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## Professional Standard on Prescribing in the Absence of Direct Patient Contact

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**.

### Professional Standard

Prescribing medication is a medical act. It is the result of a clinical decision made by a physician based on an evaluation of the patient by that same physician. This evaluation should be based on an encounter with the patient that includes an appropriate clinical assessment. The patient record should clearly describe the assessment and the diagnosis that led to the prescription.

When physicians are part of a group practice or a call group, they may choose to accept a previous patient evaluation by an associate as the basis for further prescribing. However, in such situations, each physician remains responsible and accountable for any prescriptions he or she has written.

Prescribing physicians are expected to advise patients about drug effects and interactions, side effects, contraindications, precautions, and any other information pertinent to the medication. Prescribing physicians are obligated to arrange appropriate follow-up, either personally or with the most responsible physician.

### Acknowledgements

The College of Physicians and Surgeons of Nova Scotia acknowledges the assistance of the College of Physicians and Surgeons of British Columbia in preparing this document.

## Document History

Approved by the Council of the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Nova Scotia: **October 18, 2013**

This document consolidates and replaces the following policies approved by Council in **March 2008**:

- Policy regarding Prescribing Practices/Countersigning Prescriptions/Internet Prescribing
- Policy Regarding Cross-Border Prescribing by Non-Resident Physicians

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

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