



College of Physicians and Surgeons of British Columbia

Serving the public by regulating physicians and surgeons



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The *College Connector* is sent to every current registrant of the College. Decisions of the College on matters of standards and guidelines are contained in this publication. Questions or comments about this publication should be directed to communications@cpsbc.ca.



College of Physicians and Surgeons of British Columbia

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Registrar's message: increasing awareness of the College and the importance of licensing and regulation



Over the past five years, the College has been successful in prosecuting a number of unlawful practitioners who have made false claims about their credentials, used reserved titles to imply that they are registered and licensed to practise medicine, or performed medical procedures such as cosmetic surgery, and injecting Botox and dermal fillers.

Recently, an unlawful practitioner was incarcerated for 60 days for contempt of two BC Supreme Court injunctions prohibiting her from injecting Botox.

Read the news release and backgrounder [here](#).

We are also aware of recent advertising infractions by other regulated health professionals involving false or unverifiable claims of treatment, cures and specialization, which have the potential to mislead the public and put their health at risk.

Registrants have an important role to play in educating patients about the risks associated with receiving services from unlawful practitioners, and the importance of verifying an individual's credentials before agreeing to any treatment or procedure, especially if it carries risk.

Regulations in California require all physicians and surgeons licensed by the Medical Board of California to inform patients that they are licensed and regulated by way of public signage in a conspicuous place in their office, and on each floor in every location where they practise medicine (e.g. hospital, nursing home, clinic, outpatient facility or urgent care centre). The public notice must include contact information for the Medical Board of California—website and phone number—should patients want to check their physician's credentials or find out more information about the regulatory body.

Maintaining public confidence in the health-care system and the individuals who work in the system has never been more critical. Patients should be aware that they are being treated by a qualified physician or surgeon who is licensed and registered to practise medicine in BC. We also feel it's important that members of the public know that physicians and surgeons are governed by the College, and know how to contact the College if they need to.

The College has reviewed California's Regulations and is considering implementing a similar requirement for registrants to post conspicuous signage in all practice settings indicating that they are licensed and regulated. This would require a new bylaw. More information on this proposal will be provided in the coming months.

To share your thoughts on this proposal, click [here](#).

H.M. Oetter, MD
Registrar

Registrar's message: increasing awareness of the College and the importance of licensing and regulation

Comments on this or any other article published in the *College Connector* can be submitted to the communications and public affairs department at communications@cpsbc.ca.

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Update on three recently revised practice standards

Practice Standard

The College has recently published three revised practice standards: (1) *Charging for Uninsured Services*, (2) *Medical Records, Data Stewardship and Confidentiality of Personal Health Information*, and (3) *Sale and Dispensing of Drugs*.

The revised [Charging for Uninsured Services](#) practice standard, which combines the College's previous *Missed Appointments* and *Annual Fees to Patients* professional guidelines, was sent out for consultation in April 2019. A total of 312 physicians and 44 members of the public participated in the consultation. The College made several revisions to the standard based on the feedback gathered, including adding new sections to address physicians' ethical responsibilities for setting reasonable fees that account for the patient's ability to pay, communicating fees to patients, and expectations when insured and uninsured services are combined. Along with the revised practice standard, the College created a [patient resource](#), which identifies what a patient can expect when obtaining an uninsured service from their physician.

The [Medical Records, Data Stewardship and Confidentiality of Personal Health Information](#) practice standard was revised based on input gathered from the BC Coroners Service, the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner for BC, and the Patient Relations, Practice Standards and Ethics Committee. The revised version of the standard includes new sections which outline expectations related to technology and transferring a copy of the medical record. Following the publication of this revised standard, the College archived the *Emailing Patient Information* professional guideline and the *Data Stewardship Framework*. The College sought feedback from physicians on the revised standard to evaluate whether the principles outlined are clear and easy to understand. This consultation closed on July 31, 2019 and analysis of the feedback is currently being completed. Based on the findings elicited from the feedback, further revisions may be made to the standard.

The [Sale and Dispensing of Drugs](#) practice standard underwent an extensive review process, inclusive of two separate consultations. The first consultation was held in October 2018 and gathered feedback from 120 physicians and 24 members of the public. The standard was revised based on the feedback received, then sent out for a second consultation in December 2018, which gathered further input from 90 physicians. Throughout this consultation process, the College collaborated with other regulatory colleges in the province to develop consistent principles, and sought feedback from key stakeholders, such as the Ministry of Health, at multiple stages in the process. The recently published standard incorporates several key revisions, including a revised title, added clarity regarding its application, and a list of comprehensive standards that address physicians' requirements and ethical responsibilities when selling or dispensing drugs. A [patient resource](#) has been published in addition to the practice standard to help communicate what patients can expect when purchasing a drug from their physician.

The College thanks all those who provided their feedback during the consultation process.

Questions about College standards or consultation processes can be directed to communications@cpsbc.ca.

