appendix D – CCO Standard of Practice - Acupuncture
5. Appendix E - Letter from the Veterinary Chiropractic Learning Centre to Transition Council, November 2024

VETERINARY ACUPUNCTURE

A Report – September 2023



Current Report

Risk Analysis

The risk analysis presented in this report is based off the same approach that was used in the College's work related to the use of forms of energy in the treatment and/or care of animals.

The following questions served as a basis in development:

- Does the practice of acupuncture on an animal constitute the practice of veterinary medicine?
- Does the practice of acupuncture on an animal place the animal and/or treatment provider at risk of undue harm?
- Does the practice of acupuncture on an animal require a specific set of knowledge in order to be properly administered?
- Has the practice of acupuncture on animals been researched and authenticated?
- Is there a higher-to-medium risk of adverse effect(s) if veterinary acupuncture is improperly performed?

Approach

With this risk framework in mind, this report has been developed based on extensive research undertaken by College staff. This work includes, but is not limited to, review of literature and peer-reviewed articles, conversations with veterinarians, and discussions with researchers who specialize in this topic.

For a full list of references consulted, please refer to the attached reference list.

This report is separated into the following parts:

- Existing Scientific Research
- Risk Findings
- Potential Next Steps

Each section is designed to build from the information provided in the previous section.

Existing Scientific Research

An in-depth search of available scientific research (peer-reviewed articles) related to this area was completed. Conversations were also held with veterinarians who specialize in this area of practice. Based on this review, the following general trends were noted:

Education Available

One area of uncertainty that some veterinary schools have about teaching veterinary acupuncture stems from the lack of scientific-based evidence that investigates the efficacy and techniques of veterinary acupuncture [1]. However, the teachings of veterinary acupuncture through courses run independently from veterinary schools has increased along with public demand for treatment. [2]. Examples of these courses include those run by the International

Acupuncture Society [3]. All courses that teach the physical insertion of needles are taught by veterinarians to veterinarians.

Selection of Acupuncture Points in Animals

In some research, there has been a call for further investigation of acupuncture points in animals. [4] [5]. Some authors have reported that a lack of definitive data regarding acupuncture points, needle lengths, and length of treatment create difficulties in conducting sound research [6].

Need for Further Research

Existing research identifies the need for more clinical studies with rigorous scientific methods. There is also an acknowledgement that “the absence of evidence of effectiveness is not evidence of absence of effectiveness” [7]. The reaffirmation that more research has the ability to change future perceptions and procedures is an important theme to note.

Ethical Considerations of Scientific Research

One challenge that researchers face is clinical trials becoming problematic due to testing the specific effect of acupuncture on animals [8]. Similar trials on humans are often used to develop workable and ethical guidelines for the veterinary field. This absence of research performed specifically on animals makes demonstrating efficacy in treating animals difficult [9]. It also becomes difficult to evaluate safety and risks of performing veterinary acupuncture when studies are based on treatment of humans.

Practicing Veterinary Acupuncture in Combination with Standard Veterinary Medicine

An additional theme in existing research is that veterinary acupuncture is most effective when performed in combination with standard Western veterinary medicine [4]. Veterinary acupuncture is not a complete substitute for other care performed by veterinarians. Many clinical studies include the comparison of veterinary acupuncture alone with the combination of veterinary acupuncture with standard Western veterinary medicine [4] [10] [11] [12]. In research, it is a veterinarian who is consulted on the best treatment plan and performance of the veterinary acupuncture [10].

Risk Findings

In addition to these general trends, the review also allowed for information to be compiled on the contributing factors that the level of risk of harm or potential harm that veterinary acupuncture presents.

1. Risk of Physical Harm

Defining the risk of physical harm of veterinary acupuncture is difficult due to limited research on animals. It is further complicated by the continued application of applying potential adverse effects identified in human treatments to animals [13] [14]. However, there are several identified safety problems that could arise from veterinary acupuncture. These include, but are not limited to:

1. Pneumothorax

This is one of the most frequently reported conditions in humans and could occur in veterinary acupuncture as well [12]. This risk may be increased by the high number of acupuncture points that are located over the thorax in animals [8]. Authors have indicated that it is critical that the practitioner performing veterinary acupuncture be appropriately trained to best avoid this occurring [13].

2. Bleeding

There are several bleeding disorders identified that could occur in veterinary acupuncture. Coagulopathies, bleeding disorders, spontaneous bruising, and autoimmune haemolytic anaemia are some potential bleeding-related risks [8].

3. Broken Needles

Broken needles are a risk in both humans and animals when acupuncture is performed. It is critical to consider what follows if a broken needle occurs. A risk related to the breaking of needles in horses, for example, is the need to remove the needle that has twisted into a coil from the animal's back. This can cause alarm to the animal [8]. A veterinarian will be able to perform ultrasounds and other scans as required to locate and remove broken needles.

2. Difficulty Communicating with Patient

When performing veterinary acupuncture, some symptoms, such as nausea, become more difficult to identify and assess in animals compared to humans [9]. Additionally, pain is an individual experience that cannot be communicated as clearly from animals [15]. Without the ability to communicate pain in the same way, animals leave their veterinary acupuncture practitioner with little knowledge of whether needling a trigger point is producing the same pain pattern as what may occur in humans [16]. There is a theme found in literature that indicates because animals cannot choose their practitioner or make decisions about their treatment, they require a greater degree of protection [2]. This theme suggests that a veterinarian is best suited to provide that protection.

3. Requirement for Assessment and Diagnosis

A veterinarian should be involved prior to veterinary acupuncture being administered. Before performing acupuncture, a veterinarian should examine the animal(s) and provide a diagnosis to determine whether veterinary acupuncture is a suitable treatment [5]. This also allows for the therapy to be modified on an individual basis [8] [18]. For example, not all causes for canine lameness are good indications for the use of veterinary acupuncture. Within scientific research, clinical trials for veterinary acupuncture also rely on initial diagnoses provided by a veterinarian [17].

4. Importance of Informed Client Consent

It is critical that the client is aware of the risks, side effects, and benefits of any treatment before giving true informed consent to proceed [8]. Due to the risks of veterinary acupuncture, this discussion with the client should take place with the veterinarian [19].

5. Anatomical Differences Between Species

While developing a treatment plan, the practitioner will need to consider any anatomical differences between humans, who research is typically performed on, and animals, who they will be treating. Further investigation of the anatomical characteristics of acupuncture points is needed to improve accuracy in selecting locations to perform veterinary acupuncture [16].

Common knowledge between human and animal acupuncture points cannot be assumed at any time [1] [2]. There is some debate about the meridian pathways drawn for animals based on human mapping [3]. One example is as follows:

“...the popular and commonly used point of L14 is found in the first dorsal interosseous muscle of humans; this muscle is insignificant in dogs and the point is found in the small amount of soft tissue adjacent to the dew claw, or where the dew claw might have been. In horses, there is no muscle in this point at all” [3].

Additionally, regardless of the practitioner performing veterinary acupuncture, they require sufficient familiarity with each individual species to best avoid injury [1]. It is suggested that even licensed veterinarians performing veterinary acupuncture take courses certifying them on the specific topic [4].

References

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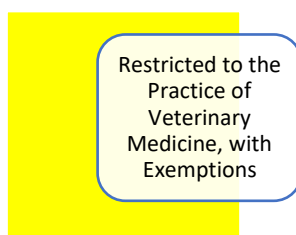
Appendix A – Risk Analysis Framework

First Level – Restricted to the Practice of Veterinary Medicine



The first level would be designed to oversee activities that have been classified as high risk. These would be restricted to the practice of veterinary medicine, and only veterinarians or those working under their delegation would be permitted to administer them to animals.

