

THE FEE FOR OSTEOPATHIC SERVICES WAS JUSTIFIED

The complainant attended an osteopath for treatment of a chronic medical condition and had lengthy discussions with both the provider and the receptionist about the service to be provided and the fee. At the consultation, the complainant asked questions about the osteopathic techniques and the provider asked the complainant about his medical history and previous treatments, examined the spine and then provided "hard massage around the spine." Following this treatment the provider said the complainant would require eight further treatments.

The complainant believed the provider withheld spinal manipulation in order "to get me to come back" and some months after the consultation asked the provider for his money back. The provider gave a detailed explanation and refused the refund.

Preliminary inquiries were undertaken by the Commission and it was established that:

- there was extensive discussion about the osteopathic procedures before the complainant attended the consultation;
- at the consultation further information was provided about osteopathic techniques to both the complainant and his partner, who was present during the consultation;
- an examination was conducted by the provider before treatment was commenced;
- osteopathic treatment was provided;
- the consultation time was in excess of the standard consultation time of 30 minutes; and
- the standard fee was quoted before the treatment and a lesser fee was charged.

The Commissioner determined to take no further action in respect of the provider. The Commissioner determined that an osteopathic service was provided at a consultation in excess of 30 minutes and the standard fee for a 30 minute consultation was charged. The Commission also noted that the Osteopaths and Chiropractors Board of the NT might wish to consider whether a practice standard of a fee schedule for osteopaths would assist providers to resolve complaints with clients who use their services.