



POLICY

Medical Practice Coverage

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| STATUS: | APPROVED |
| Adopted by Council: | 2007 |
| Approved by Council: | Sept 2010 |
| Approved by Council: | June 2012 |
| Approved by Council: | June 2015 |
| Amended: | n/a |
| To be reviewed: | June 2020 |

1. All physicians involved in direct patient care have an obligation to arrange for 24-hour coverage of patients currently under their care.
2. Recognizing the impossibility for a physician to be available continuously, where physician numbers permit (four or more), they are encouraged to form call groups with physicians of similar interest and training to share responsibility for after hours and weekend coverage.
3. Physicians who transfer coverage of patients in their practice to another physician should have the agreement of the physician before doing so.
4. If it is not possible or practical to arrange alternative coverage with another physician or group, physicians may make mutually acceptable arrangements with an RHA, one or more hospital emergency departments and/or physician emergency clinics to cover the after hours needs of their patients. These arrangements should include, wherever feasible, ability for the covering physician to contact someone from the physician's call group when necessary. However, it is not ethically acceptable for physicians to unilaterally offload professional responsibilities on RHA facilities and programs without a mutually acceptable agreement with the RHAs in which they hold a medical staff appointment.
5. Physicians who sign over coverage to a hospital or clinic emergency department should be prepared, if requested, to participate in the one-call roster, provided the physician has the required training and/or experience to do so.
6. Information should be made available to patients providing clear directions as to when, where and how they can seek physician care when their own physician is unavailable.
7. All physicians involved in collaborative practices with Primary Care Clinics should be prepared to accept their fair share of call responsibility along with other members of the interdisciplinary team.