



POLICY

Withdrawal of Physician Services during Job Action

STATUS:	APPROVED
Approved by Council:	December 1999
Amended:	March 2016
To be reviewed:	March 2021

Preamble

The College of Physicians and Surgeons of Saskatchewan:

1. Recognizes that the public, the medical profession and the Government of Saskatchewan are concerned about the quality and accessibility of health care;
2. Acknowledges the right of physicians to withdraw their services under specific circumstances;
3. Reaffirms that discontinuing services to existing patients without arranging alternative services or providing reasonable notice is professional misconduct;
4. Acknowledges that it has an obligation to communicate clearly to all parties what it expects from the medical profession in Saskatchewan during a time of withdrawal of services;
5. The ultimate responsibility for any withdrawal rests with each individual physician to act in the public interest and to ensure that his or her actions are consistent with the ethical and professional standards expected of registrants.

What does the College expect from physicians who wish to withdraw services?

The College expects and is confident that:

1. Individual physicians will adhere to their ethical obligations and avoid placing their patients at undue risk;
2. Physicians in Saskatchewan will act responsibly towards their patients during a period of withdrawal of services;
3. Physicians in Saskatchewan will provide adequate emergency care and will ensure that their patients are not abandoned;
4. A plan will be put in place to ensure access to emergency services in circumstances where groups of physicians decide to withdraw services at the same time.

5. Physicians choosing to withdraw their services will inform their patients of their decision and will make provision for access to emergency services; and
6. Physicians will recognize the need for ongoing monitoring of their patients with critical conditions which could deteriorate during a delay in treatment.

What does the College expect from physician members of Council?

The College expects that physician members of Council will refrain from participating in withdrawing their services to avoid a potential conflict of interest.

What can the public expect from the College during a withdrawal of physician services?

The College will closely monitor the situation in Saskatchewan communities to make sure that patients are receiving required care. In doing so, the College will work closely with other parties to exchange information and resolve local difficulties where it can.

The College will work with local physicians, Health Regions and Senior Medical Officers to deal with access concerns.

The College will investigate complaints about physicians arising from the withdrawal of services using normal procedures – the Quality of Care Advisory Committee and, if warranted, the Discipline Committee.