cpsa
COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS & SURGEONS OF ALBERTA

ADVICE TO ALBERTANS

Dual Practice

The College of Physicians & Surgeons of Alberta (CPSA) provides advice to Albertans to support improved patient care and safety. This advice does not define a standard of practice, nor should it be interpreted as legal advice.

Patient FAQs are dynamic and may be edited or updated for clarity at any time. Please refer back to these articles regularly to ensure you are aware of the most recent advice.

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Introduction

CPSA sets rules for physicians and physician assistants to help keep patients safe. This document tells you what to expect from a physician who offers patient-ordered tests. It is not a standard of practice or legal advice.

For questions about government policies or programs, contact the Government of Alberta: General Inquiries.

What is dual practice?

"Dual practice" means that a physician offers both insured surgeries and privately paid non-Plan surgeries. The Government of Alberta decides which surgeries may be offered this

way, and which physicians may offer them. This document does not explain those rules: it explains what patients can expect from physicians who offer privately paid non-Plan surgeries. For more information, please review the Government of Alberta's information: Dual Practice

Physicians must follow CPSA's *Standards of Practice*, no matter how a surgery is paid for. Their decisions must be based on your health needs, not on how you pay for the surgery.

Can I still get publicly funded surgery?

Yes. Some surgeries may be available both ways: through the publicly funded system or as privately paid non-Plan services. Before you pay, the physician must tell you if the same surgery could be available through the public system.

For more information about whether a surgery is covered and how to access publicly funded care, please contact the Alberta Health Care Insurance Plan.

How do I know if a physician provides privately paid surgeries?

Ask the physician or clinic if they offer privately paid non-Plan surgeries. If they do, ask which surgeries they offer and when they can offer them.

How will I know if I have to pay for surgery?

Before the surgery, the physician must explain what it is and how much you will pay.

If it is a privately paid non-Plan surgery, the physician must tell you:

- what the surgery is for;
- how much it will cost; and
- whether the same surgery may be available through publicly funded care.

The physician must give you the information you need to make a decision. You must also agree in writing to have the surgery and pay the fee.

Who is responsible for my follow-up care?

The physician must help support your care after the surgery.

They must tell you how to get care after hours and arrange any follow-up care you if need it. If another healthcare provider takes over your care, the physician must make sure that provider agrees.

What if my physician receives benefits from a clinic or facility?

If your physician sends you to a clinic, organization or facility where they have a financial or business interest, they must tell you before sending you there.

The referral must be right for your health needs, and they must also share other reasonable options with you, if any are available.

Will information about my privately paid surgery be added to Alberta's electronic health record?

Yes. Your physician must add information about your privately paid surgery to Alberta's electronic health record, usually within 30 days. They must also keep a record of your care.

Will there be a record of what I pay for a surgery?

Yes. A physician who provides a non-Plan service must keep a record of what you pay.

The records must include:

- your name;
- the fee;
- the date of the surgery;
- who paid;
- any payment terms; and
- who charged, received and paid the fee.

What if I have concerns about a surgery I paid for?

If you have questions, ask the physician or clinic about the surgery, fee, records or agreements.

If you are still concerned about a physician's care or conduct, contact CPSA at 1-800-561-3899 or support@cpsa.ca.