



GUIDELINES FOR COLLEGE-DIRECTED PRACTICE MONITORING

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INTRODUCTION

Reasons/Goals of Practice Monitoring

The College, through its committees, may require a physician's practice to be monitored. For example, the Inquiries, Complaints and Reports Committee may order Practice Monitoring, as part of interim order pending a Discipline Hearing.

PURPOSE OF GUIDELINES

These Guidelines set out the College's *general* expectations and processes for physicians engaged in a College-directed Practice Monitoring arrangement with regard to:

- principles of Practice Monitoring;
- qualifications and characteristics of an acceptable Practice Monitor;
- terms of Practice Monitoring;
- approaches to Practice Monitoring,
- content of Practice Monitoring reports;
- basis for immediate reports to the College; and
- roles of Practice Monitors and monitored physicians, as well as general responsibilities of Practice Monitors and monitored physicians to each other and to the College.

These are *general* guidelines only. All monitored physicians and Practice Monitors are asked to sign detailed undertakings which set out the College's *specific* expectations.

TERMINOLOGY

Practice Monitoring is a form of supervision that focuses on ensuring that a physician is in compliance with the terms of his or her undertaking or order, or with the terms and conditions imposed on a physician's certificate of registration by a committee.

A *Practice Monitor* is an individual who ensures that a physician is in compliance with the terms of his or her undertaking or order, or with the terms and conditions imposed on a physician's certificate of registration by a committee.

PRINCIPLES OF PRACTICE MONITORING

When principles of Practice Monitoring are applied in a consistent and responsible manner, Practice Monitoring will promote quality physicians and public trust. The principles of Practice Monitoring are:

1. Safe, quality patient care must always take priority in all Practice Monitoring situations.
2. The Practice Monitor's ultimate responsibility is to the College, and both the Practice Monitor and monitored physician must adhere to orders, and undertakings with the College.
3. Practice Monitors and monitored physicians must, within the monitoring relationship, respect the principles underlying the Ontario's *Human Rights Code*.

QUALITIES OF AN ACCEPTABLE PRACTICE MONITOR

While the College ultimately approves the Practice Monitor, monitored physicians are generally required to locate potential Practice Monitors.

College's Guidelines for Approval of Practice Monitors

The Practice Monitor must not currently be the subject of any disciplinary or incapacity proceeding.

The College, as part of its consideration/approval process, generally seeks the following qualities in a Practice Monitor:

- an Ontario certificate of registration for independent practice (or a member of another regulated health profession may be acceptable to the College for Practice Monitoring roles);
- currently practises in Ontario;
- a minimum of five current and consecutive years of practice in the scope of practice to be monitored;
- member's past and current investigative and assessment history with the College is acceptable;
- not involved in activities that would compromise their ability to be a Practice Monitor, e.g. doing work for the Canadian Medical Protective Association, or another organization that conflicts with the Practice Monitoring to be provided to the physician to meet the College's requirements;
- sufficient time and resources necessary to take on the responsibility of monitoring a physician and to fulfill all terms of the College undertaking;

In addition to the above, the College also considers relationships that could exist between the Practice Monitor and monitored physician.

Disclosure of Pre-Existing Relationship between Practice Monitor and Monitored Physician

The Practice Monitor and monitored physician **must** disclose to the College *any* pre-existing relationship, and the College will determine whether the nature of the relationship disqualifies the proposed Practice Monitor, i.e. whether the relationship might interfere with the Practice Monitor’s ability to objectively monitor the physician.

Examples of relationships that may disqualify a proposed Practice Monitor include (but are not limited to): employment, family, social/personal, and business. As noted, the College will determine whether alternative monitoring arrangements are warranted.

THE TERMS OF PRACTICE MONITORING

- The terms of the Practice Monitoring (i.e., nature, duration, level, and frequency of visits and reports) are set out in undertakings, decisions, or orders.
- The Practice Monitor and the monitored physician must discuss, through an initial meeting, the terms of the monitoring. Discussion via secure web-based technology acceptable to the College may be permitted in unique situations.
- The terms of the Practice Monitoring may only be changed on the approval of the College.
- The College determines when the Practice Monitoring is complete. Completion will be determined by whether the goals of the Practice Monitoring have been met.

