

TERMINATION OF PHYSICIAN/PATIENT RELATIONSHIP

BACKGROUND

The Code of Conduct states:

Having accepted professional responsibility for a patient, continue to provide services until they are no longer required or wanted; until another suitable physician has assumed responsibility for the patient; or until the patient has been given adequate notice that you intend to terminate the relationship.

SCOPE

This guideline applies to circumstances where a physician is of the opinion that it is not possible to continue providing care to a patient because of issues such as incompatible personalities, conflict of interest with the patient or other reasons.

GUIDELINE

- When a physician is considering terminating the physician/patient relationship with a patient, the physician should first discuss the issue with the patient and document the discussion in the patient medical record.
- If discussion with the patient fails to reach a mutually satisfactory conclusion, the physician should send a letter to the patient providing the patient with notice that the physician is terminating the physician/patient relationship. In the letter providing notice of termination of the physician/patient relationship:
 - Unless the physician believes that his/her personal safety would be compromised if reasons were stated, the physician should state his/her reasons for the termination.
 - The physician must inform the patient of any continuing care requirements.
 - The physician may provide the patient with options for obtaining appropriate alternative medical care, but is not responsible to make arrangements for alternate care.
 - The physician must notify the patient that he/she will provide emergency medical care for a reasonable period of time (at least 30 days) while the patient is making alternate arrangements for his/her medical care.
- A copy of the letter should be sent to the College.

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A guideline is practice generally recommended.