

SP-DCRPP-ACU
Reserved Practice Permit – DC Acupuncture/Dry Needling
Approved Date: NSCC November 15, 2025
Amended: Effective NSCNR May 27, 2026
Next Review Date: 2029

Note to Readers: *In the event of any inconsistency between this document and the legislation that governs chiropractic and naturopathic practice in Nova Scotia, the legislation prevails.*

1. INTRODUCTION

The Nova Scotia Chiropractic and Naturopathic Regulator (**NSCNR**) is the regulatory authority for the practice of chiropractic and naturopathy in the Province of Nova Scotia.

The NSCNR serves and protects the public interest to advance ethical and competent chiropractic and naturopathic care in Nova Scotia.

The NSCC recognizes the integration of acupuncture into the scope of chiropractic practice.

This Standard of Practice establishes the minimum professional practice expectations for Registrants holding an active chiropractor license with the NSCNR who also hold a Reserved Practice Permit to perform **Acupuncture/Dry Needling** and are therefore authorized to perform these Reserved Practices.

2. APPLICATION AND ADMINISTRATION

This Standard of Practice shall apply to all chiropractors registered and holding an active chiropractor license with the NSCNR (the “**DC Registrant**” or collectively the “**DC Registrants**”).

The administration and application of this Standard of Practice shall be the responsibility of the Registrar. Should the NSCNR become aware of any alleged breach or noncompliance with this Standard of Practice, it may take any action it considers appropriate, including but not limited to:

- a. contacting the DC Registrant to request the immediate remedy of any suspected breach or non-compliance;
- b. filing a formal complaint under the *Regulated Health Professions Act* regarding the suspected breach or non-compliance as professional misconduct; and/or
- c. immediate suspension or revocation of the DC Registrant’s Reserved Practice Permit.

3. OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this Standard of Practice are:

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- a) ensuring acupuncture and/or dry needling is performed only by competent and authorized DC Registrants;
- b) identifying the conditions under which DC Registrants may perform acupuncture and/or dry needling;
- c) providing clear requirements for training, authorization, and performance of acupuncture and/or dry needling; and
- d) supporting safe, ethical, and evidence-informed care.

4. DEFINITIONS

The following terms have the following meanings when used in this Standard of Practice:

Acupuncture means the insertion, manipulation, and removal of acupuncture needles into specific points on the body for therapeutic purposes. For the purposes of this standard acupuncture, dry needling and Chinese medicine acupuncture have the same meaning.

Adjunctive Practice means the use of a therapeutic intervention only in addition to, and not as a standalone treatment or substitute for, appropriate evidence-based diagnosis and treatment, and in a manner that does not delay or interfere with such care.

Board refers to the Board of the Nova Scotia Chiropractic and Naturopathic Regulator.

Professional Misconduct has the same meaning as set out in the *Regulated Health Professions Act* and includes failing to maintain the standards of practice.

Reserved Practice has the same meaning as set out in the *Chiropractic and Naturopathic Regulations* and means an activity, procedure or service within the scope of practice of naturopathy that:

- a. involves sufficient risk to the public, as determined by the Board;
- b. the Board requires licensed person to meet additional education, additional training or other requirements beyond an entry to practice level to engage in, and;
- c. a licensed person may engage in only with the approval of the registrar and may require a specific permit.

Reserved Practice Permit refers to a permit issued by the NSCNR authorizing a Registrant to perform specified restricted activities upon successful completion of NSCNR-approved training and competency requirements. Reserved Practice Permits must be applied for and renewed annually in accordance with the requirements set out in the applicable Standard of Practice.

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5. RESERVED PRACTICE PERMIT – DC ACUPUNCTURE/DRY NEEDLING SCOPE OF AUTHORIZATION

A. Acupuncture and dry needling administration are authorized for DC Registrants holding a current **Reserved Practice Permit – Acupuncture/Dry Needling**. This permit authorizes

- a) the provision of acupuncture and/or dry needling within the chiropractic scope of practice as an Adjunctive Practice, subject to compliance with this Standard of Practice; a

B. Prohibitions on DC Acupuncture:

- a) DC Registrants who do not hold a Reserved Practice Permit – Acupuncture/Dry Needling **are prohibited** from performing acupuncture or dry needling in any form.
- b) DC Registrants **may only** perform acupuncture or dry needling if they hold an active chiropractor license with the NSCNR **and** if they have been issued a Reserved Practice Permit to perform acupuncture /dry needling by the NSCNR.

6. STANDARDS OF PRACTICE

A. Qualifications for Permit

A DC Registrant may apply for a Reserved Practice Permit – Acupuncture/Dry Needling where they meet the following criteria:

- a) hold an active chiropractor license with the NSCNR;
- b) show proof of completing a minimum of **200 course hours** in an NSCC-approved acupuncture training program. This program **must include an in-person clinical learning component as well as a formal clinical assessment**; and
- c) show proof of professional liability insurance coverage which includes the use of acupuncture/dry needling.

B. Training and Competency Requirements

Registrants must provide proof of completing an acupuncture training program which meets the following requirements:

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- a) **approved by the NSCNR** (please refer to Appendix 1 for pre-approved programs);
- b) provides a minimum of **200 hours of course instruction**;
- c) includes **an in-person clinical learning component**; and
- d) includes a formal **clinical assessment of competency**.