APPROACHES TO PRACTICE MONITORING

- Practice Monitoring involves a regular review of a physician’s practice. The extent and frequency of the Practice Monitoring will be determined by the details as outlined in the Practice Monitoring Agreement.
- Practice Monitoring will often require the direct observation of a physician in their practice.
- The Practice Monitor verifies that the monitored physician is practising in accordance with the terms of his or her undertaking or order, or with the terms and conditions imposed on the physician’s certificate of registration by a Committee;
- A team-based approach to Practice Monitoring is sometimes acceptable¹ and desirable;

¹ Team-based Practice Monitoring must be formally approved by the College. One physician is designated as the “lead Practice Monitor” and serves as the **primary contact** for the College.

PRACTICE MONITORING REPORTS

- The Practice Monitor will submit regular reports to the College in accordance with the requirements set out in the undertaking.
- The Practice Monitor’s undertaking will set out the schedule for providing reports to the College. It is essential that the Practice Monitor meets this schedule to enable the College to monitor the arrangement. In addition, the reports must be detailed and must contain a meaningful assessment of the physician being monitored.
- Reports must be signed and dated by the Practice Monitor.
- The College acknowledges that although there may be a financial arrangement between the Practice Monitor and monitored physician, the Practice Monitor’s ultimate responsibility is to the College, i.e. the Practice Monitoring reports must be completely objective, fair, and impartial.

BASIS FOR IMMEDIATE REPORTS TO THE COLLEGE

There may be circumstances in which a Practice Monitor must file an immediate report to the College, outside of the regular schedule of reports as outlined in the Practice Monitoring undertaking. These circumstances are in addition to the obligations set out in the College’s [“Mandatory and Permissive Reporting”](#) policy that applies to all physicians.

The Practice Monitor’s specific obligations will be set out in an undertaking with the College, but generally include the requirement for Practice Monitors to report **immediately** to the College in the following situations:

- the monitored physician’s practice, or conduct may expose patients or others to risk of harm or injury;
- the monitored physician is acting in a manner that suggests that s/he may be incapacitated;
- the monitored physician fails to comply with the terms of his or her undertaking or Committee direction/order, which includes missing a meeting or an appointment with the Practice Monitor without sound reason, or being uncooperative;
- the Practice Monitor is unable to continue in the role, or unable to fulfill obligations on a timely or temporary basis, e.g., due to illness, vacation, personal emergency, etc.; or
- the Practice Monitor becomes the subject of an investigation by the College (or by his or her regulator if he or she is a member of another regulated health profession).

PRACTICE MONITORING: A form of supervision that focuses on ensuring that the physician is in compliance with the terms of his or her undertaking or order, or with the terms and conditions imposed on the physician’s certificate of registration by a Committee.

Examples:

Practice Monitor may be required to:

- ensure physician is not seeing types of patients prohibited by terms and conditions
- ensure required signage is prominently posted in the office
- maintain patient logs, initial corresponding records
- monitor and report on a physician’s conduct or behaviour in the practice setting

Practice Monitor Expectations and Responsibilities:

- signs an undertaking directly with the College;
- reviews any pertinent background materials;
- maintains a professional relationship with the monitored physician;
- verifies that the monitored physician is practising in accordance with the terms of his or her undertaking or order, or with the terms and conditions imposed on the physician’s certificate of registration by a Committee;
- submits objective reports to the College at intervals prescribed by the College; and
- reports immediately to the College any situations outlined in the [Basis for Immediate Reports to the College](#) section.

Quick Link: [Qualities of an Acceptable Practice Monitor](#)

Monitored Physician Expectations and Responsibilities:

- agrees to information sharing amongst all relevant entities (as per undertaking) to facilitate Practice Monitoring;
- is open, honest, and collegial with his or her colleagues and Practice Monitor;
- demonstrates meaningful signs of progress towards meeting College expectations;
- complies with the terms of his or her undertaking or order;
- assists the Practice Monitor in fulfilling obligations; and,
- acknowledges responsibility for payment of all fees, costs, charges, expenses, etc. arising from the Practice Monitoring.