Second Level – Restricted to the Practice of Veterinary Medicine, with Exemptions



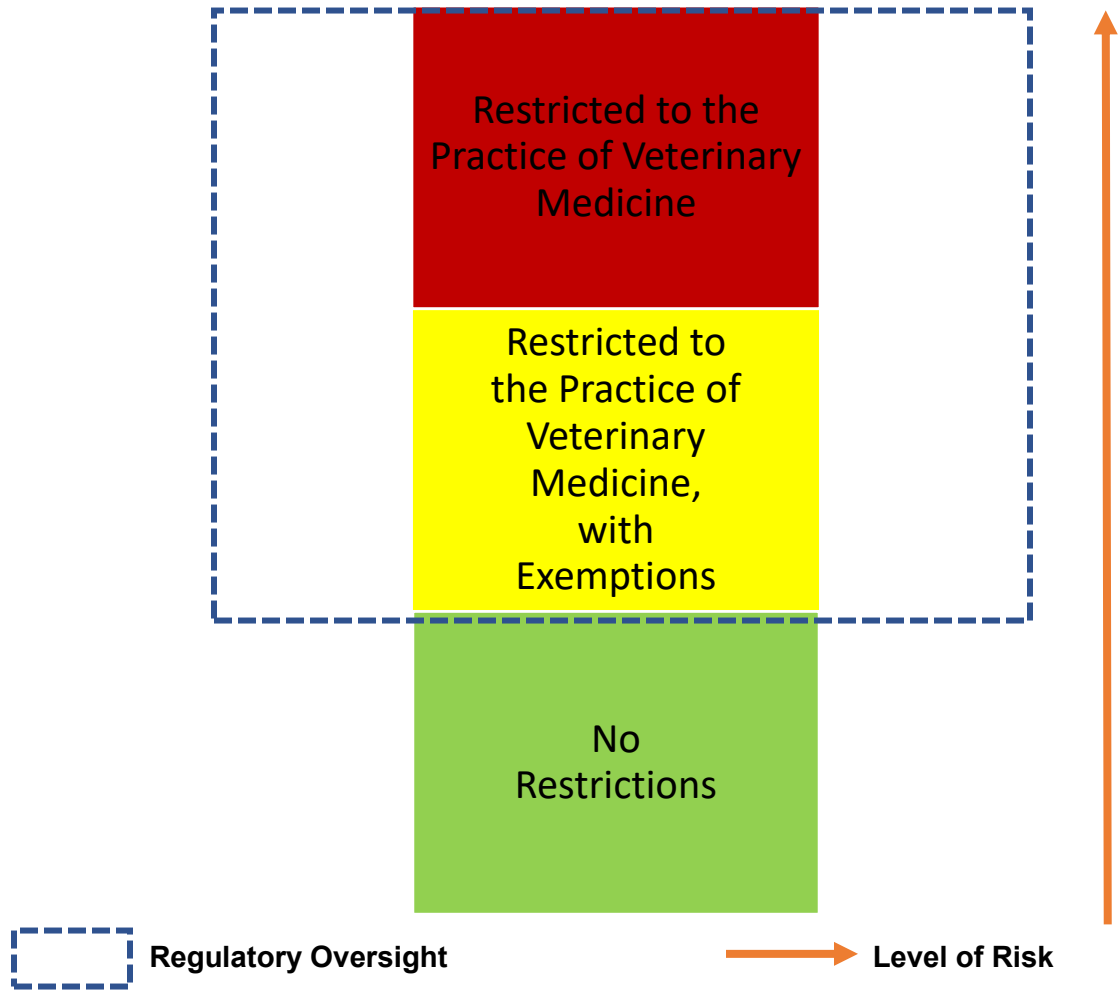
The second level would be designed to oversee activities that have been classified as medium risk. These would still be restricted to the practice of veterinary medicine, however there would be exemptions to allow use by specific groups or individuals that have been deemed capable of proper administration.

Third Level – No Restrictions



The third level would be designed to address the use of activities that have been classified as low risk. As this would result in the use of these being in the public domain, this level would not be subject to any regulatory oversight.

Overall Approach





The Veterinary Chiropractic Learning Centre

DETAILED OUTLINE & BACKGROUND DOCUMENT

of the

**Small Animal Neuroanatomical Acupuncture
for Animal Chiropractors**

The VCLCs Position Statement on Animal Acupuncture:

Introduction

The Veterinary Chiropractic Learning Centre (VCLC) has offered a nationally and internationally recognized post-graduate training program for chiropractors and veterinarians at the introductory and continuing education levels for almost 20 years. Our Basic Program teaches the science and art of animal chiropractic, focusing on the controlled act of spinal and extremity joint manipulation to improve animal mobility, performance, and quality of life for both large and small animals. The program is approved by the Animal Chiropractic Certification Commission (ACCC) of the American Veterinary Chiropractic Association (AVCA). Animal chiropractors are highly regulated professionals and have safely delivered chiropractic care for animals in Ontario for over 26 years.

Qualified chiropractors and physiotherapists have used acupuncture as an adjunct therapy for human and animal patients for many years. The use of acupuncture as an adjunctive tool requires a high degree of skill and carries some risk, as does spinal manipulation. When performed by trained and licensed practitioners using sterile needles, acupuncture is considered a safe procedure with minimal risk. However, it is important to be aware of potential risks and considerations like any intervention. These risks are mitigated when performed by well-trained, experienced, qualified, and regulated practitioners. There are educational and regulatory standards for chiropractors providing acupuncture to ensure its safe and competent delivery under the chiropractic license. Similar high standards also apply to delivering chiropractic care to animals within the chiropractic scope of practice.

Position Statement:

When practiced by qualified professionals within ethical and regulatory guidelines, animal acupuncture significantly enhances animal mobility, health, and quality of life. It should be integrated responsibly into animal chiropractic practice as part of a comprehensive treatment approach and within the chiropractic scope of practice. Overall, acupuncture is considered safe when performed by trained professionals, and serious complications are very rare. Animal chiropractors, certified in human and animal acupuncture, provide safe and effective acupuncture therapy to animals in Canada. This position statement underscores the importance of promoting standards that uphold the highest level of care and respect for animal welfare, a value we all share.

Benefits of Animal Acupuncture:

1. **Pain management:** Acupuncture is widely recognized for its effectiveness in managing pain associated with neuromusculoskeletal dysfunction in human and animal patients. Seminal research using an animal model discusses two pain-relieving mechanisms[1].
2. **Complementary Therapy:** Animal acupuncture provides holistic care that complements conventional veterinary care while respecting owners' choice, access and preferences for the best outcomes for their pets.
3. **Adjunctive Modality:** Acupuncture is a legitimate, widely accepted form of therapy in certain conditions and has been used as an adjunct in chiropractic and other allied animal professions practices for many years.
4. **Improvement of Quality of Life:** Acupuncture can enhance an animal's overall well-being by improving function, reducing pain and improving mobility.

5. **Safety:** When performed correctly by well-trained, qualified, regulated practitioners, acupuncture has virtually no side effects and minimal adverse effects[2, 3].

Ethical Considerations:

1. **Qualified practitioners:** animal acupuncture should only be performed by licensed veterinarians or qualified animal health practitioners trained in animal acupuncture techniques, such as animal chiropractors or animal physiotherapists
2. **Informed Consent:** Similar to chiropractic care of animals, consent must be obtained from the animal's owner or caretaker before starting acupuncture treatment.
3. **Patient-Centered Care:** Practitioners must prioritize the animal's welfare and ensure that treatments are administered in a safe, sanitary, and compassionate manner.

