Closing or Leaving a Medical Practice

YUKON MEDICAL COUNCIL

> **Standards of Practice** of the Yukon Medical Council ("the Council") are the minimum standards of professional behavior and ethical conduct expected of all physicians registered in the Yukon. Standards of Practice will be referenced in the management of complaints and in discipline hearings.

(1)   For the purpose of this standard, closing or leaving a practice is defined as:

    (a)   discontinuing the practice of medicine completely with no intention of returning;

    (b)   a leave of absence for more than twelve (12) months during which there is no establishment of any medical practice in the Yukon;

    (c)   a scope of practice change the Council accepts as significant;

    (d)   moving to a location a significant distance from an existing practice such that existing patients could not reasonably be expected to travel to the new practice location; or

    (e)   a significant decrease in the volume of medical practice that will require the involuntary diminution of the number of patients in a practice.

(2)   A physician must notify the Council and colleagues in advance when the physician plans to close or leave a medical practice in the Yukon.

(3)   A physician must provide the Council with:

    (a)   information describing how the transfer of patient care will be managed;

    (b)   information on the location and disposition of patient records and how the patient records may be accessed;

    (c)   a forwarding mailing address and contact information for the physician; and

    (d)   all unused Triplicate Prescription forms in the possession of the physician if ceasing a medical practice in the Yukon.

(4)   A physician who closes or leaves a medical practice is responsible for the secure storage and disposition of the patient records from that medical practice.

(5)   A physician who closes or leaves a medical practice must dispose of medications, equipment and supplies in a safe manner.

(6)   A physician who closes or leaves a medical practice must provide and document notification of the event to individual patients with whom there is an expectation of ongoing care by that physician a minimum of ninety (90) days in advance of closing or leaving the practice.

    (a)   Notwithstanding section (6) above, the 90 days' notice does not apply to a physician if the reason for closing or leaving a medical practice is due to circumstances beyond the physician's control. In these cases, patients must be notified as soon as is reasonably possible given the circumstances.

Terms used in the Standards of Practice:

- *Physician* means any person who is registered or who is required to be registered under the Medical Profession Act.
- *Must* refers to a mandatory requirement.
- *May* means that the physician may exercise reasonable discretion.
- *Patient* includes, where applicable, the patient's legal guardian or substitute decision maker.

(7)   A physician who closes or leaves a medical practice and does not maintain custody of the records must ensure there are information sharing agreements relating to management of patient charts; the information sharing agreement must, at a minimum:

   (a)   identify which physician(s) will maintain custody of the patient records;

   (b)   describe who is responsible for costs if copies of the record are provided to a physician who is a party to the agreement; and

   (c)   reflect costs that are reasonable and consistent with applicable legislation and community standards.

(8)   A physician owner who asks a physician colleague to leave a medical practice must give adequate notice that the physician's services are no longer required; thereby allowing the departing physician to meet his or her obligations as per (2) through (6) above.

Terms used in the Standards of Practice:

- *Physician* means any person who is registered or who is required to be registered under the Medical Profession Act.
- *Must* refers to a mandatory requirement.
- *May* means that the physician may exercise reasonable discretion.
- *Patient* includes, where applicable, the patient's legal guardian or substitute decision maker.