
Standard of Practice: Transfer and Termination of Care

Standard of Practice

When transferring or terminating care of a patient, naturopathic doctors must do so in a manner that is safe, ethical and competent.

Introduction

In providing safe, ethical and competent care for patients, circumstances may arise where naturopathic doctors need to transfer and/or terminate care. This standard outlines the situations and the process by which naturopathic doctors transfer and/or terminate care of a patient.

Definitions

Competence: the combined knowledge, skills, attitudes and judgement required to provide professional services, defined in the *Health Professions Act*.

Patient medical record: an account or evidence of documented patient findings, assessments, diagnoses and treatments.

Standard: an authoritative statement that describes a required behaviour of every naturopathic doctor and is used to evaluate individual conduct.

Therapeutic relationship: a planned and interpersonal process occurring between the naturopathic doctor and patient that is established for the advancement of the patient's health and well-being.

Naturopathic doctors demonstrate this standard by:

1. identifying circumstances where transfer of care to another regulated health care professional is appropriate, which include:
 - a) when a patient's life is or may be at risk, in which case the naturopathic doctor must immediately call emergency services,
 - b) when treatment of the patient's condition is beyond the scope of practice for the profession,
 - c) when the treatment of the patient's condition is beyond the competence level of the individual naturopathic doctor,
 - d) when the treatment of the patient's condition requires expertise or technology that is beyond the scope of practice for the profession;
2. ensuring when transferring care of a patient, that:
 - a) clear communication is provided to the patient regarding the transfer of care,
 - b) patients are notified in writing as to how they can obtain access to their patient medical records when their records are to be transferred,

- c) it is appropriately documented in the patient medical record and in accordance with the **CNDA Standard of Practice: Records Keeping**,
 - d) clear communication is provided to involved health care professionals in accordance with **CNDA Standard of Practice: Collaboration in Patient Care**, and
 - e) all referrals in are in accordance with the **CNDA Standard of Practice: Conflict of Interest**.
3. Understanding under which circumstances where they may terminate care of a patient **without** providing a transfer of care, which include when:
 - a) the patient poses a safety risk to office staff, other patients, or the naturopathic doctor,
 - b) the patient is abusive to office staff, other patients, or the naturopathic doctor,
 - c) the patient fails to respect professional boundaries, or
 - d) the naturopathic doctor is abruptly leaving practice with no return date because of personal illness or other urgent circumstances;
 4. ensuring that they do not terminate care of a patient based on:
 - a) any aspects of discrimination in accordance with the **CNDA Code of Ethics**,
 - b) poor lifestyle choices of a patient (e.g. smoking),
 - c) a patient failing to keep appointments or pay outstanding fees, unless advance notice regarding termination of care has been given to the patient, and
 - d) a patient refusing to follow naturopathic medical advice;
 5. identifying circumstances where termination of care is appropriate that requires transfer of care of a patient, which include:
 - a) upon the patient's request,
 - b) moving practice locations if not reasonable for patient to follow,
 - c) upon selling a practice to another naturopathic doctor,
 - d) retirement from practice,
 - e) when a naturopathic doctor changes their practice focus and determines that their care is no longer in the patient's best interest,
 - f) when the treatment of the patient's condition is beyond the competence level of the individual naturopathic doctor,
 - g) when the therapeutic relationship has been compromised, as outlined in **CNDA Standard of Practice: Professional Relationships and Boundaries**,

Expected Outcomes

Patients are satisfied that:

- naturopathic doctors understand when and how to terminate and transfer care in a competent and responsible manner.

Related Documents

Health Professions Act

Naturopaths Profession Regulation

CNDA Code of Ethics

CNDA Standard of Practice: General

CNDA Standard of Practice: Professional Relationships and Boundaries

CNDA Standard of Practice: Records Keeping

CNDA Standard of Practice: Collaboration in Patient Care

CNDA Standard of Practice: Conflict of Interest