Professional Standards:

1. **Training and Certification:** Practitioners must undergo extensive training in chiropractic, animal chiropractic, human acupuncture, and animal acupuncture from programs recognized by their regulatory bodies. They must also adhere to all Professional Standards of Care set out by their regulatory bodies.
2. **Evidenced-based practice:** The use of acupuncture should be based on sound clinical reasoning and supported by scientific evidence where available.
3. **Continuing Education:** Practitioners should engage in continuing education to stay updated on advancements in acupuncture research and techniques

BACKGROUND.

Acupuncture is an ancient therapeutic practice that involves inserting fine, solid needles into specific points on a patient's body to support health, alleviate symptoms, and improve function. The VCLCs position statement provides guidance on animal acupuncture performed by trained and licensed animal chiropractors. It addresses the benefits, ethical considerations, and professional standards for animal chiropractors.

The *Small Animal Neuroanatomical Acupuncture for Animal Chiropractors* course provides continuing education for animal chiropractors in acupuncture who already provide acupuncture to their human patients. It is designed to complement their animal chiropractic service to pet owners, meeting public demand for qualified care by regulated professionals. This course serves as a transition course for animal chiropractors to learn how to apply their acupuncture skills and knowledge to their animal patients as an adjunctive procedure in animal chiropractic practice, not a stand-alone intervention. It takes a neuroanatomical or Westernized approach (with a foundation in Traditional Chinese Medicine; TCM) and follows guidelines recognized by the World Health Organization (WHO).

Chiropractors with training and certification in human acupuncture techniques and who are additionally credentialed in animal chiropractic and animal acupuncture are competent and capable of administering needling techniques to manage neuromusculoskeletal disorders in animal patients within their scope of practice, as they have done for several years.

Acupuncture, electroacupuncture and laser acupuncture are physical modalities commonly used to address neuromusculoskeletal disorders in chiropractic practice. Chiropractors use clinical reasoning based on assessment findings and the best available evidence to select the interventions and therapies used within their treatment plan. Treatment effectiveness is

evaluated via outcome-based measures, which inform the selection of interventions throughout the duration of treatment.

Acupuncture has been utilized as a chiropractic intervention in Canada since the 1970s. In recent years, chiropractors have also incorporated additional stimulation techniques, such as electroacupuncture and laser acupuncture. Chiropractors are authorized to use the “Doctor” title in providing patient care and communicating a diagnosis within the chiropractic scope of practice. Chiropractors have a strong background in anatomy, physiology, biomechanics, physical evaluation, clinical reasoning and diagnosis. They are also highly trained in when to refer to primary health care providers and when an integrated approach is appropriate.

Animal chiropractic training programs allow chiropractors to learn animal anatomy, animal conditions, pathologies, etc., enabling chiropractors to transfer their chiropractic skills and knowledge to an animal patient. Many educational resources exist for chiropractors to learn how to practice acupuncture on people in Canada and worldwide. Additional courses and resources are available for chiropractors to learn to localize acupoints on animals. All combined education gives chiropractors the skills and knowledge to utilize acupuncture techniques on their animal chiropractic patients safely and effectively within their scope of practice.

Resources

1. College of Chiropractors of Ontario (CCO) relevant Standards of Practice: Chiropractic Scope of Practice (S-001), Chiropractic Care of Animals (S-009), Acupuncture (S-017) <https://cco.on.ca/members-of-cco/standard-of-practice/>
2. CCOs Searchable Online Animal Chiropractic Public Registry: <https://cco.ca.thentiacloud.net/webs/cco/register/?t=1>
3. Regulation (107/96) of the *Regulated Health Professions Act, 1991 (RHPA)* to perform acupuncture, a procedure performed on tissue below the dermis, in accordance with Acupuncture Standard (S-017) and within the chiropractic scope of practice.
4. Guidelines on basic training and safety in acupuncture. World Health Organization (WHO), 1999 [4]
5. The Animal Rehab Division (ARD) published Position Statement and submission on *Acupuncture and Dry Needling of Animal Patients by Physiotherapists Engaged in Animal Rehabilitation Practice, Accepted February 2017* <https://physiotherapy.ca/app/uploads/2022/07/ard-acup-positionstatement.pdf>

Update:

Given the College of Veterinarians' (CVO) concern about the perceived lack of specific training in animal acupuncture for animal chiropractors in North America, there is a growing public demand for this service. This has led to increased interest in the role of qualified animal chiropractors in providing acupuncture for pets, especially considering the challenges within the veterinary system. Here are some key points to consider:

1. **Public Demand and Access to Care:** Pet owners choose therapies like acupuncture for their pets due to their perceived effectiveness and minimal side

effects compared to traditional medications. This has created a demand for qualified animal chiropractors trained in acupuncture techniques.

2. **Skilled and Qualified Delivery:** Qualified animal chiropractors undergo specific and robust training and certification to practice animal chiropractic care. They often receive additional training in acupuncture to safely administer acupuncture treatments to animals.
3. **Overloaded Veterinary System:** The high demand for veterinary services can strain the veterinary system. Integrating qualified animal chiropractors trained in acupuncture can alleviate this burden by providing additional therapeutic options and reducing wait times for specific MSK treatments.
4. **Pet Owners' Choice of Care Provider:** Pet owners value having options when it comes to their pets' care, often preferring therapies like acupuncture, especially when traditional veterinary treatments have limitations or side effects.
5. **Regulatory Framework:** Within regulatory healthcare frameworks, there is a trend toward recognizing unique scopes of practice that prioritize patient-centred care. This means qualified practitioners, including chiropractors trained in acupuncture, can contribute to animal healthcare within appropriate regulations and guidelines. The Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care encourages 'shared scopes of practice' where appropriate for Regulated Professionals.
6. **Collaborative Care:** Acknowledging the expertise, unique scope of practice, and skills of animal chiropractors encourages collaboration between animal care providers, including veterinarians and animal chiropractors. This collaborative approach ensures that pets receive comprehensive care integrating conventional veterinary medicine and therapies like acupuncture.

In summary, animal chiropractors trained in acupuncture have provided this valuable therapeutic tool to pet owners for many years. Their expertise, coupled with regulatory oversight by the CCO, enhances access to care and enriches healthcare options for pets, benefiting both pet owners and animals. Previously, animal chiropractors had to travel long distances for animal acupuncture certification training. The VCLC, based in Ontario, also provides scope-specific animal acupuncture certification for eligible animal chiropractors.

VCLCs Small Animal Neuroanatomical Acupuncture Certification Program

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course is designed to transition qualified animal chiropractors trained and licensed to perform acupuncture on humans to adapt their knowledge and skills safely and effectively to their animal patients as an adjunct therapy within their professional scope. The course uses a Western neuroanatomical approach to acupuncture with a TCM foundation but is not a TCM-based course. Participants will learn needling techniques, point localizations, point locations, and practical skills for small animal patients. By the end of the course, participants will have performed acupuncture on ten small animal patients with a strong focus on safety and refining their needle skills. The course also includes reviews of relevant evidence-based research articles and a discussion of case studies.

Course material and examination consist of a minimum of 35 hours of learning. The course is only available to chiropractors certified in animal chiropractic and acupuncture.

