

SUBMISSION TO COAG-HEALTH WORKING GROUP

RE: NATIONAL ACCREDITATION SCHEME

Dr Louise Morauta
Deputy Secretary

On behalf of the Council on Chiropractic Education Australasia (CCEA) we thank you for the initial invitation to participate in the recent consultation session held in Canberra on the 28th September 2006.

As advised, we provide written comment and ask that the following key issues and concerns be considered. Safeguards would be necessary.

1. The CCEA is a bi-national agency (Australia and New Zealand) involved in the accreditation of chiropractic undergraduate/first professional programs. Secondly, the CCEA is responsible for the assessment of overseas chiropractors for their suitability to migrate and practice in Australia. The CCEA has been gazetted by the Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs as the relevant assessing body for the chiropractic profession in Australia.
2. The CCEA is a member of an international body of chiropractic accreditation agencies (CCEI – The Councils on Chiropractic Education International).
3. The CCEA is given the international responsibility (by its CCEI membership) to undertake program accreditations in the Australian/Asian Pacific/South East Asian regions. CCEA is currently responsible for the accreditation of one Japanese chiropractic program with programs in other South East Asian regions also seeking accreditation.
4. International membership is based upon adherence and compliance to international accreditation and education standards, processes and procedures as well as constitutional compliance. (CCEI's Procedures for Initiation and Conduct of Review to Ensure Compliance of Educational Standards and Constitutions of Member Agencies.)
5. International membership enables international educational equivalency of chiropractic programs accredited by the member agency.
6. International equivalency enables greater mobility/portability of graduates wishing to practice in other international jurisdictions. (e.g it allows graduates to skip various hurdles.)
7. International mobility is an important component to chiropractic practice. The current chiropractic workforce in Australia contains approximately 25% of overseas graduates.

8. A considerable percentage of Australian trained chiropractors work overseas at various stages of their career.
9. International membership would be jeopardised if:
 - (a) Standards were compromised;
 - (b) The Constitution was altered to no longer be compliant. It is imperative that the accreditation process and decision be independent, objective and by a profession-specific agency;
 - (c) The international body could not deal with the currently credentialed Council (CCEA);
 - (d) Registration and accreditation did not have clear delineation and separateness.

As mentioned above, the CCEA conducts Competency assessments to determine suitability for overseas chiropractors for migration to and practice in Australia. Due to Trans Tasman arrangements the CCEA is working closely with the New Zealand Chiropractors' Board to standardize this approach in both countries.

Mechanisms

1. Due to our international relationships our preferred structure is as follows:
That current accreditation agencies remain as they currently exist and that these agencies represent or continue to be the profession-specific Councils.
2. That there be an over-riding policy and administrative advisory body to deal with areas of consistency and efficiencies. This would provide the accreditation agencies with quality control and assurance mechanisms.
3. It is absolute that the advisory body not decide on profession-specific matters, nor have veto power over the accreditation decisions of the profession-specific agency.
4. That the advisory body have at least full and equal representation of each professional group.
5. If existing accreditation agencies remain then transition issues would be very minimal.
6. A task-force should be established with a representative from each current agency to progress the scheme.

Thank you for the opportunity to make comment. We look forward to discussing these issues further in Canberra on 4th December 2006.

Yours sincerely

Debby Ramsay

for

Dr Phillip Donato

CHAIRMAN

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