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2019 Education Day: register now to save a spot in one of the engaging workshops

2019
Education
Day and
AGM

Non nocere: useful ideas and initiatives in the cause of patient safety

This year's Education Day will focus on ideas, initiatives and practical tools that are effectively addressing a shared commitment to keep patients safe. Participants will enjoy plenary sessions, case studies, interactive workshops, and plenty of opportunity for dialogue.

Workshops

Caring for patients with substance-use disorders: strategies for success

Having practised addiction medicine for over 20 years, Dr. Annabel Mead is well-suited to offer strategies for physicians caring for patients with substance-use disorders. She currently works as a consultant at St. Paul's Hospital and is the director of the BCCSU Addiction Medicine Fellowship training program. Dr. Mead's workshop will use patient examples and include discussion of treatment planning, trauma-informed care, and motivational interviewing.

So you think you've got consent? Going beyond the signature

Dr. Caryne Lessard is a physician advisor for the Canadian Medical Protective Association as well as a faculty lecturer at McGill University and a medical educator at the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada. Dr. Lessard will cover the medical-legal perspective on patient consent. Her presentation will offer specifics on discussing consent with patients as well as documenting what was discussed.

Antibiotic resistance: what physicians can do about it

Dr. David Patrick is a respected public health leader, researcher, and educator with expertise in epidemiology and infectious diseases. He is the interim executive lead for the British Columbia Centre for Disease Control and his research is currently focused on antimicrobial resistance in Canada and around the world. He will speak on the current state of antibiotic use in the province and what physicians can do to combat antibiotic resistance.

Can on demand virtual health solutions in the rural ER influence health equity? Calling CODI!

Join Dr. John Pawlovich to explore how technology can increase patient safety and reduce anxiety and uncertainty for physicians in rural emergency rooms. Dr. Pawlovich has spent over twenty years of his practice focused on bringing innovative care to remote communities. He is telehealth sector lead for the Rural Coordination Center of BC and co-creator of CODI (Critical Outreach and Diagnostic Intervention), an app that connects rural health-care providers with on-demand access to specialists.

Details

Date: Friday, September 20, 2019

Location: Vancouver Convention Centre, 1055 Canada Place, Vancouver

Full program and CPD details: [Event page](#)

Register

Download the registration form [here](#).

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Message from the BC Vital Statistics Agency regarding death certification



The British Columbia Vital Statistics Agency (VSA) is asking medical practitioners to review its instructional handbook, *Medical Certification of Death and Stillbirth—A Handbook for Physicians, Nurse Practitioners and Coroners*, developed as a reference to assist in completing death and stillbirth certification.

Internationally, mortality certification is based on standardized World Health Organization (WHO) tabulation conventions.

Mortality data is used locally and in cross-jurisdictional epidemiological analyses for monitoring public health status, evaluating health interventions, planning and follow up of health care at the provincial level, and by Statistics Canada. It also contributes to robust clinical and academic research.

British Columbia is fortunate to have an internationally-recognized comprehensive collection of administrative health data including hospitalizations and other institutional care, home care, emergency department use, pharmaceutical use, etc.

Accurate and detailed mortality data comprises the end point with which to complete individuals' clinical and social histories, and as such is critically important for health surveillance and research purposes. VSA is appreciative of practitioners' assistance in providing comprehensive details regarding the circumstances leading to a person's death.

Some physicians may have received follow-up letters from the VSA Medical Coding Unit to clarify clinical events and conditions leading to death. These letters are sent to ensure provincial mortality data is as accurate and complete as possible.

In an attempt to minimize the burden on practitioners in responding to these letters, the handbook is designed to facilitate certifiers' understanding of WHO death certification procedures and will act as a guide in the task of comprehensive death certification.

Medical Certification of Death and Stillbirth—A Handbook for Physicians, Nurse Practitioners and Coroners can be accessed [here](#).

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Educational programs and support for safer prescribing practices

DRUG PROGRAMS Update

Most physicians recognize that a strong pharmacovigilance strategy is an essential tool in their practice to promote both patient and public safety. Treatment agreements, urine drug screens and random pill counts are being employed on a regular basis by most prescribers. Opioid prescribing trends continue to align more closely with best practices.

Part of the quality assurance mandate of the drug programs department involves administering the Prescription Review Program (PRP), an educational and remedial program that reaches out to physicians when there may be prescribing that falls outside the College practice standard [Safe Prescribing of Opioids and Sedatives](#) and the 2017 Canadian National Opioid Use Guidelines. The PRP process aims to help physicians with the challenging task of prescribing of opioids, sedatives and other potentially addictive medications. Physicians are typically enrolled in the PRP process when a potential concern is identified in their prescribing.

While the PRP process is a key component of the drug programs primary prevention strategy, the drug programs department is also available as an ongoing resource to any physician seeking guidance regarding prescribing challenges they may be facing in their practice. The drug programs medical consultants are experienced in complex pain and addiction management, and can offer advice and guidance on a variety of challenging subjects. To set up an advice call with a consultant, call 604-733-7758 ext. 2629 or email drugprograms@cpsbc.ca.

