

STANDARDS OF PRACTICE

Conscientious Objection

Under Review: No

Issued By: Council: January 1, 2010 (*Moral or Religious Beliefs Affecting Medical Care*)

Reissued by Council: June 1, 2016 (*Conscientious Objection*)

The ***Standards of Practice*** of the College of Physicians & Surgeons of Alberta (“CPSA”) 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. CPSA also provides **Advice to the Profession** to support the implementation of the Standards of Practice.

1. A regulated member **must** communicate promptly and respectfully about any treatments or procedures the regulated member declines to provide based on his/her Charter freedom of conscience and religionⁱ.
2. A regulated member **must not** withhold information about the existence of a procedure or treatment because providing that procedure or giving advice about it conflicts with his/her Charter freedom of conscience and religion.
3. A regulated member **must not** promote his/her own [moral or religious beliefs](#) when interacting with patients.
4. When Charter freedom of conscience and religion prevent a regulated member from providing or offering access to information about a legally available medical or surgical treatment or service, the regulated member **must** ensure that the patient who seeks such advice or medical care is offered timely access to:
 - a. a regulated member who is willing to provide the medical treatment, service or information; or
 - b. a resource that will provide accurate information about all available medical options.

RELATED STANDARDS OF PRACTICE

- [Boundary Violations: Personal](#)
- [Code of Ethics & Professionalism](#)
- [Medical Assistance in Dying](#)

ⁱ Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, Part I of [The Constitution Act](#), 1982.

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.