

Shadowing – Observing a Registered Physician in a Clinical Setting

This Policy provides guidance about the appropriate manner in which an internationally trained medical graduate (IMG) or any medical student who is not registered on a Register of the College of Physicians and Surgeons, can observe patient care in clinical settings. This type of observation will be referred to as 'shadowing'.

Preamble:

By shadowing a physician, such individuals have an opportunity to become familiar with the context in which medicine is practiced in Canada, knowledge which may assist in their pursuit of a medical career. Shadowing is an informal arrangement made between a physician and the shadowing individual. It is not a training appointment and will not be considered to be a credential on an application for certification. The College supports and encourages shadowing that is conducted in accordance with the following guidelines. The registered physician is responsible for all conduct and actions carried out by the shadowing individual.

Policy:

The College expects that when such individuals shadow physicians, they will primarily observe clinical practice.

Parameters of Practice

Shadowing is not intended to provide shadowing individuals with an opportunity to contribute to the delivery of care, or to perform any service for which the physician will, or could be remunerated. In cases which, in the judgment of the physician, the shadowing individual would benefit from some actual involvement with patients (e.g., taking a history or performing a physical examination), this activity should always be conducted with the **express consent** of the patient, and should serve an educational purpose only. Conduct of the shadowing individual should not in any way substitute for the direct care of the physician.

Consent

Physicians must obtain **express consent** from their patients before permitting a third party to observe doctor-patient encounters, or to have access to patient records. Consent can be oral, but must be recorded in the patient's medical record. Each patient is entitled to withhold or withdraw consent. A patient's decision to provide, withhold, or withdraw consent should not alter the patient's access to health care in any manner.

Confidentiality

The College recognizes that maintaining confidentiality of patient information is an essential component in a positive relationship between physician and patient. In order to ensure that shadowing does not alter the physician-patient relationship, the College expects that any shadowing individual will:

- (1) comply with all provincial legislation,
- (2) comply with all Health PEI policies and fill out required paperwork,
- (3) comply with the CMA Code of Ethics and Professionalism, and
- (4) sign a confidentiality agreement.

The physician and the shadowing individual are advised to retain a copy of the signed confidentiality agreement for their records.

An example of such an agreement is included below.

Confidentiality Agreement

I, _____ (candidate's name), understand that all information that I become aware of while shadowing Dr. _____ (name of physician) is confidential information, and that I must not share this information under any circumstances, unless I am required by law to do so.

I understand that if I do not abide by the terms of this agreement, I may be required to pay a fine, damages, or be subject to some other sanction under the law.

Date

Candidate's Name

Witness Name

Candidate's Signature

Witness Signature

Document History:

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