



College of Physicians and Surgeons of British Columbia

Practice Standard

Job Shadowing/Observing

Effective:	October 2009
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Related topic(s):	

A **practice standard** reflects the minimum standard of professional behaviour and ethical conduct on a specific topic or issue expected by the College of all physicians in British Columbia. Standards also reflect relevant legal requirements and are enforceable under the [Health Professions Act](#), RSBC 1996, c.183 (*HPA*) and College [Bylaws](#) under the *HPA*.

Registrants may seek advice on these issues by contacting the College and asking to speak with a member of the registrar staff, or by seeking medical legal advice from the CMPA.

PREAMBLE

This document is a standard of the Board of the College of Physicians and Surgeons of British Columbia. This standard relates to individuals who are not enrolled as students of health professions regulated by the *Health Professions Act* or *Emergency Health Services Act* and who wish to observe as part of their curriculum.

COLLEGE'S POSITION

The intention of this document is to protect the privacy and dignity of patients and recognize the power differential that exists between patients and health-care providers. Youth work experience programs have become more prevalent. With increased inquiries from both physicians and members of the public, the College has recognized that job shadowing or observing by individuals who are not enrolled as students of health professions regulated by the *Health Professions Act* or *Emergency Health Services Act* poses significant concerns about patient privacy and confidentiality. The College does not support the practice of job shadowing or observing by individuals who are not enrolled as students of health professions regulated by the *Health Professions Act* or *Emergency Health Services Act* and who wish to observe as part of their curriculum, irrespective of patient consent.

Accordingly, physicians must not permit individuals who are not enrolled in a regulated health profession educational program to

- be present during patient interviews or diagnostic or clinical examinations, or
- be present in the operating room or during surgical procedures, or
- be allowed access to patient medical records.

This document does not refer to individuals, including students, who are employed in specific roles in physicians' offices and who are members of the office staff. Physicians are always held responsible for the conduct of the office staff whom they employ, and are expected to ensure that they are informed about, and held accountable to, confidentiality agreements.