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“Optimal Patient Outcomes through Accurate Injury Assessment”

Here is a correction in the AMA Guides.

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AMA Issues Correction to Impairment Ratings Guide After ACA Complaint

The American Medical Association (AMA) has announced that it will issue a correction to all purchasers of its *Guides to the Evaluation of Permanent Impairment, Sixth Edition*, after ACA's legal team questioned the legality of restrictive language related to evaluations by doctors of chiropractic and accused the AMA of violating the permanent *Wilk* injunction.

In a Feb. 20 letter to ACA, AMA's legal counsel writes that the text in question "is incorrect and warrants immediate correction."

AMA's action comes in response to a Feb. 7 letter in which ACA asked for an immediate withdrawal of restrictive language in the text that limits evaluations by doctors of chiropractic to the spine only. The ACA was also in the process of contacting the Federal Trade Commission and the U.S. Department of Justice regarding concerns about the new guidelines.

In response, the AMA will take the following "immediate and visible steps to counteract any potential confusion" regarding the language:

The AMA will send a letter to all purchasers of the guide, for whom it has addresses, informing them of the correction.

A similar letter will be inserted into all manuals prior to shipment in the future.

The AMA will post a notice in the *AMAPress Online Catalog* as well as on the *Guides web page*.

The correction will be announced in the next issue of the *Guides Newsletter* scheduled for publication in late March.

Future printings of the *Sixth Edition* of the *Guides* will include the correction.

An errata sheet for the *Sixth Edition*, which will be issued in late March, will contain the correction with special highlighting to give it greater visibility.

The objectionable language is published on page 20 of the AMA guide in a section titled "Fundamental Principles of the Guides." Specifically, Item 6 of Table 2-1- states: "A licensed physician must perform impairment evaluations. Chiropractic doctors, if authorized by the appropriate jurisdictional authority to perform ratings under the Guide, should restrict rating to the spine."

In his original complaint to the AMA, ACA General Counsel Thomas R. Daly wrote: "In our view, the action of the AMA in issuing this standard unlawfully restricts competition and excludes a competitive rival, i.e. doctors of chiropractic from the provision of impairment ratings. We note that neither the ACA, nor any other major chiropractic group, was approached or provided input in the standard setting process that established this new restriction." ACA's letter also reminded the AMA of the *Wilk* decision and stated that the "recent action which implements a new and onerous restrictive standard on the practice of doctors of chiropractic violates existing antitrust law as well as the provision of the permanent *Wilk* injunction."

ACA has also identified other offending portions of the publication and is urging the AMA to remove or re-write all restrictive language related to doctors of chiropractic. [Click here](#) to see ACA's list of additional concerns.

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