



College of Physicians and Surgeons of British Columbia

# Professional Standards and Guidelines

## Annual Fees to Patients

### Preamble

This document is a guideline of the Board of the College of Physicians and Surgeons of British Columbia.

Most of patients' medical fees are covered by the Medical Services Plan of BC (MSPBC). However, there are some services that are not covered. Patients may be charged for these services one by one, or charged an annual fee which would cover all the services which are not paid by the Medical Services Plan. The College has set out rules which physicians must follow if they wish to charge annual fees:

1. Physicians may not charge a patient an annual fee for a period of less than a year;
2. The bill for the annual fee must list in writing each of the services that is covered by the fee. The patient has the right to ask the physician about any charge he/she does not understand;
3. The patient must be told how much each service would cost if paid for by itself;
4. The patient does not have to pay an annual fee. Patients are allowed to pay for each service which is not covered by the Medical Services Plan one by one;
5. The patient may decide whether or not to pay for services not covered by MSPBC as an annual fee. The physician may not refuse to see the patient or refuse to include the patient in his/her practice if he/she does not wish to pay this way;
6. Before a patient is charged an annual fee, the physician must:
  - give the patient a copy of these rules, and
  - ask the patient if he/she agrees to pay an annual fee;
7. The physician may not charge the patient a fee for "being available" in advance (for example, being available to take calls from patients).

For more information about MSPBC, go to: <http://www.health.gov.bc.ca/msp/>

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