

1973 WL 26667 (S.C.A.G.)

Office of the Attorney General

State of South Carolina

March 16, 1973

*1 The Honorable Annette Young
Member
South Carolina Board of Chiropractic Examiners
Box 141
Florence, South Carolina

Dear Dr. Young:

You have inquired whether the use of pulsed diathermy by chiropractors and the employment of intersegmental traction are permitted under the South Carolina Chiropractic Act.

Chiropractic is defined to be 'the science of palpating and adjusting the articulations of the human spinal column by hand only.' Section 56-351, Code of Laws for South Carolina, 1962.

'Diathermy' is defined in DORLAND'S ILLUSTRATED MEDICAL DICTIONARY, 23rd Edition, as 'the generation of heat in the body tissues due to the resistance offered by the tissues to the passage of high frequency electrical currents.' In some specific applications of diathermy, the tissues are warmed to a point short of tissue destruction, while in other applications, the heat is generated sufficient to coagulate tissue cells and destroy the tissues.

It is my opinion that this is a practice or procedure which is not within the scope of the law governing the practice of chiropractic in South Carolina and is in violation thereof.

Intersegmental traction is considered to mean the application of pulling forces upon the bond structure of the human body. This procedure, in my opinion, is similarly not permitted under the South Carolina Chiropractic Act.

This opinion is consonant with an opinion issued by this Office on November 10, 1960 (60 Attorney General's Opinions 132), in which the following statement appears:

'It is the opinion of this Office that chiropractors are restricted to treatment of ailments of the human body to the use of hands only, and that therapeutic methods such as diathermy, ultra sonic devices and colonic irrigations are outside the scope of chiropractic and the use of such is, therefore, in violation of law.'

A copy of that opinion is enclosed herewith. To the citations attached to the within opinion is added the case of [Biener v. St. Louis Service Company](#), 160 S.W.2d 780.

Very truly yours,

Daniel R. McLeod
Attorney General

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