PREREQUISITES

1. Doctor of Chiropractic (DC) Diploma or Degree from a CCE-accredited chiropractic institution

Rationale: This requirement ensures that course participants have met the educational requirements to practice chiropractic in North America. It also ensures that they understand, accept, and comply with the requirements, expectations, and standards of care for being a regulated health professional in Canada.

2. Current license and be in good standing with their provincial licensing body.

Rationale: Good standing with a licensing body is essential for ensuring legal compliance, maintaining professional credibility and trust, keeping up with new clinical developments, upholding ethical standards, and protecting public welfare. It signifies a commitment to excellence and accountability in one's profession.

3. Certificate in Animal Chiropractic from an AVCA or IVCA-approved program (minimum 210 hours of formal training)

Rationale: This ensures that the course participant has met the educational requirements to practice chiropractic on animals. It ensures that participants have successfully completed the animal crossover program to apply their knowledge and skills from humans to their animal patients.

4. Completed specific acupuncture training that complies with their governing bodies requirements (i.e. consistent with the WHO minimum of 200 hours of formal training)

Rationale: To practice acupuncture as an adjunctive therapy in the context of chiropractic practice, chiropractors must have completed specific acupuncture training as taught in the core curriculum, post-graduate curriculum or continuing education division of one or more colleges accredited by the Council on Chiropractic Education Inc., or an accredited Canadian or American college/university, or in an accredited school of acupuncture. This position adopts the WHO Guidelines that a combined (clinical and academic minimum of 200 hours of formal training is required for those members who intend to use acupuncture as an adjunctive procedure in their primary practice. Additionally, Chiropractors who use acupuncture must demonstrate clinical competency in any diagnostic or therapeutic procedure they use in practice. As such, qualified practitioners are expected to participate in ongoing education activities on the performance of acupuncture as an adjunctive therapy within the chiropractic scope of practice.

5. Proof of understanding of the Standards of Care for Scope of Practice (S-001), the Chiropractic Care of Animals (S-009), and Acupuncture (S-017) or applicable provincial standards.

Rationale: Participants are required to prepare and sign a document that records their understanding of these relevant standards, which can become part of their Professional Portfolio and Reflective Practice Analysis.

6. Professional liability insurance specific to acupuncture

Rationale: Chiropractors who provide acupuncture must provide evidence, satisfactorily to their licensing body, of carrying professional liability insurance in the applicable minimum

aggregate amount per year. Many insurance providers, such as the Canadian Chiropractic Protective Association (CCPA), offer acupuncture coverage for human and animal patients provided by qualified chiropractors that protect both the doctor and the animal owner.

Course Overview:

The VCLC Animal Acupuncture Course for Animal Chiropractors consists of three parts. They are as follows:

Part I**Canine Anatomy, Biomechanics and Chiropractic Care**

Description:

Canine Anatomy, Biomechanics and Chiropractic Care, a crucial and self-paced section, comprises several asynchronous lectures from esteemed VCLC instructors via our online teaching platform. This module is a prerequisite for the practical component of the program.

This section reviews canine anatomy, biomechanics, neurological function, orthopedic conditions, gait and locomotion, and their applications in chiropractic care. Other topics include the safe and stress-free handling of animals, occupational health considerations, legal issues, politics and practice, and how to integrate animal chiropractic and acupuncture using case studies. This section also ensures that past animal chiropractic graduates are updated with the most recent course information.

Learning Objectives:

- Identify and describe the anatomical structures of the canine head, neck, forelimb, thoracolumbar region, pelvis, and hindlimb
- Identify visceral anatomy for acupuncture safety
- Apply anatomical knowledge to interpret the functional significance
- Describe the structure and function of the brachial and lumbosacral plexes in small animals, reviewing common injuries or conditions affecting them and their clinical implications
- Identify common spinal conditions in dogs, including degenerative, traumatic, and developmental disorders and describe the clinical signs associated with each condition
- Explain the role chiropractic care can play in orthopedic and neurological conditions in companion animals
- Discuss the rationale for chiropractic interventions in specific conditions (e.g., joint dysfunctions, nerve impingements, postural or conformational deficits)
- Analyze normal canine gait patterns and locomotor mechanics
- Identify deviations from normal gait and their implications for musculoskeletal health.
- Identify zoonotic diseases that may pose risks in animal chiropractic practice.
- Identify conditions outside the chiropractic scope of practice that may require referral to a veterinarian
- Describe preventive measures to minimize zoonotic disease transmission.
- Identify potential hazards in the clinical environment that may affect the safety of companion animals and practitioners.
- Develop protocols for safe handling and restraint of animals during chiropractic sessions.

- Evaluate case studies where acupuncture was used for specific conditions in animals as an adjunct to chiropractic care
- Analyze treatment protocols and outcomes based on acupuncture principles.
- Discuss the integration of acupuncture with other therapeutic modalities in chiropractic care

Lesson Outline:

Lesson 1: Anatomy of the canine head, neck and proximal forelimb

Lesson 2: Dissection of the head and neck and proximal forelimb

Lesson 3: Anatomy of the canine thoracolumbar region and biomechanics

Lesson 4: Anatomy of the canine pelvis and proximal hindlimb

Lesson 5: Dissection of the pelvic muscles and proximal hindlimb

Lesson 6: Anatomy of the canine extremities

Lesson 7: Functional Review of the Brachial Plexus in Animals

Lesson 8: Functional Review of the Lumbosacral Plexus in Animals

Lesson 9: Canine Spine Conditions

Lesson 10: Canine Orthopedic and Neurological conditions and the role of chiropractic care

Lesson 11: Canine Gait and Locomotion

Lesson 12: Zoonotic Concerns for the Animal Chiropractor

Lesson 13. Ensuring the Safety of Companion Animals and Practitioners

Lesson 14: Animal Acupuncture Case Studies

The competency-based section consists of 15 hours of structured learning material.

PART II

RESEARCH ARTICLES

Competency-based

All candidates must read, summarize, and synthesize key acupuncture-related research articles and prepare and submit an assignment based on these articles. Participants should demonstrate an in-depth understanding of acupuncture research and integrate knowledge from articles into broader concepts and applications. A rubric will be provided to complete this task, along with a quiz to assess competency.

This section consists of approximately 5 hours of self-directed learning material.

PART III

The contact portion of VCLCs Small Animal Neuroanatomical Acupuncture program for Animal Chiropractors is a two-day intensive hands-on course in Paris, Ontario. This interactive component maintains a small group setting and is supervised by an experienced, qualified animal chiropractor.

Learning Objectives and Outline for Practical Portion (in-person)

- 1. History of Acupuncture & Traditional Chinese Medicine**
 - Understand the historical development of acupuncture.
 - Recognize the cultural and traditional roots of acupuncture.
- 2. Anatomical and Westernized Approach to Acupuncture**

- Gain a basic understanding of acupuncture points in terms of anatomical landmarks in small animals
- 3. Neuroanatomical Mechanisms of Action**
 - Learn about the neurophysiological basis for the effectiveness of acupuncture.
 - Understand how acupuncture modulates pain perception, inflammation, and homeostasis through neural pathways.
 - Discuss the role of neurotransmitters, endorphins, and other physiological responses to acupuncture stimulation.
 - 4. Safety Concerns, Contraindications, and Animal-Specific Considerations**
 - Identify safety considerations when performing animal acupuncture, such as the Clean Needle Technique (CNT) and avoiding adverse events.
 - Recognize contraindications for acupuncture treatment in certain conditions.
 - Discuss species-specific anatomical and physiological differences that influence acupuncture practice.
 - 5. Neuroanatomical Rationale for Acupoint Selection**
 - Understand the principles of acupoint selection based on neuroanatomical pathways.
 - Learn how specific acupoints relate to MSK issues
 - 6. Non-Needling Techniques to Stimulate Acupoints**
 - Explore alternative methods such as laser acupuncture and acupressure.
 - Understand how these techniques influence acupoints and their therapeutic applications
 - Compare the efficacy and indications of non-needling techniques versus traditional acupuncture
 - 7. Palpation, Localization, and Needling of Acupoints in Dogs**
 - Develop skills in palpation techniques to locate acupuncture points on canine subjects
 - Practice accurate localization of specific acupoints using anatomical landmarks and palpation
 - Learn safe and effective needling techniques for various acupuncture points in dogs
 - 8. Clinical Reasoning Skills via Case Presentations**
 - Apply theoretical knowledge and practical skills to case studies involving animal acupuncture
 - Develop clinical reasoning abilities in identifying conditions suitable for acupuncture treatment as an adjunct to chiropractic care
 - Discuss treatment protocols, response evaluation, and modifications based on individual patient responses.

