

College broadens supervision of medical students policy

Policy includes those educational experiences that fall outside of an undergraduate medical education program

Interested in volunteering to provide a summer clinical observership for a medical student? We applaud your goodwill. Please be aware, however, that our supervision policy sets new expectations for such educational experiences.

At its May meeting, Council approved the revised policy, **Professional Responsibilities in Undergraduate Medical Education**. The policy was broadened to apply to all physicians who supervise undergraduate medical students, including those who participate in educational experiences that fall outside of an Ontario undergraduate medical education program.

The change was made with the best interests of all involved, including


patients, students, and supervisors, explained Dr. James Watters, chair of the College's Education Committee.

"Physicians are occasionally asked to supervise medical students who are either not on an approved rotation from an Ontario medical school or are from another jurisdiction. While it is laudable for physicians to assist students in acquiring the experience they need for future practice, patient safety must prevail in all situations. That is why we have set out certain expectations," he said.

In addition to fulfilling the obliga-



tions set out elsewhere in the revised policy, physicians who choose to supervise medical students for experiences outside of an Ontario undergraduate medical education program must also: ►►

6. Be comprehensive. Obtain and review all available and relevant clinical notes, records and opinions that could impact the findings of the report, including your final opinion and/or recommendations.
7. Be objective. Findings or opinions contained in a report should be free of personal bias.
8. Write clearly and in language that is appropriate for the intended audience. If jargon or medical short forms are used, you should also include more colloquial terms or explanations so that the report is understandable to the reader.
9. Be relevant. Third party reports should include only that information which the physician deems necessary.
10. Be aware that for some court-ordered medical examinations, observers are not permitted in the examining room. Speak to the lawyer involved before proceeding. 

Supervision of Medical Students *continued*

- be familiar with the Delegation of Controlled Acts policy;
- obtain evidence that the student is enrolled in and in good standing at an undergraduate medical education program at an acceptable medical school;

limit the activities of the medical student to the observation of clinical care only, states the policy.

The revised policy is also more explicit on the issue of informed consent for those investigations or procedures that are performed sole-

“Displaying appropriate behaviour and providing an ethical and compassionate model of patient care is particularly important for the Most Responsible Physician and supervisor, as students often gain knowledge and develop attitudes about professionalism through role modeling,” states the policy.

The policy was informed by input from medical students. “The Ontario Medical Students’ Association is pleased to have been consulted at multiple points during the creation of this important policy,” said Stephanie Kenny, co-chair of the OMSA. “We are proud to have a set of principles that provide clear direction on the issues arising in the learning environment,” she said. **MD**

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– Ontario Medical Students’ Association

- ensure that the student has liability protection that provides coverage for the educational experience;
- ensure that the student has personal health coverage in Ontario;
- ensure that he or she has liability protection for that student to be in the office; and
- ensure that the student has up-to-date immunizations.

In addition, physicians who do not have experience supervising medical students or are unable to fulfill the expectations outlined above should

ly for educational purposes and are unrelated or unnecessary for patient care or treatment. The policy states that an explanation of the educational purpose behind the proposed investigation, or procedure must be provided to the patient and their express consent must be obtained. This must occur whether or not the patient will be conscious during the examination. If express consent cannot be obtained, e.g., the patient is unconscious, then the examination cannot be performed.

The policy also acknowledges the importance of role modeling.