



The College of
Physicians and Surgeons
of Newfoundland and Labrador

NEW AND REVISED STANDARDS OF PRACTICE WHICH AFFECT YOUR PRACTICE

Notice to College Members

March 18, 2021

Council of the College recently approved eight new and revised Standards of Practice. These documents set out the College's expectations for physicians on a variety of topics relating to the practice of medicine.

These documents can be found on the College's website on the "Standards of Practice and Practice Guidelines" page. Physicians are expected to be familiar with the documents which apply to their individual practices.

Advertising (Revised)

This revised document outlines the College's expectations of physicians when advertising medical services and products. The revised Standard includes direction on how a physician can advertise credentials and practice interests.

Bloodborne Viruses (Revised)

This revised document outlines the College's expectations with respect to bloodborne viruses, including safeguarding health, knowing serological status, and reporting serological status (in circumstances where the physician performs or assists in exposure prone procedures). The revised Standard incorporates guidance from the Public Health Agency of Canada on routine practices and precautions and preventing transmission.

Boundary Violations (Revised)

This revised document outlines the College's expectations for maintaining boundaries (both sexual and non-sexual) with patients. The revised Standard includes a definition of a "patient" as well as presumptions and considerations regarding how long an individual remains a "patient" after the provision of medical care.

All College communication to its members will be by email.
It is a professional obligation for College members to read all College communications.



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Chaperones (Revised)

This revised document outlines the College's expectations of physicians when engaging a third party chaperone for a clinical encounter. The revised Standard includes both general expectations for any time a chaperone is used as well as specific expectations for sensitive examinations.

Continuity of Care (*New*)

This new document outlines the College's expectations with respect to continuity of care in primary, consultative, specialist, and episodic care. The new Standard addresses the topics of making and receiving referrals, transfer of care, availability and coverage, management of test results, and walk-in clinics.

Disclosure of Harm (Revised)

Previously titled "Disclosure of an Adverse Event," this revised document outlines the College's expectations with respect to disclosing unintended "harmful" or "no-harm" incidents to patients. The revised Standard includes updated definitions and expectations, consistent with those used by the Canadian Patient Safety Institute.

Physical Examinations (*New*)

This new document outlines the College's expectations with respect to physical examinations, which includes conducting examinations in a professional and respectful manner which promotes patient comfort and ensures that the patient has an understanding of the scope of the examination.

Virtual Care (Revised)

Previously titled "Telemedicine," this revised document outlines the College's expectations when providing medical care by means of telecommunications and information technology. Physicians practising virtual care are held to the same standards of legal, ethical, competent, and professional care as physicians providing personal face to face medical services and must only provide virtual care in appropriate circumstances. The revision to the Standard reminds physicians of their duty of non-abandonment in circumstances where virtual care is not appropriate.

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