Att Chair of Chiropractic Board of Australia.

I have been reading the Code of Conduct circulated for comment by the Chiropractic Board of Australia. I have not been greatly involved in the profession lately being in semi-retirement, thus my tardy input.

Firstly a little about my past involvement in the profession.
I served on the executive of the CAA for 10 plus years in various position including Peer Review and President.
I sat on the Chiropractic and Osteopathic Board of Queensland for six years, three of those as Chairman. Whilst serving on the Board I had input into rewriting the Act.
On moving to the UK I had input into the professions submission to the GCC. I understand that it can be difficult to make sure that the legitimate concerns of patients are dealt with and that practitioners are not bogged down by tedious legislation that has no evidence to prove that they have a positive effect on patient outcomes.

My first observation is that the Codes are too long and at times trivial although I am pleased to see no specific regulation on the wearing of mismatching soxs'.

The basics of governance are quite simple;

1. You define the field of play, that is what the practice of chiropractic is

2. You define who can enter the field of play. That is, who can practice as a Chiropractor. Pretty easy, approve the colleges and exclude persons proven to dangerous to patients.

3. Thirdly and to my mind more difficult one needs to formulate the basic rules of play in such a way that the profession continues to grow. That is, new persons choose to be Chiropractors and people continue to seek their services in growing numbers.

After long thought I managed to prune it down to 4 rules.
1. Don't bonk patients
2. Don't rip off patients.
3. Do the best you can for the Patients
4. Do your best to keep up to date.

There is one unspoken rule. Practitioners have the right to charge a fee for their services.

Whilst the paucity of rules seems to fry the bureaucratic mind I have yet to be convinced that all the regulations are not an attempt to expand on these few rules.
In regards to your Code I can tell you now not many will read them fully. Fewer will remember them and fewer still will understand them. In the end over-regulation is self defeating, people just give up on the system.

My fear is that we are coming down with the UK Disease.
Symptoms of this ailment are:
1. Over-regulation to support the Regulation Industry.
2. An adversitorial relationship between the profession and the Regulators. Indeed in the UK one can be excused for believing that the Boards exist to punish Doctors, particularly non PC doctors. The one day of a hearing I witnessed reminded me of hyenas tearing apart a wounded animal.
3. That the only way to escape their wrath is to tug the fore lock and admit all.
4. An atmosphere of fear and paranoia amongst practitioners.

This not limited to the Chiropractors in the UK but to all Health Care Practitioners. It is a reason why it is so hard to get and keep practitioners in the UK. Without Doctors and Nurses from third world countries their system would fail. In fact it has been suggested that schools be set up in third world countries to supply the UK.
If the Healthcare Professions do not attract intelligent, well educated people they might all go off and be bankers. Imagine the trouble then.

The answer to this malaise is Evidence Based Regulation EBR.
With the use of EBR do regulation without clear scientific evidence that it improves patient outcomes and makes the Practitioners practice more efficient.
This would, of course be an ongoing process, updated as evidence comes to hand.

I trust you will accept my input in the manner it is offered. A genuine attempt to create a dynamic, caring, evolving Profession. One which includes the Patients and the Practitioners

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