



COLLEGE & ASSOCIATION OF
Acupuncturists
OF ALBERTA

April 2, 2020

CAAA GUIDELINES REGARDING CMOH ORDER 07-2020 – Prohibitions on Non-Essential Health Services

Dear valued members:

On March 27, 2020, the Chief Medical Officer of Health, Dr. Deena Hinshaw issued an Order (CMOH Order 07-2020) which, among other things, prohibits non-essential places of business from offering or providing services to the public in a location that is accessible to the public. After seeking clarification with Alberta Health representatives, the CAAA would like to provide the following guidelines.

1. Non-essential business closure

One of the restrictions in the March 27, 2020 Order is:

“Albertans are prohibited from accessing close contact personal services, including personal services facilities, cosmetic enhancement services, wellness studios and clinics, non-emergency and non-critical health services.”

The Order defines “non-essential health services” to include any service that is generally done to protect, promote or maintain health of an individual and where an interruption in the provision of services will NOT result in an individual’s life, health or safety being immediately endangered.

Non-emergency and non-critical health services provided by regulated health professionals or registered professionals have been restricted for the following:

- Dentistry
- Physiotherapy
- Massage
- Foot care and podiatry
- **Acupuncture and acupressure**
- Chiropractic services
- Optometry
- Naturopathy

Based on clarification from representatives of Alberta Health, the Order authorizes health professionals to provide non-essential health services at a place of business that is accessible to the public ONLY IF THE SERVICES ARE DEEMED URGENT by the health professional providing the services.

2. Urgent/emergent health services

EMERGENT CARE is the immediate management or treatment of potential life-threatening conditions, which is not something Acupuncturists typically encounter or manage in their regular practice, and where patients should be referred to emergency service providers.

URGENT CARE is the management and treatment of conditions that require prompt attention. To determine whether urgent care is needed, Acupuncturists need to consider the following two questions:

- Will the inability to initiate in-person care or the withdrawal of care lead to serious or imminent harm?
- Is the client at risk for an emergency room visit, imminent hospital admission or re-admission without interim treatment?

Only if the answers to both questions are YES then in-person urgent care may be considered.

For Acupuncturists, urgent care needs which are approved by the CAAA are as follows:

- Severe pain which may otherwise be permanently exacerbated without interim treatment, or where pain may be severely incapacitating and limit self-care or independent living;
- Severe addiction issues which may relapse without interim treatment;
- Mental health/depression which may worsen without interim treatment;
- Terminal or aggressively progressive conditions where a delay of treatment will have an adverse effect that outweighs the risks to patients.

Acupuncturists providing in-person services with close proximity to the patient under urgent or emergent circumstances shall take necessary and appropriate protective measures to protect the safety and health of patients and Acupuncturists themselves, including infection prevention control methods, patient screening methods, as well as social distancing expectations.

The Government of Canada has published guidelines for health professionals, available at the link below.

<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/health-professionals.html>

Alberta Health Services has published guidelines covering point of care risk assessment, hand hygiene, accommodation, and personal protective equipment (PPE), available at the link below.

<https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/assets/healthinfo/ipc/hi-ipc-routine-practices-info.pdf>

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) should be appropriate to the service and may include gloves, gowns, masks and eye protection according to the practitioner's professional judgment.

Members can also refer to the CAAA Safety Handbook and CAAA Handbook of Occupational Hazards and Controls, available at the link below.

<http://acupuncturealberta.ca/pdfs/examination/CAAA-Safety-Handbook.pdf>

<http://acupuncturealberta.ca/pdfs/resources/Handbook-of-Occupational-Hazards-Controls-for-Acupuncturists.pdf>

PLEASE NOTE THE GUIDELINE IS ISSUED FOR MEMBERS TO PROVIDE URGENT CARE ONLY. ACUPUNCTURE AND ACUPRESSURE ARE NON-EMERGENT AND NON-CRITICAL HEALTH SERVICES. THEREFORE, REGULAR PRACTICE BY ACUPUNCTURISTS SHALL BE CLOSED WHEN THE ORDER (CMOH ORDER 07-20) REMAINS IN EFFECT.

URGENT CARE CAN ONLY BE PROVIDED TO EXISTING PATIENTS UNDER THE CARE OF ACUPUNCTURISTS FOR THE URGENT CARE NEEDS APPROVED BY CAAA COUNCIL. ACUPUNCTURISTS MUST KEEP ADEQUATE PATIENT RECORD TO PROVE THAT TREATMENT WAS PROVIDED IN RESPONSE TO URGENT CARE NEEDS.

ACUPUNCTURISTS IN PROVIDING URGENT CARE WITH CLOSE PROXIMITY TO THE PATIENT MUST FOLLOW PROCEDURES ON PATIENT SCREENING AND INFECTION PREVENTION AND CONTROL METHODS, AND TAKE NECESSARY AND APPROPRIATE PERSONAL PROTECTIVE MEASURES.

ACUPUNCTURISTS WHO DECIDE TO PROVIDE URGENT CARE MUST SUBMIT A PRIOR WRITTEN NOTICE TO THE CAAA OFFICE BY EMAIL TO COMMUNICATION@ACUPUNCTUREALBERTA.CA. THIS REQUIREMENT IS INTENDED TO PROTECT THE PUBLIC AND PROVIDE APPROPRIATE SUPPORT TO ACUPUNCTURISTS.

ACUPUNCTURISTS TAKE FULL RESPONSIBILITY FOR PROVIDING URGENT CARE BASED ON THEIR PROFESSIONAL JUDGMENT.