

STANDARDS OF PRACTICE

Episodic Care

Under Review: No

Issued By: Council: January 1, 2010

Reissued by Council: June 1, 2015

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 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 clause (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](#).

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:

- “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.

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
 - 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 Record Retention](#) 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.

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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.

RELATED STANDARDS OF PRACTICE

- [Continuity of Care](#)
- [Establishing the Physician-Patient Relationship](#)
- [Patient Record Content](#)
- [Patient Record Retention](#)
- [Referral Consultation](#)
- [Responsibility for a Medical Practice](#)
- [Transfer of Care](#)

COMPANION RESOURCES

- [Advice to the Profession: Episodic Care](#)
- [Advice to the Profession: Continuity of Care](#)
- [CMPA's The Most Responsible Physician](#)

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