

## Senate Bill SB-577

California Senate Bill SB 577, which was signed by the Governor in September 2002, has profound implications for the practice of alternative forms of healthcare in California. SB 577 enables alternative and complementary health care practitioners (including, but not limited to, Reiki) to provide and advertise legally. They must also, however, comply with certain requirements specified within the bill.

### What does Senate Bill SB 577 mean for you, the patient?

SB 577 provides you with access to alternative and complementary health care practitioners. You must be given information about the nature of treatment and practitioner's qualifications. Feel free to ask a practitioner any question you might have about your treatment. Check to see if your practitioner has been certified by a professional membership society. In addition, tell your doctor about any alternative treatment you are pursuing. You can also request that your licensed and unlicensed health care providers communicate with each other and work collaboratively to meet your health care needs.

### How SB 577 helps to protect you

SB 577 requires unlicensed alternative health care practitioners to follow certain guidelines and restrictions. Here are the things that unlicensed alternative practitioners are not allowed to do:

- Perform any form of surgery or any procedure that punctures your skin or harmfully invades your body.
- Use X-Ray radiation.
- Prescribe prescription drugs, or recommend that you discontinue drugs that were prescribed by a licensed physician.
- Set fractures.
- Treat wounds with electrotherapy.
- Put you at risk of great bodily harm, serious physical or mental illness, or death. Imply in any way that they are licensed physicians.

### In addition, all unlicensed alternative practitioners must do the following to comply with the law:

- Provide you with a statement, written in plain language, that includes the following information:
  - (a) That he or she is not a licensed physician and that his or her services are not licensed by the state.
  - (b) A brief clear description of the kind of services he or she provides and the reasoning behind it.
  - (c) A description of his or her education, training, and experience.
- Ask you to provide written acknowledgment that you received a Client Information and Consent to Receive Treatment Form, and provide you with a copy of it.
- They must keep a copy of your signed acknowledgment for three (3) years.