With these learning objectives, participants will gain a comprehensive understanding of animal acupuncture as an adjunct therapy utilized in chiropractic practice, encompassing historical context, anatomical foundations, neurophysiological mechanisms, practical techniques, and clinical applications. This framework ensures a thorough education integrating traditional and modern perspectives on acupuncture's role in animal MSK care.

Day1 = (8.5 hours):

Lesson 1:

- History of Acupuncture and Traditional Chinese Medicine
- Neurofunctional mechanisms of action for acupuncture
- Neuromodulation and anatomical levels of stimulation

Lesson 2:

- Non-needling techniques to stimulate acupoints
- Safety considerations for animal acupuncture and electroacupuncture, including animal visceral anatomy identification for acupuncture safety

Lesson 3: Acupuncture points of the hip, stifle, hock, tarsus, and foot

Lesson 4: Acupuncture points of the spine and pelvis

Lesson 5: Acupuncture points of the head and neck, shoulder, elbow, carpus, and foot

Lesson 6: Acupoint selection

Lesson 7: Case studies discussion and wrap-up

Day 2 (8.5 hours):

Lab Outline:

- Practical instruction and practice of needling 'opening points'
- Practical instruction and practice of needling acupuncture points of the hip
- Practical instruction and practice of needling acupuncture points of the stifle
- Practical instruction and practice of needling acupuncture points of the hock, tarsus, and foot
- Practical instruction and practice of needling acupuncture points of the spine and pelvis
- Practical instruction and practice of needling acupuncture points of the head and neck
- Practical instruction and practice of needling acupuncture points of the shoulder
- Practical instruction and practice of needling acupuncture points of the elbow, carpus, and foot
- Q&A
- Written & Practical Testing

Competency-Based Assessment

Assessment of point localization and safe needling practical technique exam

Competency-based written examination incorporating Parts I, II, & III

Case Study & Assignment

Passing Grade: 75%

Certification

To receive a Certificate in Small Animal Neuroanatomical Acupuncture, participants must complete the following:

- Meeting all prerequisites
- Finishing the online course (Part 1)
- Completing the Acupuncture Research Article Assignment (Part II)
- Attending the Hands-On course (Part III)
- Successfully passing the practical technique and written assessments

ADDENDUM

Safety and Considerations Regarding Small Animal Acupuncture and Dry Needling

Contraindications / Precautions

Absolute Contraindications

- During pregnancy, it is advised to avoid needling altogether and use points LI 4, SP 6, BL 40, BL 60, BL 67, ST 36, and all points around the lumbosacral or abdominal region.
- Needling of an edematous limb poses a risk of lymphedema.
- Patients on anticoagulant therapy or with a blood disorder affecting clotting (e.g. Von Willebrand disease) should not be needled.
- Needling over an infection
- Lack of owner consent
- Medical emergency

Relative Contraindications

- Avoid needling directly over or into a tumour.
- Avoid areas of poor skin condition (i.e. skin ulcers or abrasions, frail skin, unhealthy tissues, or an open wound)
- No aseptic technique is attempted in animal patients, and the area is not shaved prior to needling. However, needling should not be done over mud or feces.
- Patients with diabetes may experience poor tissue condition concerns and slower healing times.
- Uncontrolled seizure disorder

Special Precautions

- Immuno-suppressed patients, limit the number of points
- For patients who are extremely fatigued or weak, it is recommended to use shorter and smaller gauged needles and limit the number of points
- After extreme physical activity such as training or racing, patients should rest and relax for an hour before receiving acupuncture
- In cases of unclear diagnosis, limit the number of points used
- Be cautious when treating patients with abnormal physical structures and be aware of nearby sensitive structures
- When needling over or into articular spaces, only use ½ inch needles to avoid piercing the joint capsule (e.g., locations – knee eyes, or shoulder points LI 15 and TW 14)
- When needling over the thorax, using ½ inch or shorter needles, consider the needling depth and use oblique techniques to avoid puncturing the lung
- Do not use electroacupuncture over or across an animal's chest if they have a cardiac pacemaker
- If a patient has a strong negative reaction to acupuncture, reassess the treatment plan

Animal-Specific Considerations:

- The animal should be calm and controlled. Small animals do well in a recumbent position.
- Animals with needles in place should always be monitored to ensure minimal movement and to prevent nibbling or swallowing of the needles.
- It is not recommended to needle anywhere on the abdomen.

Safety

In human and animal acupuncture, a clean needle technique (CNT) is used rather than a sterile technique. While the needles are sterile, the technique may not be, especially when inserting them through the animal's hair and fur. Gloves are not typically worn unless there is a risk of exposure to blood or other body fluids. Practitioners should wash their hands with soap and water before and after needling or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are unavailable.

When needling, be prepared for possible contact with blood. Have a tissue or cotton ball ready to cover the insertion site upon removal. Keep a sharps container nearby for needle disposal. Avoid overfilling the container and keep it out of reach of children. When full, take the container to a collection facility for disposal.

Blood-tinged materials should be placed in a plastic bag or sealed inside a rubber glove for disposal.

Although needling-related infections are rare, any skin piercing can allow pathogens to enter. Practitioners should always use CNT and consider the patient's immune system.

If a needle stick injury or blood contact occurs, wash hands promptly. To prevent needle stick injuries, keep track of needles and dispose of them properly. Avoid rushing, interruptions, and needling when tired.

POTENTIAL ADVERSE EVENTS

Adverse Event Category	Example
Delayed or missed diagnosis	Cancer
Deterioration of disorder under treatment	Increased pain
Vegetative reactions	Autonomic type reaction, nausea, etc
Bacterial & viral infections	Hepatitis B
Trauma of tissue and organs	Pneumothorax*, cardiac tamponade*, nerve lesion

Peuker & Gronemeyer (2001)

To Prevent Pneumothorax or Cardiac Tamponade:

- Know lung and heart anatomy
- Use only half-inch needles over the thorax
- Consider the relative body sizes of the animals. For instance, one cun in a Chihuahua is less than one cun in a Mastiff. The depth of needle penetration for

dogs, especially in the thorax region, should be described in relative depth (i.e. cun). The bladder meridian points from BL11 to BL21 should not be inserted more than one cun.

