

## STANDARDS OF PRACTICE

# Charging for Uninsured Professional Services

Under Review: No

Issued By: Council: January 1, 2010 (*Charging for Uninsured Medical Services*)

Reissued by Council: September 9, 2014 (*Charging for Uninsured Professional Services*)

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. Amounts charged for [uninsured professional services](#)<sup>1</sup> including block fees<sup>2</sup> **must** reasonably reflect physician professional costs, administrative costs and the patient’s ability to pay. When asked, a regulated member **must** be able to account for the fee charged for the service.
2. A regulated member **must** [inform a patient](#) or third party of any fee to be charged before the provision of an uninsured professional service.
3. A regulated member’s agent **may** give preliminary information to a patient about the billing policies in his or her medical practice, but the regulated member [remains responsible](#) for the final decision and explanation to the patient when the patient disputes a fee or requests clarification.
4. A general notice to patients in a regulated member’s office is **not** sufficient by itself to fulfill the requirements in clauses (2) and (3).
5. A regulated member **may not** demand payment from an individual patient in advance of urgently required uninsured professional services that are not readily available elsewhere.
6. A regulated member **must not** charge a fee to the patient in advance for “[being available](#)” to render professional services.
7. If a regulated member offers a block option, the regulated member **must**:

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<sup>1</sup> A professional service includes both medical and non-medical services.

<sup>2</sup> For the purpose of this standard, a block fee is a fixed fee for all designated uninsured services provided during a specified time period.

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**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.

- a. allow the patient the choice of paying the block fee or for each professional service individually as provided;
  - b. provide the patient with the block fee option in writing;
  - c. ensure the patient is given sufficient information to make an informed choice including:
    - i. a list of fees that will be charged individually for each professional service if the patient declines the block fee option; and
    - ii. a copy of this standard.
8. If a regulated member offers a block fee option, the regulated member **must not**:
- a. refuse to provide an insured professional service because a patient has not paid a block fee for uninsured services;
  - b. include in a block fee any service for which the regulated member is compensated through any other means, including any charge for a professional service which is included as part of an insured professional service; or
  - c. promise or provide preferential services to a patient who paid a block fee.

## RELATED STANDARDS OF PRACTICE

- *Informed Consent*
- *Responsibility for a Medical Practice*

## COMPANION RESOURCES

- [Advice to the Profession: Charging for Uninsured Professional Services](#)
- [Advice to the Profession: Insured Persons](#)
- [Are You Up to Standard? Charging for uninsured professional services](#)
- [AMA's Uninsured services](#)
- [AH's Health care services covered in Alberta](#)

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