



Message from the President and Registrar

We would like to thank all Manitoba physicians on the front lines helping patients during the COVID-19 pandemic. This is a challenging time to be practising medicine. New information is emerging daily, which requires each of you to be nimble and adaptable. Your leadership in keeping patients safe, your empathy towards patients and your exceptional efforts do not go unnoticed.

The extraordinary burdens of the current situation may put additional constraints on your delivery of care, and you may be in a position where it is not possible, or not in the patients' best interest to abide by all of our standards explicitly. Our expectation is that physicians will practice within their scope of training and expertise now and always act in the best interest of their patients. In situations like these, physicians should be guided by our [Code of Ethics & Professionalism](#), especially:

- Consider first the well-being of the patient.
- Take all reasonable steps to prevent harm to patients.
- Provide whatever appropriate assistance you can to any person who needs emergency medical care.

Physicians should not be reluctant to provide care, even when it may be extremely difficult to follow some components of CPSM's *Standards of Practice*. CPSM will always consider the individual circumstances and context if a complaint arises during the COVID-19 pandemic. In such an emergency situation, failure to meet standards is not considered unprofessional conduct if a physician can demonstrate they took all reasonable actions in their service to patients.

We recognize these are challenging times, but it is worth reminding physicians all patients have the right to access medical care and we all have a professional, ethical and in many cases a legal duty to not turn sick patients away.

A great deal of information is being shared about COVID-19, some of which can seem overwhelming. We are confident Manitoba's health professionals are well positioned to manage COVID-19 effectively by taking necessary precautions. There are excellent up to date links provided on the [Shared Health](#) website and encourage you to review this daily.

We are working on further information to provide more details regarding the Standards of Practice, standards of care, and scope of practice provided by our members during a major public health emergency. Stay connected to the CPSM website. To assist you, CPSM has prepared the below **Guidance to the Profession – Practicing Medicine During a Pandemic**.

Thank you again for your efforts to help and expertise in keeping Manitobans safe.

Dr. Ira Ripstein, President
Dr. Anna Ziomek, Registrar/CEO

CPSM Guidance to the Profession – Practicing Medicine During this Pandemic

Please consider the following suggestions for your practice:

Continuing to Practice

- Physicians are vital members of the health care team and are critical to the success of managing the COVID-19 crisis and **physicians have a duty to continue to care for their patients and other patients during this pandemic**. This care may ultimately be outside of your current scope of practice.
- Consider your scope of practice – what patient care is required now, what patient care can be deferred, and what are alternative ways to deliver care.
- Encourage your patients to access information and advice through [Shared Health resources](#).

International Travel

- If you have recently travelled internationally, follow the Department of Health and Shared Health's [Notice to Health Care Professionals](#), updated regularly [here](#)

Self Isolation (Travel Related, Patient Interaction, or Symptomatic)

- If you are sick, stay home and take care of yourself.
- If you are self-isolating as a precaution but asymptomatic, you still have professional responsibilities. We understand that this was a difficult decision to make, but if you meet the criteria for self-isolation, this is the right decision to make.
- Given that you are unavailable to your patients, take reasonable steps to help make coverage arrangements for their ongoing care needs where you can (recognizing the stresses on the system) and help patients navigate the system and find the right care for them. To the extent that you can, take advantage of virtual care options to provide care remotely even while in self-isolation where it would be appropriate in the circumstances to do so.
- If you are immunocompromised or elderly, then consider deferring care to physicians less at risk.

Telemedicine/Virtual Care

- Use digital health or telemedicine to connect with patients when appropriate, particularly those patients who may be at higher risk due to age or pre-existing health conditions if they were to be inadvertently exposed to COVID-19. There are new tariffs recently announced for telemedicine and can be found on the [Doctors Manitoba](#) website.
 - Choose the most secure method of telemedicine, such as land line telephones over email, Skype, or Facetime.
 - Ensure that you inform patients of privacy risks and obtain patient consent before providing health services using digital technology.