- Needle at an oblique angle as opposed to perpendicular in the region of the thorax (or over the viscera)

Identification of pneumothorax:

- Shortness of breath
- Dry cough
- Decreased auscultation breath sounds
- Fatigue
- Tachycardia
- Low oxygen saturation
- Low blood pressure

Symptoms of cardiac tamponade include:

- Anxiety
- Restlessness
- Low blood pressure
- Weakness
- Chest pain radiating to the neck, shoulder, back, or abdomen
- Chest pain that worsens with deep breathing or coughing
- Problems breathing or rapid breathing
- Fainting or drowsiness
- Diminished or absent peripheral pulses

Broken Needle

Needle breakage is rare but is more likely to occur at the handle-shaft junction. Avoid inserting needles up to the handle, don't reuse needles, and use forceps to remove a broken needle from the external end. If you can't remove the needle, seek veterinary help.

Ingested Needle

According to Xie & Preast (2007), if an animal has swallowed a needle, it should be fed a high-fibre diet, and a veterinarian should be consulted to take radiographs to monitor the location of the swallowed needle. It may take five to seven days for the needle to pass.

Stuck Needle

If a needle becomes stuck during insertion, the therapist can wait for the muscle to relax, massage around the stuck needle, or attempt to twirl it in the opposite direction. If the needle remains stuck, inserting a second nearby can often help release it.

Performance Expectations

The practitioner:

1. Assesses the risks and benefits associated with needling and communicates these to the client to obtain the client's informed consent for the treatment of the animal patient.
2. Remember, written consent does not equal informed consent.
3. Assess appropriateness and benefits for the animal patient.

4. Presents all risks to the animal owner, including that of a pneumothorax.

Establish critical event management plans for potential adverse events associated with needling and regularly review these plans with other staff in the practice environment (e.g. closest emergency veterinary clinic & staff action plan).

Regarding Needles:

- There is no standard for the depth of needle penetration, especially in animals.
- There is no standard for needle manipulation or stimulation.
- Needles come in different thicknesses, lengths, and materials.
- About 1/3 of the needle should be left outside the skin.
- Use pre-sterilized needles.
- Use metal needles as they are safe for electrical stimulation and for targeting fascia and trigger points.
- Ensure safety regarding the depth of needle penetration.
- There are different ways to stimulate the needle, such as turning, flicking, applying heat, applying electricity, moving the needle in and out, or keeping it stationary.

Inserting a Needle

- Push the needle with the tube
- Pinch or tent skin
- Stretch the skin
- use a jabbing motion like a Henpeck
- Rotate the needle 3 times to grab the fascia and allow shallower insertion with a bigger impact
- insert the needle perpendicular, Inclined, or Flat
- Position yourself to avoid a bite in case of tenderness
- Skin penetration is usually not painful but could cause a sharp, fleeting sting
- Subcutaneous tissue and muscle penetration may feel a grabbing or sucking of the needle
- Hitting bone, tendon, and ligaments is painful and indicates resistance.
- Hitting a nerve or blood vessel is painful, but it does not feel like resistance In such cases, withdraw partially or completely reposition the needle

Dealing with a Stuck Needle

- Wait for the tissues to relax
- Untwist/turn in the opposite direction
- Apply pressure on skin and tissues near the needle
- Insert a second needle close to the first.

Body Measurement System

- Body ratio system. 1 palm area = 1% of the body.
- 1 cun = width of the Achilles tendon, width of a digit, width of a rib

Acupoint Size:

- Acupoints are often compared to the size of coins for different animals: a Loonie for a horse, a Quarter for a human, a Nickel for a dog, and a Dime for a cat.

- However, considering the variety of dog sizes, a dog's acupoints can range from a quarter to less than a dime.
- The key point is that there is a wide margin of error when determining the actual size of an acupoint.

Typical Reactions in Animal Acupuncture

Typical reactions may include feeling relaxed or sleepy, yawning, looking at the needles, experiencing urination afterwards, skin rippling, and grunting.

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Small Animal Neuro-Anatomical Acupuncture & Dry Needling Certification PART 1

Prerequisites:

- Diploma or Degree in Physiotherapy / Physical Therapy
- Diploma in Canine Rehab, CCRT, CCRP, Master in Animal Physiotherapy, Master in Veterinary Physiotherapy, Diploma in Veterinary Physiotherapy (Or equivalent)
- Rostered to perform needling techniques by their provincial physiotherapy College OR education in human Acupuncture and/or Dry Needling as evidenced by a certification (i.e. a test was conducted and the student passed) in cases where the province does not roster for needling.

Course description This course is designed to transition physiotherapists who are educated and rostered to needle in human practice into being able to select acupoints or myofascial trigger points to needle in small animal patients. The course is taught with a western neuroanatomical approach to acupuncture and dry needling. The online portion of this certification course consists of 15 lessons, examination questions that follow each lesson, and a final exam. Case studies are discussed as well.

Learning Objectives

Participants will:

- acquire knowledge of the history of acupuncture.
- gain a basic understanding of the anatomical / westernized approach to acupuncture.
- understand neuroanatomical mechanisms of action for the effectiveness of acupuncture.
- learn about safety concerns, contraindications, and animal-specific considerations.
- be able to identify a neuroanatomical rationale for the selection of acupoints.
- learn about non-needling techniques to stimulate acupoints.
- be instructed in palpation, localization, and needling of acupoints on a canine subject.
- learn the theory and mechanisms of action for dry needling techniques.
- be instructed in dry needling techniques.
- learn clinical reasoning skills via case presentations as it pertains to both acupuncture and dry needling.

Course Structure

15 online lessons, case studies and final exam.



Certification

Completion of this online program (and passing the examination) is a prerequisite to the one-day Hands-On course (Part 2) where students can practice point localization and the various needling techniques on small animal subjects. **Completion of both** the online and hands-on courses will culminate in a *Certificate in Small Animal Neuro-Anatomical Acupuncture & Dry Needling.*

Registration

Online www.embodiaacademy.com and search for **Small Animal Neuro-Anatomical Acupuncture & Dry Needling Certification - PART 1**

Availability - anytime

Cost: ARD member (\$396 + HST), non-ARD member (\$495 + HST)
Animal Rehabilitation – GST/HST # - **106865397 RT0031**

For more information, please contact animalrehab@physiotherapy.ca,



Small Animal Neuro-Anatomical Acupuncture & Dry Needling Certification PART 2

Prerequisites

- Diploma or Degree in Physiotherapy / Physical Therapy
- Diploma in Canine Rehab, CCRT, CCRP, Master in Animal Physiotherapy, Master in Veterinary Physiotherapy, Diploma in Veterinary Physiotherapy (Or equivalent)
- Rostered to perform needling techniques by their provincial physiotherapy College OR education in human Acupuncture and/or Dry Needling as evidenced by a certification (i.e. a test was conducted and the student passed) in cases where the province does not roster for needling.
- ** Completion of the Online Course – Small Animal Neuro-Anatomical Acupuncture & Dry Needling – Part 1. Course available at www.EmbodiaAcademy.com **

Course description

This One-Day course is designed to transition physiotherapists who are educated and rostered to needle in human practice into being able to perform acupuncture or dry needling on the small animal patient. The course is taught with a western neuroanatomical approach to acupuncture and dry needling. The course will instruct participants in needling technique, point localizations, and practical dry needling skills on canine (or other small animal) patients. Safety and refinement of needling skills will be a focus. The entire course will be practical, as lecture materials will have been covered in the Online Part 1 course (prerequisite). Time will be allotted for questions and discussion.

Learning Objectives

Participants will:

- be instructed in palpation, localization, and needling of acupoints on a canine subject.
- practice needling all needle-safe points from the Part 1 Online course.
- practice safe positioning (of therapist and patient).
- practice appropriate needle direction and stimulation techniques.
- be instructed in dry needling techniques.
- practice needling myofascial trigger points.



