

Episodic Care

Standards of Practice of the College of Physicians & Surgeons of Alberta (“the College”) are the minimum standards of professional behavior and ethical conduct expected of all regulated members registered in Alberta. Standards of Practice are enforceable under the *Health Professions Act* and will be referenced in the management of complaints and in discipline hearings. The College of Physicians & Surgeons of Alberta also provides **Advice to the Profession** to support the implementation of the Standards of Practice.

- (1) A regulated member providing episodic care¹ **must**:
 - (a) inform the patient that the regulated member will not provide ongoing care beyond addressing the patient’s presenting concern(s), referred consultation, or identified medical condition(s);
 - (b) establish whether the patient has a primary care provider and, if so, provide the primary care provider with a record of the encounter, including all information discussed in subsection (2);
 - (c) obtain and document the patient’s presenting concern(s) and/or medical condition(s);
 - (d) collect and document the patient’s relevant medical history, drug reactions, current medication(s) and pertinent current health problems;
 - (e) observe, examine and identify relevant positive and negative findings;
 - (f) establish a reasonable differential diagnosis; and
 - (g) either provide necessary follow-up care personally or ensure that arrangements are in place for follow-up care.
- (2) A regulated member **must** discuss with the patient:
 - (a) tests requested;
 - (b) diagnoses reached;
 - (c) treatment and advice given;
 - (d) procedures recommended and performed;
 - (e) referrals and reports made; and

¹ Episodic care refers to a single encounter with a patient focused on a presenting concern(s), identified medical condition(s) or referred consultation, where neither the regulated member nor patient have the expectation of an ongoing care relationship.

Terms used in the Standards of Practice:

- *Physician* means any person who is registered or who is required to be registered as a member of this College. The College regulates physicians, surgeons and osteopaths.
- *Must* refers to a mandatory requirement.
- *May* means that the physician may exercise reasonable discretion.
- *Patient* includes, where applicable, the patient’s legal guardian or substitute decision maker.

- (f) follow-up care arranged and/or advised.
- (3) A regulated member who has provided episodic care **must** document the encounter in accordance with the [Patient Records](#) standard of practice.
- (4) A regulated member who requests a diagnostic test(s), performs a procedure or provides a treatment that requires follow-up, or makes a referral to another healthcare provider **must**:
- (a) have a system in place to:
- i. review and respond to any diagnostic test results and/or consultation reports arising from this encounter;
 - ii. review and respond promptly to critical test results reported by a laboratory or imaging facility, including after regular working hours or in the regulated member's absence;
 - iii. arrange any necessary follow-up care either personally or through referral to another healthcare provider; and
 - iv. notify the patient of any necessary follow-up care; and
- (b) track all contacts and attempted contacts with the patient.
- (5) A regulated member who requests a diagnostic test and directs a copy of the result to another regulated member remains responsible for any necessary follow-up care unless the regulated member to whom the copy is directed has formally agreed to accept responsibility for follow-up care arising from the test results.

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