



POLICY

Physicians/Surgeons Leaving Practice

STATUS:	APPROVED
Approved by Council:	June 2005
Amended:	September 2016
To be reviewed:	September 2021

When a physician/surgeon plans to close or leave a practice, it is mandatory that there is timely and appropriate notification to regulatory authorities and patients, provision on continuity of care for patients in that practice and appropriate disposition of all medical records in the practice.

NOTIFICATION

Regulatory authorities such as the Regional Health Authority, the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Saskatchewan and other organizations such as Medical Care Insurance Branch and Canadian Medical Protective Association should be notified of the anticipated date of closure or departure from practice. Notification should include the date of practice closure, and forwarding address for any correspondence thereafter. If an existing colleague or new physician is taking over practice responsibilities or will be acting as a liaison person during the transition, the name and contact information for that individual should accompany the notification of the intent to cease practice. Patients also require appropriate notification of intent to cease practice. This notification can be done in person, by regular mail or electronic means. Advertising in appropriate local newspapers is advisable.

It is advised that notification occurs a minimum of a three months prior date of practice closure. This will give patients ample opportunity to access the physician for any care needs prior to practice closure and allow access to medical records as needed.

CONTINUITY OF CARE

It is the responsibility of the physician to ensure that continuity of care is maintained after practice closure. In the event that an existing colleague or a new physician is taking over the practice, this arrangement needs to be clearly outlined and documented for patients in the practice and the regulatory authorities. Care of any patient under acute, active treatment in an inpatient setting should be transferred to a colleague at the time of practice closure. All outstanding reports or test results must be reviewed and acted upon prior to practice closure.

MEDICAL RECORDS

The records, whether on paper or electronic media, should be maintained securely at the time of practice closure.¹ Information on the location and disposition of patient records and how the patient records may be accessed needs to be made available to the regulatory authorities and the patients. The ongoing secure storage and disposition of the medical records from that medical practice are the responsibility of the physician until such time as another physician or entity clearly takes full responsibility for these records.

In the event that a sudden illness or untimely, unpredictable death results in the sudden cessation of medical/surgical practice, the responsibilities for the above requirements will fall on that individual's professional medical colleagues and to the estate to fulfill. It is anticipated, in that unfortunate situation, that physician colleagues would assist in the fulfillment of these requirements and offer aid to whoever is helping with estate matters.

¹ – See the College's requirements for maintaining and transferring medical records contained in Regulatory Bylaw 23.1 available at <https://www.cps.sk.ca/iMIS/Documents/Legislation/Legislation/Regulatory%20Bylaws%20-%20July%202016.pdf>