



Guidelines on the Provision of Care by Podiatrists after Hours or During Short-Term Absences

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

Guidelines contain recommendations endorsed by the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Nova Scotia. The College encourages its members to be familiar with and to follow its **guidelines** whenever possible and appropriate. Note that **guidelines** may contain references to College **standards**.

Preamble

Podiatrists have an obligation to assist or direct patients to care when their offices are closed or when they are unavailable. This obligation is ordinarily met by participating in on-call coverage, and/or providing information to patients on where care is available in their absence. The College therefore encourages its members to be familiar with and to observe the following guidelines.

Guidelines

These guidelines apply to all podiatrists when accepting new patients at any point during their practice.

- 1) Podiatrists are strongly encouraged to participate in an after-hours call or coverage schedule, allowing for the provision of urgent care to their patients. This may be achieved by participating in a call group where possible.
- 2) Podiatrists are expected to make arrangements with their call group to deal with specific issues such as:
 - a) Impending medical problems among patients.
 - b) Impending test results.
 - c) Unexpected calls from the laboratory or from homecare.
 - d) Special needs.

- 3) Podiatrists are expected to establish mechanisms to ensure that patients are made aware of who to contact for help when the office is closed (either after hours or for other reasons). This may include a recorded phone message directing patients to an alternate medical practitioner or call group.
- 4) When podiatrists are unable to participate in after-hours coverage, or where after-hours coverage is provided for less than 24 hours per day, it is recognized they may have no option but to direct their patients to a local hospital, emergency department, walk-in clinic, or another local service such as a Collaborative Emergency Care Centre (CEC). In some cases, podiatrists may choose to give direct contact information to clients who are at risk of complication. This is up to each individual podiatrist's discretion.

Document History

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