Course Outline

Practical instruction and practice of needling 'opening points'
 Practical instruction and practice of needling acupuncture points of the head and neck
 Practical instruction and practice of needling acupuncture points of the shoulder
 Practical instruction and practice of needling acupuncture points of the elbow, carpus, and foot
 Practical instruction and practice of needling acupuncture points of the spine and pelvis
 Practical instruction and practice of needling acupuncture points of the hip
 Practical instruction and practice of needling acupuncture points of the stifle
 Practical instruction and practice of needling acupuncture points of the hock, tarsus, and foot
 Dry needling and ashi points (introduction & techniques)

Certification

Completion of BOTH the online course (Part 1) and passing the examination and completion of the one-day Hands-On course (Part 2) will culminate in a Certificate in Small Animal Neuro-Anatomical Acupuncture & Dry Needling.

Registration

Date: Friday June 24, 2022 8:30am - 4:30pm
 Kemptville Canine Center, 2868 County Rd 43, Kemptville, ON K0G 1J0
<https://www.kemptvillecanine.com>
 Instructors: Carrie Smith, PT, Laurie Edge-Hughes, PT, Telma Grant, PT
 Deadline for registration is: June 10, 2022

Cost: ARD member (\$475 + HST), non-ARD member (\$575 + HST)
 Animal Rehabilitation – GST/HST # - **106865397 RT0031**

To register please go to: <https://ard.rostertrack.com/>

You will be invoiced via the secure PayPal system once it is confirmed that the course will run so that you may have the option of paying by credit card OR PayPal debit.

For more information, please contact animalrehab@physiotherapy.ca,
 ph/fax (403) 932-4432

*****The animal rehab division reserves the right to cancel this course at any time. Course confirmation will be sent out no later than 3-weeks prior to the start date of the course. The Animal Rehab Division strongly recommends obtaining cancellation insurance for all travel.*****

ACUPUNCTURE



Standard of Practice S-017

Quality Assurance Committee

Distributed for Feedback: September 2006

Approved by Council: June 22, 2007

Amended: September 11, 2007, December 3, 2009, September 15, 2016, February 27, 2019

Note to Readers: In the event of any inconsistency between this document and the legislation that affects chiropractic practice, the legislation governs.

INTENT

Chiropractors have been using acupuncture treatments for many years as an adjunctive therapy for their patients. The use of acupuncture, as an adjunctive therapy, requires a high degree of skill and is not without risk. This standard of practice outlines the elements necessary to maintain a high level of skill in the application of acupuncture as an adjunctive therapy in the chiropractic practice.

Note: This standard of practice applies to members of CCO when they are providing acupuncture under their chiropractic certificate of registration, and not to members of CCO who may be also members of the College of Traditional Chinese Medicine Practitioners and Acupuncturists of Ontario, providing acupuncture services as a traditional Chinese medicine practitioner or acupuncturist.

OBJECTIVES

- To assist members who intend to provide acupuncture services as an adjunctive therapy to their patients.
- To remind members of their duties, obligations and scope of practice when providing acupuncture services as an adjunctive therapy to their patients.

DESCRIPTION OF STANDARD OF PRACTICE

Scope of Practice

Members are authorized under Regulation 107/96 of the *Regulated Health Professions Act, 1991 (RHPA)* to perform acupuncture, a procedure performed on tissue below the dermis, in accordance with this standard of practice and within the chiropractic scope of practice. Regulation 107/96 creates a specific exemption for specific regulated health professionals, including chiropractors, to perform the controlled act of a procedure performed on tissue below the dermis, in accordance with the standard of practice and within the scope of practice of the profession.

Standard of Practice S-017: Acupuncture

Therefore, a member may **only** perform the controlled act of performing acupuncture, a procedure below the dermis, as an adjunctive treatment, within the chiropractic scope of practice, and in accordance with this standard of practice.

The chiropractic scope of practice is defined in the *Chiropractic Act 1991*, as follows:

The practice of chiropractic is the assessment of conditions related to the spine, nervous system and joints and the diagnosis, prevention and treatment, primarily by adjustment, of:

- (a) dysfunctions or disorders arising from the structures or functions of the spine and the effects of those dysfunctions or disorders on the nervous system; and
- (b) dysfunctions or disorders arising from the structures or functions of the joints.

See Standard of Practice S-001: Chiropractic Scope of Practice for further information.

For the purposes of this standard of practice, the performance of dry needling is considered as performing the controlled act of acupuncture, a procedure performed below the dermis, and has the professional responsibilities outlined in Regulation 107/96 and this standard of practice.

Titles

Members who use acupuncture as an adjunctive therapy are reminded that they are restricted from using certain titles and representations to the public as outlined in section 8 of the *Traditional Chinese Medicine Act, 2006*:

8(1) “No person other than a member (of the College of Traditional Chinese Medicine Practitioners and Acupuncturists) shall use the titles "traditional Chinese medicine practitioner" or "acupuncturist", a variation or abbreviation or an equivalent in another language.”

8(2) “No person other than a member shall hold himself or herself out as a person who is qualified to practise in Ontario as a traditional Chinese medicine practitioner or acupuncturist or in a specialty of traditional Chinese medicine.”

Therefore, members may not make any misrepresentations to the public that they are a traditional Chinese Medicine Practitioner or acupuncturist. Members must clearly communicate to the public, including advertising, signs websites and social media and billing and business practices, that they are a chiropractor who performs acupuncture as an adjunctive treatment, and not an acupuncturist or a member of the College of Traditional Chinese Medicine Practitioners or Acupuncturists.

A member shall consider whether their overall representation of their use of acupuncture as an adjunctive treatment is misleading to a reasonable member of the public. In addition the College of Traditional Chinese Medicine Practitioners and Acupuncturists of Ontario has the jurisdiction

Standard of Practice S-017: Acupuncture

to address any inappropriate representation of someone who is not a member of their college holding themselves out as a person who is qualified to practise in Ontario as a traditional Chinese medicine practitioner or acupuncturist or in a specialty of traditional Chinese medicine.

For example, CCO considers the use of the titles “acupuncture provider” and “acupuncture clinic” to be a variation of the title “acupuncturist”, contrary to the *Traditional Chinese Medicine Act, 2006*, if the member is also not a member of the College of Traditional Chinese Medicine Practitioners and Acupuncturists of Ontario. It would be more accurate for a member to list acupuncture as an adjunctive therapy that is provided, in the context of providing chiropractic care.

Assessment and Care Related to Acupuncture

A member shall ensure that they are providing acupuncture within the chiropractic scope of practice and in accordance with CCO standards of practice.

In providing acupuncture, a member must perform a chiropractic consultation and examination, communicate a diagnosis or clinical impression within the chiropractic scope of practice, obtain informed consent and deliver a plan of care, which may involve acupuncture as an adjunctive treatment, consistent with the chiropractic scope of practice.

Consideration of Public Safety

Members are reminded that the use of any acupuncture procedure or protocol may have significant benefits for patients, but also carries some risk. As such, members must be:

- skilled at prevention of infection and familiar with clean needle techniques;
- aware of any and all contraindications to the use of acupuncture;
- trained in the appropriate responses to accidents and untoward reactions;
- aware of precautions necessary to prevent injury.

Members are required to obtain patient consent prior to treatment by acupuncture that is:

- fully informed;
- voluntarily given;
- related to the patient’s condition and circumstances;
- not obtained through fraud or misrepresentation; and
- evidenced in a written form signed by the patient or otherwise documented in the patient health record.

