Relocating a Medical Practice

The 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) For the purpose of this standard, relocating a practice is defined as moving a practice within a distance that patients could be reasonably expected to travel to the new practice location. If the move is to a location beyond which patients would normally be expected to travel, Closing or Leaving a Medical Practice applies.

(2) A regulated member who relocates a medical practice must notify the College of the move in advance.

(3) A regulated member who relocates a medical practice must provide and document notification of the move to patients and colleagues in the practice a minimum of forty five (45) days in advance of the move. The notice must include the dates of the move, the new location and contact information and the time frame that patients will be permitted to follow the regulated member to the new location.

(a) Notwithstanding clause (3) above, the 45 day notice does not apply to a regulated member if the reason for relocating a medical practice is due to circumstances beyond the regulated member’s control. In these cases, patients must be notified as soon as is reasonably possible given the circumstances.

(4) A regulated member who relocates a medical practice must allow current patients the opportunity to follow him or her to the new practice location for a period of no less than twelve (12) months unless the regulated member has substantially altered his or her scope of practice or the regulated member relocates more than twelve (12) months after leaving or closing an earlier practice.

(5) A regulated member practicing in the location where another regulated member had previously practiced must provide information upon request to any member of the public, profession or another regulated health professional about the new location of the regulated member who has moved, if it is known.

(6) A regulated member who relocates a medical practice where another regulated member is assuming this practice location must ensure there are information sharing agreements relating to management of patient charts for those patients who will continue to have care provided by the relocating regulated member. The information sharing agreement must, at a minimum:

(a) identify which regulated member (s) will maintain custody of the patient records;

Terms used in the Standards of Practice:

- “Regulated member” 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.
(b) describe who is responsible for costs if copies of the record are provided to a regulated member who is a party to the agreement; and

(c) reflect costs that are reasonable, and consistent with applicable legislation and community standards.

(7) In order to ensure continuity of care, a regulated member practicing in the location where another regulated member had previously practiced must:

(a) provide the departing regulated member with access to and/or copies of outstanding investigations, consultation reports and other information requested by the departing regulated member as it relates to ongoing care for those patients previously attended to by the departing regulated member.

Terms used in the Standards of Practice:

- "Regulated member" 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.