The College also regularly hosts and collaborates on educational courses and workshops aimed at challenging prescribing. On March 6 and 7, 2020, the Foundation for Medical Excellence, in cooperation with the College, will host the 33rd Annual Pain Management Conference. The conference has received very positive feedback in past years and continues to provide crucial and practical education and skills in complex chronic pain management.

On October 17, 2019, the College will host the [prescribers course](#). The prescribers course is an intensive one-day course where practitioners can gain further education and experience in pain management and addiction medicine. Practitioners will work with experienced clinical teachers and their peers to be able to identify unsafe prescribing patterns and further develop skills for talking to patients in realistic terms about the risks and benefits of opioids, benzodiazepines and other potentially addictive medications.

The drug programs department encourages registrants to get in touch to learn more about safe prescribing: drugprograms@cpsbc.ca.

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Evaluating post-operative support requirements for patients undergoing surgery at non-hospital facilities

NHMSFAP Update

Patient safety incident reviews: sharing learning

The following information and recommendations are being shared with all facilities in the spirit of learning and improving patient safety.

The Non-Hospital Medical and Surgical Facilities Patient Safety Incident Review Panel recently reviewed an incident involving a patient who required several admissions to hospital following a procedure at a non-hospital facility. Admissions were for inadequate pain control, nausea and vomiting, and actual interventions were minimal and dealt with general medical issues.

One of the contributing factors to this incident included the patient's lack of a social support system:

- This lack of support resulted in the patient seeking help in the hospital system and requiring 15 days of admission. The pre-operative education and assessment were inadequate to optimize the chance of success following surgery. Each assessment (RN, anesthesia, surgeon) was made with respect to whether the patient was medically fit to deal with the anesthetic, surgery, or PACU stay. No one took responsibility or assessed if this patient was appropriate for the surgery in terms of post-operative support requirements.

In reviewing the potential impact of the contributory factors on the patient safety incident, the panel made the following recommendation for the facility and others to consider:

- Consideration and assessment of a patient's post-operative course should be undertaken by a multi-disciplinary team. Social history should be assessed as part of pre-surgical screening to determine post-operative support requirements for the patient.

Facilities are reminded that care of a surgical patient doesn't end when the patient is discharged. Patients should be assessed for required supports following surgery to ensure a successful recovery. A social history should be included in the pre-operative assessment to allow for discharge planning.

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Feedback requested: point-of-care laboratory diagnostic tests exempt from accreditation



The Diagnostic Accreditation Program (DAP) Committee is preparing revisions to the list of approved point-of-care laboratory tests that are exempt from accreditation when performed by physicians in the course of treating their own patients. The DAP Committee consulted with laboratory medicine subject matter experts in developing the proposed list and is now consulting with registrants to obtain their feedback on the following draft position statement:

- [Point-of-care Laboratory Diagnostic Tests Exempt from Accreditation](#)

A brief online survey about the draft is available [here](#). The survey will close on

Friday, August 30, 2019.

Feedback gathered from the survey will help the committee assess the position statement to determine whether there are any issues that should be considered.

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EvidenceAlerts with a College library connection

College
LIBRARY

Over the years, the College library has received requests for a specialty-specific version of *Cites & Bytes*, a monthly compilation of recent, newsworthy, or locally interesting medical citations in family practice and internal medicine. Taking up the challenge, librarians experimented by increasing specialty content in *Cites & Bytes*. Unfortunately, the uptake was low and the effort was high, so the standard version returned, supplemented with a small "From the Specialties" section.

Enter now: EvidenceAlerts, a free alerting service from the Health Information Research Unit at McMaster University that identifies important new publications in more than 30 specialties. The EvidenceAlerts results can be filtered by specialty and patient populations (neonates, pediatrics, adults, geriatrics). To create a new alert, register for free, search for terms of interest, and save the search strategy. Emailed alerts will arrive whenever new results are found. Articles from journals that are part of the College library's subscriptions are available in full text in each EvidenceAlert.

College registrants can enable this feature by selecting "College of Physicians and Surgeons of BC" under Account/Update profile/PubMed Outside Tool Institution. To locate full-text articles from the library's collection, view article abstracts in the EvidenceAlerts results, select "View on PubMed" and use the teal-coloured "CPSBC Article Access" button.

If the College library does not have a subscription to a certain journal, a form will automatically display that will send a request for the article to the library. The library can locate copies of almost all articles quickly and, in most cases, for free. A short user guide to setting up links from EvidenceAlerts to College library articles can be found [here](#).

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CPD events: mark your calendars



Education Day and Annual General Meeting 2019

September 20, 2019 – Vancouver

[Learn more](#)

Medical Record Keeping for Physicians

October 16, 2019 – Vancouver

[Learn more](#)

Prescribers Course

October 17, 2019 – Vancouver

[Learn more](#)

Professionalism in Medical Practice: Avoiding the Pitfalls

November 1, 2019 to November 2, 2019 – Vancouver

[Learn more](#)

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