



The College of  
Physicians and Surgeons  
of Newfoundland and Labrador

## INDEPENDENT MEDICAL EXAMINATIONS – UPDATED PRACTICE GUIDELINE

### Notice to College Members

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June 21, 2019

Council of the College recently approved updates to the Practice Guideline “Independent Medical Examinations.” This document sets out the College’s expectations for physicians who conduct these types of examinations.

This Practice Guideline pertains to examinations conducted to offer a physician’s perspective on an individual’s medical needs or condition in circumstances when benefits, compensation, disability issues, or further treatment are being considered or requested by a third party (ex. lawyer, insurance representative) where the physician is not the attending physician nor a consultant to the attending physician.

A copy of this document is attached below and can also be found on the College’s website on the “Standards of Practice and Practice Guidelines” page. **Physicians are expected to be familiar with the standards and guidelines which apply to their individual practices.**

All College communication to its members will be by email.  
It is a professional obligation for College members to read all College communications.



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## Practice Guideline: Independent Medical Examinations

**Practice Guidelines** are recommendations developed by the College to which members should be familiar with and follow whenever and wherever possible and appropriate.

## Independent Medical Examinations

### Preamble

An independent medical examination (IME) is intended to offer a qualified physician's perspective on an individual's medical needs or condition at the request of a third party. The College expects that when conducting an IME or preparing an IME report, a physician will adhere to the same standards of practice and professionalism as physicians who provide patient care.

### Definitions

**Independent Medical Examination (IME):** an examination conducted to offer a physician's perspective on an individual's medical needs or condition in circumstances when benefits, compensation, disability issues, or further treatment are being considered or requested by a third party (ex. lawyer, insurance representative) where the IME physician is not the attending physician nor a consultant to the attending physician.

### Practice Guidelines

A physician conducting an IME or preparing an IME report must adhere to the same standards of practice and professionalism as physicians who provide patient care.

### Communication

The physician should clearly communicate the nature of his/her role to the individual being examined. In discussing the role, the physician should explain the purpose of the examination and how this examination differs from a usual physician-patient interaction.

The physician must explain the scope of the examination by describing the areas and systems that will be examined, why they will be examined, and the nature of the examination. The physician must also explain that a detailed report will be sent to the requesting third party and provide the identity of this party.

If a concerning health finding is detected during the examination, the physician should inform the individual of the finding and refer him/her back for further assessment by a health care provider.

## Consent

Consent must be obtained from the individual prior to the examination. Through the consent process, the physician should ensure that the patient understands what the examination will entail and that the examination is being conducted for the purposes of preparing a report for a third party. Patients should be advised that consent can be withdrawn at any time during the examination. In obtaining consent, physicians should consider the appropriateness of obtaining consent for a defined period of time following the IME for the purposes of accessing any medical information necessary for completion of the IME report.

## Conflict of Interest

The College expects a physician to consider whether he/she is in a conflict of interest in providing an IME in advance of the examination. A physician should refer to the College's Standard of Practice on Conflict of Interest in the event that a physician believes that he/she may be in a perceived or actual conflict of interest.

## Acknowledgements

CPSO (2018). Policy Statement: Third Party Reports

CPSNS (2016). Professional Standards and Guidelines Regarding Third-Party Examinations and Reports.

CPSBC (2013). Professional Guideline: Independent Medical Examinations.

CMPA (2011). Independent Medical Evaluations: be prepared.

## References

CPSNL (2018). Conflict of Interest: Standard of Practice.

## Document History

Approved by Council	June 15, 2019
Reviewed & Updated	
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