

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.

Referral: a recommendation that a patient consult with another health care professional; this may involve a transfer of care.

Standard of Practice: an authoritative statement that describes a minimum required behaviour of every naturopathic doctor and is used to evaluate individual conduct. Naturopathic doctors should always strive to practice above the minimum standards. Performance below the minimum standard may result in disciplinary action.

Transfer of care: transferring full or partial responsibility for a patient's care to another health care professional, for a defined or indefinite period of time.

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 and acknowledges the naturopathic doctor's position of authority, trust or power whether over a period of time or for a single interaction.

Naturopathic doctors demonstrate this standard of practice 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, and
 - b) when a patient requests a transfer of care;
2. identifying circumstances where a referral and/or a transfer of care to another regulated health care professional is appropriate, which include:
 - a) when treatment of the patient's condition is beyond the scope of practice for the profession,

- b) when treatment of the patient's condition is beyond the competence level of the individual naturopathic doctor,
 - c) when treatment of the patient's condition requires expertise or technology that is beyond the scope of practice for the profession, and
 - d) when treatment of the patient's condition requires expertise or technology that is beyond the ability of the individual naturopathic doctor;
3. ensuring when transferring care of a patient, that:
 - a) clear communication is provided to the patient regarding the roles and responsibilities of the involved health care professionals in the patient's ongoing 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**, and
 - d) clear communication is provided to involved health care professionals in accordance with **CNDA Standard of Practice: Collaboration in Patient Care**;
4. ensuring when referring a patient, that:
 - a) clear communication is provided to the patient regarding the roles and responsibilities of the involved health care professionals in the patient's ongoing care,
 - b) all referrals in are in accordance with the **CNDA Standard of Practice: Conflict of Interest**, and
 - c) any communication provided to involved health care professionals is in accordance with **CNDA Standard of Practice: Collaboration in Patient Care**;
5. 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;
6. 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;
7. 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, as outlined in the **CNDA Guideline: Moving and Leaving Practice**,
 - 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 the **CNDA Standard of Practice: Professional Relationships and Boundaries**;
8. ensuring when terminating care of a patient, that:
- a) the patient is notified in writing as to how they can obtain access to their patient medical record, and
 - b) it is appropriately documented in the patient medical record and in accordance with the **CNDA Standard of Practice: Records Keeping**;

Expected Outcomes

Patients are satisfied that:

- naturopathic doctors understand when and how to refer, transfer and terminate care in a competent, ethical 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

