



STANDARDS OF PRACTICE

Re-Entering or Changing Scope of Practice

Under Review: Yes
Issued By: Council: January 1, 2010

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.

PREAMBLE

The public is entitled to be treated by regulated members who are competent to practise, and CPSA is responsible for ensuring that members practise competently to meet the standard of practice for their chosen area. However, we recognize that members may have an extended period of clinical inactivity or change their **scope of practice**^G over time.

Members must notify CPSA if they wish to return to practice after three (3) or more years and may have to complete a **return to practice assessment**^G to make sure their skills are sufficient to start work again.

Members must also notify CPSA before a **change in scope of practice**^G. It is considered a change in scope when members wish to add a new medical service to their practice or return to an area of practice they have not practised in for three (3) or more consecutive years.^{1,2} Members wishing to do this may need a **change in scope assessment**^G prior to offering these services to patients.

Commented [CD1]: Added to ensure currency of practice and to align with other Canadian regulators.

CPSA is available³ to assist members in determining if the standard applies to them.

Related standards, additional information and general advice can be found in the companion resources listed at the end of this document.

¹ From CPSS’s **Scope of Practice Change** Policy (Sep. 2021) – accessed Apr. 2025.

² From CPSO’s **Ensuring Competence: Changing Scope of Practice and/or Re-entering Practice** Policy (May 2019) – accessed rApr. 2025.

³ Contact CPSA at 1-800-561-3899 (in Canada) or at support@cpsa.ca.

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.

STANDARD

1. A regulated member **must not** re-enter or practise in a new scope of practice unless CPSA has approved their request;⁴
2. A regulated member whose permit status has been inactive for more than ninety (90) days **must** submit a current [Review of Qualifications](#)⁹.
 - a. This may occur when a regulated member has not completed the annual renewal of their practice permit and renewal fee, resulting in cancellation.
3. A regulated member **must** notify CPSA by completing the appropriate application form when they:
 - a. wish to re-enter medical practice after three (3) years or more; **or**
 - b. wish to change their scope of practice, including:
 - i. adding or changing medical services offered;
 - ii. obtaining a new certification from the Royal College of Physicians & Surgeons of Canada or the College of Family Physicians of Canada; **or**
 - iii. returning to a scope of practice in which they have not practised for three (3) consecutive years or more.
4. Based on CPSA review of the application, a regulated member **must** participate in an assessment when required by the Registrar or **delegate**.
5. A regulated member who intends to change their scope of practice **must** provide documentary evidence attesting to the acquisition of training, experience and/or competence to perform the proposed change(s) in medical services that is satisfactory to the Registrar or **delegate**.
6. Prior to initiating the proposed change(s) in medical services, a regulated member **may** be required to complete an assessment, training and/or retraining to demonstrate they can safely perform the medical services that is satisfactory to the Registrar or **delegate**.

Commented [CD2]: From CPSO: clarifies up front that approval is needed before taking action.

Commented [CD3]: New addition due to Registration process change: if a permit lapses for more than 90 days, applicants must reapply.

Commented [CD4]: Clause 1 of [current version](#).

Commented [CD5]: Added for clarification from [Registration page](#).

Commented [CD6]: Clause 2 of [current version](#).

Commented [CD7]: Clause 3(b) of [current version](#).

Commented [CD8]: Clause 3(c) of [current version](#).

⁴ From CPSO's [Ensuring Competence: Changing Scope of Practice and/or Re-entering Practice](#) Policy (May 2019) – accessed Apr. 2025.

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GLOSSARY

Change in Scope Assessment: this assessment ensures regulated members have the training, experience and competence to offer a new service or return to an area of practice they have not practiced in for three (3) or more consecutive years. Apply for a Change-in-Scope Assessment [application form](#).

Change in scope of practice: a change in scope of practice occurs by entering an area of inactivity (e.g., a new area of practice)⁵ or when there is a significant change to a member's education, training or certification; the patients they care for; or the procedures/treatment they provide.⁶

Return to Practice Assessment: this assessment determines what kind of re-training or other support regulated members might need to care for physicians after an absence from medicine of three (3) years or more. Apply for a Return-to-Practice Assessment [application form](#).

Review of Qualifications: this is a pre-screening process for every applicant to confirm they meet all CPSA eligibility requirements. A letter is sent confirming if applicants can move to the next step, outlining which CPSA Register they can apply to and what assessment is needed.

A Review of Qualifications can be submitted through [physiciansapply.ca](#). For more information, visit "[applying for independent practice](#)."

Scope of practice: a term that describes a regulated member's practice at a particular point in time. Scope of practice is determined by a number of factors including education, training, and certification; the patients they care for; the procedures they perform; treatment provided; and the practice environment.^{7 8}

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

CPSA acknowledges the work of the Colleges of Physicians and Surgeons of Manitoba,

⁵ From CPSM's [Assessment Candidate \(Re-entry to Practice\) Class](#) Council Policy (Mar. 2023) – accessed Apr. 2025.

⁶ From CPSO's [Ensuring Competence: Changing Scope of Practice and/or Re-entering Practice](#) Policy (May 2019) – accessed Apr. 2025.

⁷ From CPSO's [Ensuring Competence: Changing Scope of Practice and/or Re-entering Practice](#) Policy (May 2019) – accessed Apr. 2025.

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Ontario and Saskatchewan in preparing this document.

RELATED STANDARDS OF PRACTICE

- [*Closing or Leaving a Medical Practice*](#)

COMPANION RESOURCES

- Advice to the Profession
 - [Closing or Leaving a Medical Practice](#)
- [Change in Scope of Practice assessment form](#)
- [Practice Readiness Assessment](#)
- [Return to Practice assessment form](#)

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