

## Termination of a Pharmacist-Patient Relationship

Pharmacists may have the right to terminate a relationship with a patient for various reasons. The termination of a relationship may occur provided there are valid reasons; sufficient documentation of the reason(s) and the patient is not in immediate need of pharmaceutical care.

Examples of valid reasons include but are not limited to:

- communication with the patient has proven to be unsuccessful
- the patient is acting in an abusive manner
- the patient poses a threat to the safety of the pharmacist and staff members
- the patient poses a threat to the safety of other patients or the public
- the patient is uncooperative with treatment plans or agreements

**When ending a patient-pharmacist relationship, the College recommends the following:**

### 1.0 Documentation

1.1 Review the patient's profile (both PIP and pharmacy record) before deciding to terminate the relationship. Ensure that there is detailed documentation of objective and factual evidence that supports the decision of termination including:

- 1.1.1 Patient complaints or accusations against the practice or pharmacy team members.
- 1.1.2 Detailed documentation of inappropriate comments or threats towards healthcare providers, staff or other patients. Using specific examples or quotations when applicable to preserve the patient's statements.
- 1.1.3 Documentation indicating the pharmacy manager has attempted to resolve the issue with the patient.

If there is insufficient evidence that provides support for the termination of the pharmacist-patient relationship, it is advised that the pharmacist continue to provide pharmaceutical care until proper documentation supporting the decision has been chronicled.

### 2.0 Communication

- 2.1 Written notice of the intention to terminate care should be given to the patient when possible. The decision shall be clearly communicated to the patient while remaining compassionate, supportive and non-confrontational.
- 2.2 There is no obligation for the pharmacist to provide a reason for terminating the relationship, but if the pharmacist wishes to do so, the statements being made should be concise, factual and non-argumentative.
- 2.3 Guidance for the patient shall be included in the notice and shall provide resources that the patient can use to find a new pharmacy service.

- 2.4 The notice shall state the date that the termination will become effective, until this date the pharmacy will remain responsible for the patient's pharmaceutical care and medication management needs.
- 2.5 The notice shall be signed by the pharmacy manager and a copy of the written notice retained by the pharmacy in the patient's file.
  - 2.5.1 If the pharmacy manager chooses to provide the written notice via a letter and the letter is returned by the post office due to it being undelivered or the patient has refused to pick it up, the unopened letter shall be filed on the patient's profile, e.g. scanned.
  - 2.5.2 Alternatively, a note can be posted to the patient's profile referencing the date the letter was returned and then the letter can be filed with the prescriptions on the date the letter was returned.

### **3.0 Timing**

- 3.1 To ensure patient abandonment is not alleged, timing shall be taken into consideration when terminating the pharmacist-patient relationship. Reasonable time shall be given to the patient to transition to a new pharmacy.
  - 3.1.1 If the pharmacy is the only location in an area, it may take longer to ensure the patient has appropriate care, which may result in a longer notice period prior to terminating the relationship.
  - 3.1.2 Alternatively, during the transition period, the patient may utilize a patient advocate who will be charged with picking up the patient's medications or the medications can be delivered. This will allow the patient to still obtain their medications but will not require the patient to come to the pharmacy.

### **4.0 Conduct Agreement between patient and pharmacist**

- 4.1 In the case that the pharmacist is not ready to terminate the relationship with a patient, but the patient is being problematic, it is advised that the pharmacy manager use a conduct agreement with the patient and/or family.
  - 4.1.1 A conduct agreement can help preserve the pharmacist-patient relationship or if the agreement is not followed, it can be used as documentation supporting the termination of the pharmacist-patient relationship.

### **5.0 Letter of Termination**

- 5.1 It is advised that the letter of termination contain the following:
  - 5.1.1 Pharmacist's name.
  - 5.1.2 Pharmacy's name, location and phone number.
  - 5.1.3 Date the letter was written.
  - 5.1.4 Patient's name and address.
  - 5.1.5 Rationale for the decision to terminate the patient relationship (if the pharmacist wishes to include).
  - 5.1.6 Date upon which the termination will be effective.
  - 5.1.7 Information for the patient regarding where to locate new pharmacy services.

- 5.1.8 Confirmation that their primary practitioner will be notified of the decision to terminate the relationship at the pharmacy location or suggestion to inform their primary practitioner of the change.
- 5.1.9 Acknowledgement that the patient's prescription and medication information and all other relevant documents will be transferred to the pharmacy of the patient's choice upon the pharmacy receiving notice of consent to do so by the patient.

## **6.0 Considerations**

### **6.1 Staff**

- 6.1 Staff should be made aware of the termination and who to report to in the case that the patient shows up to the pharmacy when the pharmacy manager is not present.
- 6.2 A note indicating the termination of the pharmacist-patient relationship should be retained on the patient's profile so that the new prescriptions are not entered into the system.

## **7.0 Transitioning the Patient to Another Pharmacy**

### **7.1 Find a Pharmacy**

- 7.1.1 To ensure the patient continues to receive the appropriate level of care the pharmacist or pharmacy manager in charge of the patient-pharmacist relationship termination shall provide the patient with a list of pharmacies in the surrounding area that can meet the patient's healthcare needs. It is important that the pharmacist suggest an alternative pharmacy that meets the patient's healthcare needs as not all pharmacies provide the same services.
- 7.1.2 The pharmacist or pharmacy manager can locate other pharmacies by using the "Find a Pharmacy" section on the SCPP website [here](#).

### **7.2 Notifying the patient's practitioner**

- 7.2.1 To ensure the patients practitioner is aware that there has been a change in the pharmacy care provider the pharmacy manager or pharmacist should notify the practitioner.

## **8.0 Information for the Patient**

When transferring the patient's medication list to their preferred pharmacy, the pharmacist should also advise the patient on making an appointment with their primary care practitioner to ensure they will have prescription refills available as some medications may require new prescriptions.