



# Standard of Practice

## Observing or Shadowing a Physician (2024)

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

### Preamble

Through observing a licensed physician, an individual who is considering practicing medicine in Newfoundland and Labrador can learn about health care practices and gain exposure to the provincial healthcare system. Observing can also provide opportunities for health professionals working in Newfoundland and Labrador to improve their clinical knowledge on specific treatments or procedures.

### Definitions

- **Clinical Observer:** an individual who observes/shadows a physician in their practice.
- **Observe:** the act of observing or shadowing a licensed physician in their practice of medicine.

### Standard of Practice

Physicians must only permit a Clinical Observer to observe them in practice if one or more of the following applies<sup>1</sup>:

1. The Clinical Observer is registered with the College on the medical, provisional, associate, or clinical assistant register.
2. The Clinical Observer is currently licensed by another medical regulatory authority in Canada.
3. The Clinical Observer is registered with the College as an undergraduate or postgraduate learner and the observing is approved by the Faculty of Medicine of Memorial University.
4. The Clinical Observer has been approved to act as a Clinical Observer following a request made to the College by the Faculty of Medicine or the Provincial Health Authority.

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<sup>1</sup> *Medical Regulations, 2023 s. 30*

Prior to permitting an individual to observe them in practice, the College expects a physician to take reasonable steps to ensure:

1. the Clinical Observer is authorized to observe (e.g. confirmation that the individual is registered with the College, licensed to practice medicine in Canada, or has been approved to observe following a request from Memorial University or the Provincial Health Authority);
2. the Clinical Observer has signed an oath of confidentiality to protect all personal health information that they will become privy to during the observing; and
3. the role of the Clinical Observer has been explained to the patient, and the patient (or their representative) has provided consent to permit the intended observing.

A physician who is being observed must ensure that the Clinical Observer does not engage in the practice of medicine during their period of observing. This includes, but is not limited to, conducting assessments, making entries in the patient’s medical records, providing medical advice, and performing or assisting in medical procedures.

### Acknowledgements

CPSNS (2023) Physician Responsibilities for Clinical Observers and their Practice  
CPSPEI (2023) Shadowing – Observing a Registered Physician in a Clinical Setting  
CPSA (2011) Medical Practice Observation/Experience

### Related Documents

[Medical Regulations, 2023 s. 30](#)

### Document History

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