



Public Forum

Protecting Your Health

The Bureau of Health Professions

▪ MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY HEALTH ▪ 2010 ▪ VOLUME 1 ▪ ISSUE 1

Glitch in Public Forum Sign-Up

Anyone who signed up to receive the *Public Forum* newsletter between the end September 2009 and the first week of January 2010, should sign up again. A problem within the system prevented the department from receiving requests to be added to the list. If you signed up, but never received an email verifying that you had been added to the list, sign up again at www.michigan.gov/mdch/0,1607,7-132-27417_27529-162134--,00.html. We are sorry for any inconvenience this may cause you.

Michigan Chiropractors Scope of Practice Expanded

The Bureau of Health Professions currently licenses and regulates about 3,000 chiropractors in Michigan. Chiropractors are a discipline within the healing arts which deals with the human nervous system and its relationship to the spinal column and its interrelationship with other body systems. The services provided by health care professionals is defined as their "scope of practice", and is broadly described in the Michigan Public Health Code <http://legislature.mi.gov/doc.aspx?mcl-368-1978-15-164> and the administrative rules http://www.state.mi.us/orr/emi/admincode.asp?AdminCode=Single&Admin_Num=33812001&Dpt=CH&RngHigh= for that profession. Scope of practice for a profession can change over time as practices in health care delivery of the profession change.



Several bills introduced in the 2009 legislative session that change chiropractors scope of practice have passed and been signed into law by the Governor. Below is a summary of the bills changing the scope of chiropractic practice:

- Allow chiropractors to diagnose and treat subluxations (partial dislocations), misalignments, and joint dysfunction anywhere in the body.
- Allow chiropractors to evaluate conditions or symptoms through physical examination, review of patient health information, and the performance and ordering of tests.
- Prohibit the performance of invasive procedures unless allowed under departmental rules and limit to examinations of the ears, nose, and throat.
- Prohibit treatment of fractures or dislocations (a complete disruption in the normal relationship of two bones forming a joint resulting in no contact of the articular surfaces, but would not include a subluxation), or the use of x-rays except as allowed under the legislation.
- Require continuing education related to the revised scope of practice as a condition for license renewal.
- Not require reimbursement or coverage by insurers for any new service authorized under the revised scope of practice.

The practice of chiropractic **does not include:**

- the performance of any procedure that cuts or punctures the skin;
- the dispensing or prescribing of drugs or medicine;
- the use of x-ray except for diagnostic purposes only;
- the performance of an invasive procedure involving a body orifice (an opening) or cavity unless allowed by rules promulgated under Section 16423 and limited to examinations involving the ears, nose, and throat;
- the treatment of fractures or dislocations or,
- the performance or ordering of non-x-ray diagnostic imaging tests that were not allowed under Section 16423 as of December 1, 2009.

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Shingles Vaccine Now Available

Shingles is a disease caused by the same virus that causes chickenpox. Once a person has had chickenpox, the virus can live, but remain inactive in certain nerve roots within your body for many years; if the virus becomes active again, usually later in life, it can cause shingles. About 1 in 5 people have shingles at some time in their life, impacting an estimated 2 million people in Michigan. It can occur at any age, but it is most common in people over the age of 50. It is uncommon to have shingles more than once, but about 1 in 50 people have shingles two or more times in their life.

You may not be able to see the first signs of shingles, but you may feel them. The first signs of shingles may include itching, tingling and burning. Within a few days, a rash of fluid-filled blisters appears (usually on one side of the body or face). The blisters may take 2 to 4 weeks to heal.

Shingles rashes can be painful. For most people, the pain from shingles rash lessens as it heals. However, for some people, after the rash heals, shingles may lead to pain that can last for months or even years. This long-term nerve pain, called postherpetic neuralgia or PHN, occurs because the virus that causes shingles may damage certain nerves. The pain can vary, and may include burning and throbbing, and a stabbing and shooting pain. The older you get, the more you are at risk for long-term nerve pain. Long-term nerve pain hurts more and lasts longer in older adults. For many people with long-term nerve pain, even the touch of soft clothing against the skin can be painful. Other serious problems that may result from shingles include skin infection, muscle weakness, scarring, and a decrease or loss of vision or hearing.



There is, however, good news about how to prevent shingles. A vaccine has been developed that can prevent you from developing shingles. The **Herpes zoster vaccine** was approved by the Food and Drug Administration for use in the United States in 2006. Talk to your primary care physician about obtaining the vaccine to avoid having to suffer with this painful and often debilitating disease. More information about other painful diseases and conditions can be found on the bureau's Pain & Symptom Management website at www.michigan.gov/pm.

New Dental Products Ease the Pain and Fear of Dental Visits

Are you one of the many people who dread going to the dentist because of the pain and discomfort of dental procedures? According to the American Dental Association, around 10 million people avoid going to the dentist each year due to the fear of needles and the pain caused by them. With recent advances in dental techniques and new medications, discomfort can be greatly reduced or even eliminated during many dental procedures. One of these recent advances includes a number of new and improved topical anesthetics now used by many dentists. Topical anesthetics are numbing agents that are applied externally to tissues in the mouth in the form of a spray, patch, ointment or gel. Unlike local anesthetics, which are numbing agents injected into the mouth with a needle, topical numbing agents can be applied to the mouth in a painless manner. Some topical agents even come in different flavors, such as fruit, mint, and bubblegum.



