

Job Action

Related Standard of Practice: [Job Action](#)

The College of Physicians & Surgeons of Alberta (CPSA) provides advice to the profession to support physicians in implementing the *CPSA Standards of Practice*. This advice does not define a standard of practice, nor should it be interpreted as legal advice.

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CPSA Perspective

The College acknowledges physicians should be able to advocate for their patients’ and their own interests, and there may be times when job action is appropriate.* This must be balanced with physicians’ professional and ethical responsibility to not place their patients or the public at risk of significant harm.

The College recognizes withdrawal of services may be considered as part of a job action in some circumstances. The decision to withdraw services can have serious negative consequences for both individual patients and the public as a whole and should never be taken lightly.

*The College would determine the appropriateness of a job action based on the unique facts and circumstances of the situation.

CPSA Advice

If taking job action, physicians must have a plan in place to mitigate the adverse impact on their patients and/or the public and to act in a manner that maintains public trust.

If withdrawal of services is part of a job action, the plan must include a triage system to ensure urgent medical care is available to patients at significant risk to prevent harm or suffering. What constitutes significant risk will be a clinical judgment, informed by the patient’s health status and individual circumstances.

Prior to withdrawing services, the College expects physicians will:

- determine if the issue affects patient care, directly or indirectly,
- explore all other options to resolve the issue,
- consider the impact on their patients, the public and other stakeholders,
- consider alternative resources for the medical management of patients during the withdrawal of services,
- identify and manage potential conflicts of interest, and
- establish an effective communications strategy to ensure all stakeholders are informed in advance of the intended withdrawal of services and details about contingency plans for patients.

Resources

The College collaborated with the AMA and AHS to develop resources to assist physicians to advocate effectively for their patients. These resources are available on the AMA website at:

<https://www.albertadoctors.org/advocating/physician-advocacy>

The College recommends physicians contemplating job action consider contacting the College for advice. If a concern is brought to the attention of the College related to the provision of medical services during a job action or withdrawal of services, the unique facts and circumstances of the situation will be considered by the Complaints Director as part of the complaints process.