



A **standard** is the minimum standard of professional behaviour and ethical conduct on a specific issue expected by the College.

Accepting New Patients

Preamble

Access to physician services is a concern for the public and the profession. When deciding whether to accept a new patient, physicians must ensure their decision is fair and non-discriminatory.

Standard of Practice

In the selection of new patients, physicians must ensure that access to medical care for patients is fair and non-discriminatory.

Discrimination

Physicians are bound by the *Human Rights Act* which prohibits discrimination regarding provision of, or access to, services or facilities.

The following grounds of discrimination are not acceptable reasons for denial of a patient into a medical practice: race, colour, nationality, ethnic origin, social origin, religious creed, religion, age, disability, disfigurement, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, marital status, family status, source of income and political opinion.

Patient Selection Process

Physicians who are able to accept new patients into their practice should use a first-come, first-served approach. Decisions to accept or refuse new patients must be made in good faith.

A physician who restricts or selects patients for his or her practice for any reason must establish a selection process which is clearly articulated to the prospective patient. The selection criteria for accepting patients must be relevant to the physician's clinical competence and medical practice and to a patient's health care needs.

Decisions not to accept an individual as a patient should be conveyed respectfully and honestly.

Medical Questionnaires

The College cautions against requiring or asking prospective patients to fill out medical questionnaires until they have been accepted as patients as this practice may be viewed as discriminatory.

Acknowledgement/s

College of Physicians and Surgeons of Alberta (2016).
College of Physicians and Surgeons of British Columbia (2015).
College of Physicians and Surgeons of Manitoba (2016).
College of Physicians and Surgeons of Nova Scotia (2015).
College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario (2014).
McCurry, T.M. Jr. & Kasdan, M.L. (2006). Patient selection. *Clinics in Occupational and Environmental Medicine*, 5(2), 217-223.

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