

COVID-19: Important update regarding scope of practice

Monday, March 30, 2020

2:10 PM

Subject	COVID-19: Important update regarding scope of practice
From	College of Physicians and Surgeons of BC
Sent	Monday, March 30, 2020 1:38 PM



[College of Physicians and Surgeons of British Columbia](#)

Serving the public by regulating physicians and surgeons

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Dear registrant,

As our provincial health system reorganizes itself to address the current crisis, I want to thank all of you who are providing front-line care to patients who have contracted COVID-19. As a society, we have tremendous gratitude for the services of so many who contribute in innumerable ways to ensure public safety and patient care, especially during this very challenging time.

While we all hope that current measures such as physical distancing, closure of non-essential services and limitations on travel will continue to flatten the curve, behind the scenes the Ministry of Health, the Provincial Health Officer and the health authorities are making contingency plans to ensure that our hospitals can manage the anticipated increase of COVID-19 patients, many of whom may need critical care support.

We know that some registrants have seen a dramatic reduction in clinical services as a result of the cancellation of non-essential and elective procedures or surgeries. Others are busier than usual, and health authorities are considering how best to redeploy health-care professionals to support critical care needs. In addition to re-registering recently retired physicians, the health authorities are providing just-in-time retraining, support and supervision for physicians to ensure they are prepared to provide services when and where they are needed.

To continue to support the health authorities in meeting health human resourcing needs during the pandemic, in certain circumstances the College will waive the expectation that registrants must limit their scope of practice to recent training and experience. This will apply only to registrants who are privileged and working in a health-care setting operated by a health authority, which includes in-patient and out-patient care settings, as well as community-based COVID-19 assessment centres where the health authority has requested redeployment of a registrant to a practice environment outside their usual scope and is providing oversight of the registrant's practice.

Registrants who work in community settings in private practice are reminded that if they wish to change their scope of practice, they must notify the registrar in writing in advance to determine what the College may require of them, and otherwise comply with [section 2-8 of the Bylaws](#) under the *Health Professions Act*.

This pandemic is unprecedented in our time and is requiring all of us to do things differently to ensure patients' and health professionals' needs are being met. We must continue to be responsive and

flexible in order to address this crisis together.

Thank you.

Heidi M. Oetter, MD

Registrar and CEO

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