

March 28, 2025

Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance and
Financial Services

Regarding: LD 1220

Dear Committee,

I have been a practicing companion animal veterinarian and a professor teaching at Parker University for the past 44 years. In 2002 we started a post graduate program at Parker to educate licensed Chiropractors and Veterinarians in the art, the philosophy, and the science of animal chiropractic. I started this program after incorporating chiropractic therapy into my veterinary practice and seeing the results chiropractic care afforded my patients. It was a therapeutic treatment plan that was beyond what I had been trained to do in veterinary school. It offers a drug and surgery free approach to treatment of neuromusculoskeletal conditions and there were many animals I was able to return to a quality of life that I was not able to help using traditional veterinary medicine.

The postgraduate program at Parker University has grown into one of the largest program of its type in the country and we maintain the highest ethical standards in teaching. We only offer the training to licensed Veterinarians and Chiropractors. The course is a vigorous 225.5 post graduate contact hours, equivalent to a 9-10 college credit hour class. Topics covered include contraindications to adjust (treat the patient using approved chiropractic methodologies; a chiropractic osseous thrust or manipulation) , how to recognize cases which should be treated by the veterinarian, when to refer to a veterinarian, zoonotic diseases, chiropractic philosophy and history, practice ethics and legalities, biomechanics, veterinary anatomy, terminology, neurology, case studies, research, pathology, practice management, and chiropractic adjusting techniques. We train our students to recognize when and when not to adjust, how to recognize when to send the animal to the veterinarian and how to recognize zoonotic diseases. We are also strict in training our students about staying within the scope of practice and not crossing practice lines.

The Parker Animal Chiropractic Program does not train chiropractors how to practice veterinary medicine or how to make a veterinary diagnosis. We teach that Animal Chiropractic is a distinct and separate approach to health care which utilizes the expertise of both the Chiropractor and the Veterinarian. Animal Chiropractic care does not replace traditional veterinary medicine but creates a symbiotic relationship between the two professions. One of the key elements of the program is to get the Chiropractor and the Veterinarian to work closely together and to understand the uniqueness of what each health care discipline can do to advance the health of the animal patient. We do not teach Chiropractors to diagnose veterinary diseases. We do not teach Veterinarians to be human Chiropractors. We do teach the science, the philosophy, and the art of chiropractic as it applies to animal health. We do teach our students to recognize common diseases in animals so they can notify the Veterinarian. We teach Veterinarians how to perform a chiropractic assessment on animals and to how to adjust using acceptable chiropractic techniques. We promote collegiality and understanding between the two professions.

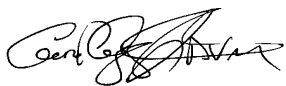
One of the continual problems I have encountered in the state I practice in is there is a resistance of veterinarians to utilize individuals trained in animal chiropractic to treat patients who can benefit from this type of care. It is also a problem of access. In the state of Texas, a chiropractor can assess and adjust an animal patient if the patient is first seen by a veterinarian and the Veterinarian determines that "musculoskeletal manipulation" will not be harmful to the animal. Then the veterinarian can recommend the client take their animal to a Chiropractor. This procedure is flawed in that often times, especially in rural areas, access to the Veterinarian may be delayed days to weeks due to case load and once the client is able to have their animal seen, the veterinarian because of bias or ignorance about what chiropractic is, fails to recommend the animal be seen by a chiropractor.

Having personally trained many Veterinarians and Chiropractors in chiropractic care for animals, I will unequivocally state that it is much easier to train a chiropractor in how to adjust an animal than a veterinarian. Licensed Chiropractors have an extensive background in the basic sciences including anatomy, physiology, microbiology, biochemistry, and chiropractic techniques and they already know how to adjust their human patients. So, it is relatively easy for them to learn the anatomy of the animal patient and to learn to adjust animals. The veterinarians, while they know the anatomy, physiology, etc. struggle with the art of chiropractic assessment, adjusting and care.

There is another issue that many states fail to address when dealing with animal chiropractors and that is the right of the general public to access care for their animals. Restricting this access can be construed as denying care to animals, and unfortunately, I have seen small animal cases in which the animal was euthanized because the owner could not financially afford spinal decompressive surgery, and the veterinarian told them that it was surgery or euthanasia. Not offering them the option of chiropractic care borders on malpractice and is a restriction of trade. The question of the patient having first been seen by the veterinarian prior to a chiropractor seeing the animal is an ongoing debate which many states are still discussing. Some states allow access without a veterinarian recommendation, some states require that the animal first be seen by a veterinarian, some states prohibit a chiropractor from treating animal patients.

In summary, I support the right of licensed chiropractors who have received the appropriate training, passed the appropriate certification exams given by the American Veterinary Chiropractic Association (or the equivalent), and maintain their training by meeting CE requirements, to be able to access animal patients, render a chiropractic assessment and then provide chiropractic care if so indicated. I would be happy to answer any questions anyone might have about this letter.

Sincerely,



/M, D. Hum. CAC, EMR