C. Ongoing Competence and Maintenance of Permit

DC Registrants who are issued a Reserved Practice Permit – Acupuncture/Dry Needling are required to renew their permit on an annual basis.

D. Quality Assurance

- a) The NSCNR may at any time request that a DC Registrant submit training or education records, appointment calendars, patient records, emergency protocols, and any other documentation required to demonstrate continued compliance with this Standard of Practice. Failure to do so may result in suspension or revocation of the Registrant's Reserved Practice Permit
- b) The NSCNR may conduct inspections at any time as set out in the *Chiropractic and Naturopathy Regulations* and Nova Scotia Chiropractic and Naturopathic Regulator Bylaws.
- c) Failure to maintain continued competence or first aid certification, submit records when requested, or meet any permit maintenance requirements may result in immediate suspension or revocation of the Registrant's Reserved Practice Permit and authorization to perform associated activities.
- d) The NSCNR may refuse to issue or may impose conditions on a Reserved Practice Permit-DC Acupuncture if the DC Registrant does not meet the requirements set out in this Standard of Practice or does not demonstrate sufficient knowledge, skill, judgment, or readiness to practise safely.

E. General Standards

DC Registrants who hold a Reserved Practice Permit – Acupuncture/Dry Needling must:

- a) Use acupuncture/dry needling only in conjunction with the adjustment or manipulation of the spinal column and other articulations of the body, and not as a stand-alone treatment;
- b) not list acupuncture and/or dry needling as a “specialty” in any professional communication;

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- c) maintain current professional liability insurance coverage which includes the use of acupuncture/dry needling and be able to provide proof upon request of the NSCNR on request;
- d) visibly and publicly display the Reserved Practice Permit - Acupuncture/Dry Needling at the registrant's place of work;
- e) obtain and document specific informed consent for acupuncture/dry needling in accordance with the **NSCNR Standard of Practice: Informed Consent** and which may be combined with chiropractic informed consent forms;
- f) follow clean needle techniques and comply with all aspects of **NSCNR Standard of Practice: Infectious Disease Control** and including the following:
 - i. needles are to be single use;
 - ii. treatment area must be appropriately exposed and prepared with visible anatomical landmarks;
 - iii. needles must be inserted on exposed skin surfaces; and
 - iv. needles may not be inserted through clothing or other materials.
- g) dispose of all acupuncture needles immediately after use in an approved sharps container which must be puncture-resistant, clearly labeled, and disposed of in accordance with applicable biomedical waste regulations
- h) ensure that patients receiving treatment are appropriately monitored with the Registrant available for immediate assistance; and
- i) where the DC Registrant practices in a shared, group, or multi-professional clinical setting, ensure that their acupuncture/dry needling practice complies with this Standard independently of other providers' practices or protocols, including maintaining appropriate procedures, documentation, and emergency preparedness; and
- j) follow all related NSCNR standards of practice;

7. EXEMPTIONS

- a) Notwithstanding the above, DC Registrants are permitted to perform acupuncture/dry needling while participating in a NSCNR-approved specific component training program or associated preceptorship provided they:
 - i. provide acupuncture/dry needling only within the limits of their current personal competency and the specific component training completed to date;

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- ii. provide acupuncture/dry needling within areas being taught in the specific component training program of participation; and
 - iii. inform and obtain written consent of the patients under care that they have enrolled and are participating in, but have not yet completed, the specific component training program for the approved Reserved Practice Permit sought.
- b) Recognized instructors of a NSCNR approved specific component training program with NSCNR-approved credentials are permitted to provide acupuncture/dry needling only as part of the curriculum of the approved program.

8. RESTRICTIONS

DC Registrants are not authorized to:

- a) perform acupuncture or dry needling without holding a current Reserved Practice Permit issued by the NSCNR;
- c) delegate any aspect of acupuncture or dry needling treatment except where compliant with the **NSCNR Standard of Practice - Preceptorships**; or
- e) exceed the DC Registrant's individual competence, training, or authorized scope of practice, including any limitations associated with specific Reserved Practice Permits.

9. LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT

[Regulated Health Professions Act \(2023\)](#)

[Regulated Health Professions General Regulations](#)

Regulations Respecting Chiropractic and Naturopathy

Nova Scotia Chiropractic and Naturopathic Regulator Bylaws

9. ADDITIONAL RELEVANT STANDARDS OF PRACTICE:

Registrants are advised that all NSCNR Standards of Practice apply, including but not limited to, specific application of:

- Patient Record Management
- First Aid
- Professional Liability
- Emergency Readiness
- Infectious Disease Prevention and Control



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APPENDIX 1

NSCNR Approved Training Programs for DC Acupuncture/Dry Needling

Practitioners must complete an accredited program approved by the NSCC, encompassing a minimum of 200 hours which includes an in-person component in both clinical and academic training, and pass a competency exam.

- Acupuncture Canada, Levels AA1 –3
- McMaster University Contemporary Medical Acupuncture Program, Units 1 – 5
- CMCC Clinical Acupuncture Certificate Program
- Integrated Seminar Series
- Functional Integrated Therapy Institute (FIT) –Functional Integrated Acupuncture
- Or an equivalent program assessed and specifically approved by the NSCNR Board