The most common uses of topical anesthetics are to prevent or reduce the pain caused by a needle injection, to prevent gagging, and to decrease discomfort during tooth cleaning procedures and the removal of stitches. These new topical treatments are also used to relieve pain from "dry socket" (a serious pain condition sometimes occurring after tooth extractions). There are also other uses for these numbing agents that can be determined by your dentist. Topical anesthetics have recently improved to work more effectively and numb for a longer period of time.

Topical anesthetics numb the nerves 2 to 3 millimeters below the surface, and on average are effective for 15 to 30 minutes. However, the length of time these topical agents last does vary somewhat with each patient and each product. The most common ingredients used in topical numbing agents are Lidocaine, Benzocaine, Tetracaine, Dyclonine Hydrochloride, or mixtures of more than one of these agents. You can learn more about topical anesthetics by visiting the American Dental Association at their website www.ada.org.

In the state of Michigan, there are over 20,000 dental professionals licensed by the Michigan Department of Community Health/Bureau of Health Professions- including dentists, dental hygienists, oral surgeons, orthodontists and periodontists. These professionals frequently update their practices with new dental advances in order to provide the most pain-free dental care. Ask your dentist about these new and more effective topical agents to relieve the pain and discomfort of many dental procedures.

Visit Our Websites



The Michigan Department of Community Health is dedicated to keeping Michigan residents informed and healthy. One of the easiest ways to stay up to date is by visiting us online.

The ***Pain & Symptom Management*** website is designed to increase the awareness of both the general public and health professionals regarding pain and symptom management throughout life. It provides information by presenting professional papers, articles, related statutes, and numerous links to organizations with expertise in the area of pain and symptom management (www.michigan.gov/pm).

Patient Safety is of significant concern for those encountering the healthcare system, which is why a website was developed to assist and educate the general public and Michigan health care providers about this important issue. The website provides health care consumers with tools to protect themselves and their families in various health care settings, and assists health professionals in taking important steps toward providing optimum safety for their patients (www.michigan.gov/patientsafety).

The ***Health Careers in Michigan*** website was designed for students, career advisors, healthcare professionals and the general public. It provides a wide-range of information about careers in the healthcare field including pay scales, the skills and education needed to pursue these careers, licensing requirements and employment information. It also features a list of in-demand healthcare occupations and provides written profiles and video presentations describing numerous healthcare occupations (www.michigan.gov/healthcareers).

The ***Michigan Medical Marijuana Program*** website provides general information about the program, law and rules, forms, and a frequently asked questions page (www.michigan.gov/mmp).

Anyone can verify that a license has been issued to a health professional by going to the ***Verify a License*** website. This website allows users to check the current status of a health professional's license and see if disciplinary action has ever been taken against the health professional (www.michigan.gov/verifylicense).

To see what other websites the Michigan Department of Community Health has to offer, please visit www.michigan.gov/mdch.

Patients Have the Right to Pain and Symptom Management in Michigan

Though some people may believe that pain and suffering is good for the soul, research shows that appropriate and effective pain and symptom management can lead to more rapid recovery for patients, and can even cut health care costs. In particular, effective pain and symptom management can reduce the risks of a patient becoming depressed, anxious, sleep deprived, or anorexic.

Pain is an important public health issue. A March 2009 public survey on pain showed that about 28% of the Michigan adult population reported having an acute pain issue in the previous year, and 25% reported that they had a chronic pain issue over the previous year. The survey showed acute pain was more effectively treated than chronic pain. "Acute" pain is pain that is more short-lived, such as a toothache or a surgical wound. "Chronic" pain is pain that does not go away, such as the pain from cancer or arthritis. Effective treatment of acute pain can also reduce the risk of a patient developing chronic pain later on.

In order to advocate for more effective pain and symptom management, the Michigan Legislature passed Public Act 240 of 2001 for the purpose of adding language on pain and symptom management into the Michigan Patient Bill of Rights:

333.20201(2)(o). A patient or resident is entitled to adequate and appropriate pain and symptom management as a basic and essential element of his or her medical treatment.

The first step recommended for adequate and appropriate pain and symptom management is a thorough assessment or evaluation of the patient, followed by the development of a treatment plan. In treating a chronic pain condition, the goals of treatment may not be to achieve zero pain. Instead, the goals of treatment may be to reduce pain, achieve better functioning, and improve the quality of life. (cont. on the next page)

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The Pain and Policy Studies Group at the University of Wisconsin has given Michigan "A" ratings for its pain policies for the past several years (go to www.painpolicy.wisc.edu to see Michigan and other state pain policy ratings.). The Michigan Patient Bill of Rights is one of the reasons that Michigan's pain policies have been nationally recognized. You are encouraged to work with your health care providers to receive the most effective and appropriate pain management available.

Visit the Bureau of Health Professions **Pain Management** website to read other pertinent Michigan statutes or to find out more about valuable public resources on pain and symptom management at www.michigan.gov/pm.

**Q
&
A**

This section of the newsletter is generally used for a frequently asked question, along with an answer to the question. We would like to encourage our readers to submit questions to us and we will publish a question in the next issue of the newsletter, along with an answer.

Please feel free to write to the editor at the email address at the bottom of this page. We hope to hear from you soon!

Receive Future Editions Automatically



Do you find the information contained in this newsletter helpful? If so, you can sign up to receive future editions free of charge (electronically only).

Just go to www.michigan.gov/healthlicense and select the *Public Forum Newsletter* link in the *Spotlight* box. It's that easy!

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This newsletter is a periodic publication of the
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Readers' comments are invited. Please e-mail comments and suggestions to the editor at: lymand@michigan.gov or write to Public Forum Editor, Doreen Lyman, BHP, MDCH, P.O. Box 30670, Lansing, MI 48909.

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