



Standard of Practice: Independent Medical Examinations (2024)

A **Standard of Practice** is the minimum standard of professional behavior and ethical conduct expected by the College on a specific issue.

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 therapeutic care.

Definitions

Examinee: an individual being evaluated through an IME.

Independent Medical Examination (IME): a medical examination of an individual for the purpose of a third-party process (e.g., legal, financial or insurance reasons). An IME is often requested when there is uncertainty about the cause, nature, or rehabilitation potential of an examinee's disability or functional status. IMEs are also referred to as non-treating medical examinations (NTME).

Third Party: a party, other than the examinee or the IME physician, who requests an examination of an examinee's medical needs or conditions, generally in circumstances where compensation, disability, or further treatment is being considered (e.g., lawyer, insurance representative).

Standard of Practice

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

Role of the Physician

When conducting an IME, the physician's role is to provide an impartial medical opinion to a third party. The physician does not provide treatment to the examinee, and as such, a therapeutic relationship does not exist between the physician conducting the IME and the examinee.

Communication

A physician conducting an IME must clearly communicate the nature of their role to the examinee. 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 IME physician must inform the examinee of the finding and recommend that the examinee seek further assessment by another regulated healthcare professional. If the examinee provides consent, the physician should communicate their findings to the examinee's primary healthcare provider. Necessary emergent or urgent care should be provided in circumstances where it is within the scope of practice of the physician and the examinee does not have timely access to another regulated healthcare professional.

Consent

Consent must be obtained from the examinee prior to the examination. Through the consent process, the physician must ensure that the examinee understands what the examination will entail, and that the examination is being conducted for the purpose of preparing a report for a third party. Examinees 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 they are 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 they may be in a perceived or actual conflict of interest.

Acknowledgements

CPSBC (2022) Independent Medical Examinations
CPSS (2022) Medical Examinations by Non-Treating Physicians
CPSO (2021) Third Party Medical Reports

Related Documents

CPSNL (2023) [Conflict of Interest](#)

Document History

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