An Overview of
Manipulation Under Anesthesia (MUA)

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The first certification course in MUA for chiropractors was developed in the mid-1980's, by Dr. Rob Francis while Dean of Clinical Sciences at Texas Chiropractic College and after being certified and proctored in MUA by board certified orthopedic surgeons. A variety of standards for MUA have been taught since by non-academic proprietary organizations over the last fifteen years. MUA has been utilized in manual medicine for over 70 years. Increased participation of chiropractors on hospital medical staffs and with medical physicians has made both the facilities and training more available for performing and credentialing this procedure.

Specific protocol for the procedure has been developed by academic institutions and national and international organizations towards an effort to recognize training programs and clinical outcomes that establish a safe and effective means of implementing this procedure across the country in appropriate hospital and ambulatory surgical settings. Most recently the International MUA Academy of Physicians was organized to provide an avenue for the dissemination of valid and authoritative database of current research and new scientific developments in the field of Manipulation Under Anesthesia for physicians dealing with chronic difficult cases through efforts to develop evidence-based principles for MUA clinical application and practice.

The National Academy of MUA Physicians has developed and published guidelines and protocol for MUA consistent with the CCE accredited MUA programs of Texas Chiropractic College. Standardization of MUA protocol is largely accomplished across the country and in Europe.

Continuing education and international conferences are designed to accomplish, implement, fulfill and discharge the purpose and intent of this mission. The objectives of these continuing education conferences are to present by an international and interdisciplinary faculty a state of the art review of the present knowledge in the field of non-operative care, interventional diagnostic and therapeutic procedures other relevant treatment modalities affecting the spine.

It has been well documented in the medical literature for well over forty years that chronic unresolved non-surgical musculoskeletal conditions respond well to manipulation under anesthesia. MUA is a procedure designed to restore the lost range of motion of the spine and extremities and to reduce scar tissue in soft tissues and peri and intra articular

structures which results in articular dyskinesia.

The restoration of motion and the reduction of scar tissue results in more flexibility and visco-elasticity of the paraspinal musculature and associated articulations thereby increasing the functional capacity of the patient. MUA is a procedure utilized in a selected patient population which has been recalcitrant to an adequate trial of conservative care in the office setting.

MUA requires the use of non-paralyzing anesthesia (patients continue to breath on their own during the procedure) towards an effort to provide relaxed skeletal musculature enabling the manipulator to reduce fibroblastic proliferative tissue and restore articular motion without patient guarding and pain. Generally, pre-op medications include Versed and Fentanyl with Propofol used in the Operating Room without intubation to accomplish flaccid muscular relaxation.

This procedure is an out patient procedure and is performed in an appropriate setting providing access to monitoring and resuscitation equipment in a facility certified or licensed to provide a safe operative environment which can provide transfer capability to inpatient care.

It is recommended that an assistant who is certified in the procedure be present to assist in the performance of MUA. It is essential that the assistant be knowledgeable in the biomechanics and pathomechanics of the condition being treated towards an effort to assist proper positioning before and during the manipulative procedures performed by the primary physician. Many manipulative procedures under anesthesia are performed in tandem by the manipulator and assistant. Most facilities require a MUA certified assistant be present for spinal MUA cases.