Members are reminded that this standard should be read in conjunction with standard of practice S-013: Consent. Members should refer to the World Health Organization’s (WHO) *Guidelines on Basic Training and Safety in Acupuncture, 1999* (WHO Guidelines), for a more in-depth discussion of prevention of infection, contraindications, accidents and untoward reactions, and injury to organs.

Educational Requirements in Establishing Degree of Skill

To practise acupuncture as an adjunctive therapy in the context of their chiropractic practice, members must have completed specific acupuncture training as taught in the core curriculum, post-graduate curriculum or continuing education division of one or more colleges accredited by the Council on Chiropractic Education Inc., or in an accredited Canadian or American college/university, or in an accredited school of acupuncture¹.

CCO adopts the WHO Guidelines that a combined (clinical and academic) minimum of 200 hours of formal training² is required for those members who intend to use acupuncture as an adjunctive procedure in their primary practice.

Members are required to achieve, maintain and be able to demonstrate clinical competency in any diagnostic or therapeutic procedure that they use in practice. As such, members who are authorized to perform acupuncture are required to participate in ongoing continuing education activities in the performance of acupuncture as an adjunctive therapy within the chiropractic scope of practice.

Billing Practices for Acupuncture as an Adjunctive Treatment

The financial record and invoice for acupuncture must reflect the clinical delivery of acupuncture as an adjunctive treatment. Therefore, the records must reflect that the member performed acupuncture under their certificate of registration as a chiropractor, within the chiropractic scope of practice, and in accordance with this standard of practice as an adjunctive procedure.

GRANDPARENTING CLAUSE

Chiropractors who have actively practised acupuncture as an adjunctive therapy in their chiropractic practice for a minimum of five consecutive years immediately before the enactment of this standard of practice will be deemed to have met the qualifications to practise acupuncture as an adjunctive therapy, as outlined above.

¹ Examination, certification or other proof of clinical proficiency is required.

² The course should comprise at least 200 hours of formal training, and should include the following components:

1. Introduction to traditional Chinese acupuncture
2. Acupuncture points
 - location of the 361 classical points on the 14 meridians and the 48 extraordinary points;
 - alphanumeric codes and names, classifications of points, direction and depth of insertion of needles, actions and indications of the commonly used points selected for basic training.
3. Applications of acupuncture in modern Western medicine
 - principal clinical conditions in which acupuncture has been shown to be beneficial;
 - selection of patients and evaluation of progress/benefit;
 - planning of treatment, selection of points and methods of needle manipulation, and the use of medication or other forms of therapy concurrently with acupuncture.
4. Guidelines on safety in acupuncture
5. Treatment techniques
 - general principles;
 - specific clinical conditions.

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Actively practising acupuncture as an adjunctive therapy means performing 150 acupuncture treatments per year for each of the last five years within a chiropractic practice.

PROFESSIONAL LIABILITY INSURANCE

Members must provide evidence, satisfactory to the Registrar, of carrying professional liability insurance in the applicable minimum amount per occurrence and minimum aggregate amount per year, including coverage for claims after the member ceases to hold a certificate or membership in a protective association that provides equivalent protection unless, the applicant is, or will be when registered, an employee of a member, a health facility or other body that has equivalent professional liability insurance coverage or membership in a protective association that provides equivalent protection.

LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT***Health Professions Procedural Code (The Code), Schedule 2 of the Regulation Health Professions Act, 1991***

The QA program is defined in section 1 (1) of the Code as “a program to assure the quality of the practice of the profession and to promote continuing evaluation, competence and improvement among members.”

Objects and Duties of CCO – Section 3 of *the Code*

Section 3(1): The College has the following objects:

5. To develop, establish and maintain standards of practice to assure the quality of the practice of the profession
6. to develop, establish and maintain standards of knowledge, skill and programs to promote continuing competence among the members

Regulation 107/96 of the *RHPA*: Controlled Acts**Section 8(2)**

Subject to subsection (4), a person who is a member of a College listed in Column 1 of the Table is exempt from subsection 27(1) of the Act for the purpose of performing acupuncture, a procedure performed on tissue below the dermis, in accordance with the standard of practice and within the scope of practice of the health profession listed in Column 2.

Table

	Column 1	Column 2
1.	College of Chiropractors of Ontario	Chiropractic
2.	College of Chiropractors of Ontario	Chiropractic
3.	College of Massage Therapists of Ontario	Massage Therapy
4.	College of Nurses of Ontario	Nursing
5.	College of Occupational Therapists of Ontario	Occupational Therapy
6.	College of Physiotherapists of Ontario	Physiotherapy
7.	Royal College of Dental Surgeons of Ontario	Dentistry

Titles

Members who use acupuncture as an adjunctive therapy are reminded that they are restricted from using certain titles as outlined in section 8(1) of the *Traditional Chinese Medicine Act, 2006*:

Section 8(1)

No person other than a member (of the College of Traditional Chinese Medicine Practitioners and Acupuncturists) shall use the titles "traditional Chinese medicine practitioner" or "acupuncturist", a variation or abbreviation or an equivalent in another language.

Chiropractic Act, 1991**Scope of Practice**

Members who use acupuncture as an adjunctive therapy are reminded that the scope of practice of chiropractic is defined in section 3 of the *Chiropractic Act, 1991*:

3. The practice of chiropractic is the assessment of conditions related to the spine, nervous system and joints and the diagnosis, prevention and treatment, primarily by adjustment, of:
 - (a) dysfunctions or disorders arising from the structures or functions of the spine and the effects of those dysfunctions or disorders on the nervous system; and

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(b) dysfunctions or disorders arising from the structures or functions of the joints.

CONCLUSION

Identifying and complying with safeguards will ensure safer administration of this form of treatment. Therefore, risks to the public will be minimized and the benefits of safe, effective therapeutic treatment will be maintained.

This standard should be read in conjunction with standards of practice S-001: Chiropractic Scope of Practice, S-003: Professional Portfolio, S-011: Members of More Than One Health Profession, and S-013: Consent.



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November 18, 2024

****Subject:**** Response to CVO's Request for Further Information on Animal Chiropractors' Training, Prerequisites, and Safety in Providing Animal Acupuncture

Dear Transitional Council Members,

Further to our submission of the detailed course outline for the Neurofunctional Acupuncture Course for Animal Chiropractors, we would like to provide additional clarification in response to the questions raised by the CVO's Transitional Council regarding training, prerequisites, and safety protocols for providing acupuncture to animals.

To address the College's inquiry regarding the mitigation of risks associated with acupuncture, we draw your attention to pages 11-14 of the course outline, where these protocols are detailed comprehensively. Risk mitigation strategies include, but are not limited to:

- The use of Clean Needle Technique (CNT)
- Appropriate needle length selection and insertion angle
- Safe disposal practices
- The establishment of a comprehensive Critical Event Management Plan

The Critical Event Management Plan addresses rare but potential adverse events and is designed to be regularly reviewed and practiced in collaboration with staff. This includes maintaining up-to-date action plans and identifying the nearest emergency veterinary clinic.

Regarding prerequisites for enrollment, one of the six requirements is that participants must hold certification in human acupuncture. This certification must align with the World Health Organization's (WHO) minimum standard of 200 hours of formal training. A full list of prerequisites and their rationales is provided on page 6 of the VCLC Course Outline.

We trust that this information addresses your questions. Should further clarification be required, please do not hesitate to reach out to us.

Best regards,

Dr. Kim Adie, DC
VCLC Program Directors

Dr. Annette Langlois, DC

