



REDUCING THE LIKELIHOOD OF A PATIENT COMPLAINT

Notice to College Members

December 8, 2022

Patient complaints to the College relating to professionalism and communication continue to trend upwards at a time when physicians are facing challenges with providing care.

Many of these complaints involve situations where patients reported that their physician was rude, used a condescending tone, or dismissed their concerns. Patients also reported not feeling involved in decisions about proposed treatments, procedures, or exams.

While we know you may be feeling significant work pressures, here are some tips from our learnings:

- Focus on the patient and show respect in your speech and body language.
- Actively listen to the patient's concerns and express empathy.
- Provide information clearly and simply.
- Be alert to verbal and non-verbal signs that the patient may not understand the information you are presenting.
- Involve patients in decisions about their healthcare. Explain the risks and benefits of proposed treatments, procedures, and examinations and always get the patient's consent, unless it is a medical emergency.

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

- Document your discussions.
- Consider continuing professional development on the topics of communication and professionalism. This may include reviewing the CMPA Good Practices Guide on Professionalism or completing a course offered through an educational organization.

The College is required to accept and review all written complaints. By engaging in patient-centred communication, physicians can improve their interactions with patients and potentially reduce the likelihood of a complaint.

This and all other Notices can be viewed on our website at www.cpsnl.ca > News

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