

(S. B. 884)

(No. 150)

(Approved August 8, 2006)

AN ACT

To amend subsection (n) and add subsection (r) to Section 2; and to amend Section 6 of Act No. 194 of August 25, 2000, as amended, known as the “Bill of Rights and Responsibilities of the Patient,” to define chiropractors or chiropractic physicians as “Health Professionals” and to include chiropractic care as a health service and treatment to which all patients, users or consumers are entitled to select and have access to, if the coverage provided by their health plan includes any service that chiropractors or chiropractic physicians are authorized to provide in Puerto Rico.

STATEMENT OF MOTIVES

In forty-five (45) states of the United States of America, as well as in Alaska and Hawaii, the chiropractic practice has been regulated for many years. In Puerto Rico, such level of advancement was reached that it became necessary to regulate through Act No. 493 of May 15, 1952, the chiropractic practice.

The chiropractic practice is the branch of the healing arts that is based upon the scientific fact that the nervous system controls the functions of all the cells, tissues, organs and systems of the body. The nervous system consists of the brain, spinal cord or medulla, and millions of nerves. The cranium protects the brain and the twenty-four (24) vertebrae of the spinal column protect the spinal cord or medulla. Many of life’s daily activities may cause these movable bones of the spinal column to lose their normal position and range of movement, which may finally result in malfunction of the nervous system and ultimately bad health.

According to the provisions of subsection (a) of Section 1 of Act No. 493 of May 15, 1952, as amended, chiropractic means “the science of the treatment of the

human body by means of adjustments and manipulations for the purpose of correcting partial misalignment and subluxation of the spinal column, causing compression on the nerves, thus hindering the transmission of vital energy from the brain to the organs, tissues and cells of the human body.”

The chiropractic health-improvement method consists of detecting, reducing and helping prevent nervous system malfunctions. Chiropractic physicians are the health professionals that specialize in detecting and correcting vertebral subluxations.

Vertebral subluxations refer to when one or more vertebrae of the spinal cord lose their correct position, exerting pressure on the spinal cord, thus affecting the functions of the body.

After completing a bachelor’s degree in natural sciences, chiropractic physicians complete four (4) years of postgraduate chiropractic specialization studies, and a one-year residency. Prior to initiating their practice, they also undergo rigorous national examinations and must fulfill strict licensing requirements.

Several research studies have documented the safety and effectiveness of the chiropractic health-improvement method.

On the other hand, in countries such as the United States of America, Canada and other regions, the implementation of chiropractic care into their health services systems has resulted in considerable annual million dollar savings in health service costs.

For the aforementioned reasons and in order to guarantee the citizenry, especially those who are medicinal indigent, access to quality medical-hospital care and services, while maintaining control mechanisms directed toward avoiding unjustified raises in the costs of such services in view of budget insufficiencies and the increasing costs of technology and medical supplies, it is opportune and

pertinent to define chiropractors or chiropractic physicians as “health professionals” and to include chiropractic care as a health service and treatment which all patients, users or consumers are entitled to select and have access to, if the coverage provided by their health plan includes any service that chiropractors or chiropractic physicians are authorized to provide in Puerto Rico.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF PUERTO RICO:

Section 1.- Subsection (n) is hereby amended, and subsection (r) is added to Section 2 of Act No. 194 of August 25, 2000, as amended, to read as follows:

“Section 2.- Definitions

For the purposes of this Act, the following terms shall have the meaning indicated below:

(a) . . .

(b) . . .

(c) . . .

(d) . . .

. . .

(n) “Health Professional”: means any practitioner duly licensed to practice in Puerto Rico, according to the laws and regulations that may apply, any of the health and medical care professions, such as, but not limited to, physicians, surgeons, podiatrists, chiropractors, optometrists, clinical psychologists, dentists, pharmacists, nurses and medical technologists, in accordance with the authorization of the corresponding laws of Puerto Rico.

(o) . . .

(p) . . .

(q) . . .

- (r) “Chiropractic Physician or Chiropractor”: means the professional that is licensed by the Board of Examiners of Chiropractors of Puerto Rico, as defined in Act No. 493 of May 15, 1952, as amended.”

Section 2.- Section 6 of Act No. 194 of August 25, 2000, as amended, is hereby amended to read as follows:

“Section 6.- Rights Concerning Plan and Provider Selection

Regarding the selection of health care plans and medical and hospital health care service providers, all patients, consumers or users of such plans and services in Puerto Rico are entitled to:

- (a) . . .
- (b) . . .
- (c) . . .
- (d) Select and have access to health services and treatments by podiatrists, chiropractors, or optometry physicians, if the coverage provided by their health plan offers any service that is included under the “spectrum of practice” of a podiatrist, chiropractor, or optometry physician and a licensed clinical psychologist authorized by the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico.

If the coverage or health plan of the patient provides for compensation or reimbursement, the beneficiary and the podiatrist, chiropractor, or optometry physician and the clinical psychologist who render the services shall be entitled to such compensation or reimbursement under equal conditions as other health professionals that provide the same services.”

Section 3.- This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2006.

CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify to the Secretary of State that the following Act No.150 (S.B. 884) of the 3rd Session of the 15th Legislature of Puerto Rico:

AN ACT to amend subsection (n) and add subsection (r) to Section 2; and to amend Section 6 of Act No. 194 of August 25, 2000, as amended, known as the “Bill of Rights and Responsibilities of the Patient,” to define chiropractors or chiropractic physicians as “Health Professionals” and to include chiropractic care as a health service and treatment to which all patients, users or consumers are entitled to select and have access to, if the coverage provided by their health plan includes any service that chiropractors or chiropractic physicians are authorized to provide in Puerto Rico ,

has been translated from Spanish to English and that the English version is correct.

In San Juan, Puerto Rico, today 31st of July of 2007.

Francisco J. Domenech
Director