

STANDARDS OF PRACTICE

Relocating a Medical Practice

Under Review: No

Issued by Council: Jan 9, 2014

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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.

Note: a glossary of terms can be found at the end of this document. Glossary terms are indicated in teal with a “G” throughout this document.

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, the *Closing or Leaving a Medical Practice*^G standard applies.
2. A regulated member who relocates a medical practice **must**:
 - a. notify CPSA a minimum of forty-five (45) days in advance of **relocating the practice**^G;
 - b. provide and document **notification**^G of the event to individual patients who have been seen within the past year with whom there is an expectation of **ongoing**^G care a minimum of forty-five (45) days in advance of relocating the practice; and
 - c. provide notification of relocating the practice to all healthcare providers to whom they regularly refer patients or from whom they receive referrals, hospitals where they hold privileges, employers and the Alberta Health Care Insurance Plan, if applicable.
3. Notwithstanding clause 2, the 45 days’ 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 (e.g., fire, flood, loss of tenancy). In these cases, CPSA, patients and individuals or agencies identified in clause 2(c) **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 them to the new practice location for a period of no less than

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- “Patient” includes, where applicable, the patient’s legal guardian or substitute decision maker.

twelve (12) months.

5. A regulated member practicing in the location where another regulated member had previously practiced **must** provide contact 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**⁶ relating to management of patient records 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;
 - 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**⁶, a regulated member practicing in the location where another regulated member had previously practiced **must** 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.

GLOSSARY

Closing/leaving practice: the discontinuation of practice with no intention of returning, a leave of absence more than 12 months or a significant move from the current practice patients could not reasonably be expected to travel. See the *Closing or Leaving a Medical Practice* standard of practice for more information.

Relocating practice: moving a practice within a distance that patients could be reasonably expected to travel to the new practice location.

Notification: patient notification may be made by way of a detailed letter, secure email, or telephone call detailing the regulated member's last day at the former

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location, contact information of the new location, and how patients can access copies of their records if they opt not to follow the physician to the new location.

Ongoing: in an established physician-patient relationship, both the regulated member and patient have a reasonable expectation the care provided will extend beyond a single encounter including, but not limited to, longitudinal relationships, based on the identification of a regular attending physician or clinic and sessional relationships for a defined period of time, based on a presenting concern(s), referred consultation or identified medical condition.

Information sharing agreement (ISA): as required by the *Patient Record Retention* standard of practice, an ISA provides clarity on how custodians will manage shared patient records and what will happen in the event the professional arrangement between the custodians changes (e.g., the partnership dissolves). For more information, please refer to the Physicians as Custodians of Patient Records Advice to the Profession document.

Continuity of care: as indicated in the *Continuity of Care* standard of practice, physicians must have systems in place to receive, review, and follow-up on any investigations, including arranging continuous after-hours care.

RELATED STANDARDS OF PRACTICE

- [Closing or Leaving a Medical Practice](#)
- [Continuity of Care](#)
- [Patient Record Content](#)
- [Patient Record Retention](#)
- [Re-Entering Medical Practice or Changing Scope of Practice](#)
- [Responsibility for a Medical Practice](#)

COMPANION RESOURCES

- [Advice to the Profession: Physicians as Custodians](#)
- [Custody of Patient Records form](#)
- To access the Notification of Change Form, please log into your [physician portal](#)
- [Professional Corporation Address Change form](#)

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