



Professional Standard Regarding Obstetrical Ultrasound for Non-Medical Reasons

This document is a **standard** approved by the Council of the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Nova Scotia.

A **standard** reflects the minimum professional and ethical behaviour, conduct or practice expected by the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Nova Scotia. Physicians licensed with the College are required to be familiar with and comply with the College **standards**.

Purpose

The purpose of this professional standard is to clarify for physicians their obligations with respect to ordering and performing diagnostic ultrasounds.

Introduction

Physicians are under increasing pressure to perform and/or order obstetrical ultrasound examinations for non-medical purposes.

There are a number of organizations that have formal statements indicating that the use of obstetrical ultrasound for entertainment or fetal gender determination purposes is inappropriate. These include: Health Canada, the Nova Scotia Association of Radiologists, the Canadian Association of Radiologists, the Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada, the Canadian Society of Diagnostic Medical Sonographers, and the American Institute of Ultrasound in Medicine.

Professional Standard

Physicians must ensure that all diagnostic imaging examinations are ordered and conducted for appropriate clinical indications.

The purpose of an imaging examination should always be to obtain information relevant to the diagnosis or treatment of a patient, or both. Therefore, when requesting the examination, the physician should specify the clinical indications and the information needed.

If it is brought to the attention of the College that a physician is ordering or providing diagnostic tests (including ultrasound) inappropriately, the College may investigate and take action, where warranted. In addition, ordering or providing ultrasounds for non-medical reasons and billing MSI for this service may be viewed by the College as professional misconduct.

Acknowledgements

The College of Physicians and Surgeons of Nova Scotia gratefully acknowledges the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario for providing information used in producing this professional standard.

Further Reading

Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada Policy Statement:
[Non-Medical Use of Fetal Ultrasound](#)

Document History

Re-approved by Council with minor revisions: **March 22, 2013**

First approved by the Council of the College of the Physicians and Surgeons of Nova Scotia: **October 13, 2006**

Approximate date of next review: **March 2018**

This document was formerly titled *Policy Regarding Ultrasound for Non-Medical Reasons*.

Unless otherwise noted, this material is © College of Physicians and Surgeons of Nova Scotia. This material may be reproduced for non-commercial purposes, in whole or in part, provided that credit is given to the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Nova Scotia or other original source identified in this document. Any other use requires permission from the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Nova Scotia.