

Closing a community office-based practice

A guide for physicians

Ontario Medical Association (OMA)
Updated: June 2024



Introduction

This booklet is a guide to help you fulfil your professional and medical obligations as you close your practice. It includes templates to assist you.

If you have questions about closing your practice, reach out to the OMA [by email](#), phone 1-800-268-7215 or [visit our website](#).



Talk with colleagues who have retired to learn from their experiences.

When unforeseen circumstances require a practice closure, please review the *When the unexpected happens* guide instead.

Legal disclaimer

The information in this booklet has been made available for informational and educational purposes only and does not replace independent legal advice. These resources contain the views and opinions of the Ontario Medical Association (OMA) regarding the interpretation of the College of Physician and Surgeons (CPSO) Policies and Ministry of Health (MOH) regulations. Members are advised that the ultimate authority in matters of interpretation are in the purview of CPSO and MOH. The OMA assumes no responsibility for any discrepancies or differences of interpretation, any applicable law, or regulation with the Government of Ontario including but not limited to the MOH and the CPSO.

Table of contents

Planning to close your practice

| | |
|--|---|
| Develop a plan | 5 |
| Consider your professional succession plan | 5 |
| Choose a departure date | 5 |
| Begin physician recruitment | 5 |
| Contact professional advisers | 6 |

Business obligations

| | |
|--|---|
| Office space | 7 |
| Inform partners or employers | 7 |
| Inform your staff | 7 |
| Settle accounts with tax and utility companies | 8 |
| Winding down business with suppliers | 8 |
| Liaise with computer software/hardware companies | 8 |
| Disposal of medical equipment | 9 |
| Dissolve your Medicine Professional Corporation | 9 |
| Close business account | 9 |

Patient obligations

| | |
|--|----|
| Notify patients | 10 |
| Review medical record storage guidelines and source companies | 11 |
| Review your EMR vendor contract and user agreements | 12 |
| Deactivate digital health services integrated with your EMR | 13 |
| Inform hospital, long-term care facilities, laboratories, pharmacies and referring/referred colleagues | 13 |

Association obligations

| | |
|---|----|
| Inform the MOH | 14 |
| Inform colleges and professional associations of address change and practice status | 14 |

After closure obligations

| | |
|--|----|
| Maintain contact mechanism | 16 |
| Follow up reports and requests for medical records | 16 |
| Reminder about documents that need to be retained | 16 |

Appendix

Appendix A
Sales considerations when selling a practice 18
Legal obligations 20

Appendix B: patient notifications templates
Medical practice closure (without a physician taking over) 21
Medical practice closure (with a physician taking over) 22
Office poster template (without a physician taking over the practice) 23
Office poster template (if a physician is taking over the practice) 24
Voice message template for patients after practice closure 25

Appendix C
Authorization form for the release of medical records 26

Appendix D
Closure notification of hospitals/long-term care/pharmacies/laboratories/other providers (if a physician is taking over the practice) 28

Appendix E
Notification to OHIP/professional bodies/business contacts 29

Practice closure: checklist 30

List of contacts 32

Planning to close your practice



Priorities

- Develop a plan
- Consider your professional succession plan
- Choose a departure date
- Begin physician recruitment



There is no “right” succession choice. You need to choose the best option for you and your loved ones.



Links/templates

- [HealthForce Ontario transition resources](#)
- [Locum resources](#)
- See [Appendix A](#) for sales considerations when selling your practice

Develop a plan

It is never too early to start planning. Here are some reflection items when deciding if/when to close your practice:

- Why do you wish to close your practice?
- What is your financial situation when you close your practice?
- If you are closing to retire, what will retirement look like for you?

Consider your professional succession plan

Some options are:

- **Close your practice**
- **Gradual retirement:** Give yourself a time frame to fully retire
- **Part-time:** Determine how many hours per week you wish to work
- **Locum:** Access [locum resources](#)
- **Selling your practice:** It is beneficial to give yourself as much time as possible to engage a new physician. This helps ease patients’ anxiety, allows for a smoother transition of your patients’ care and the business transition

(see [Appendix A](#) for sales considerations when selling your practice)

Choose a departure date

Ensure your departure date gives you enough time to complete your professional obligations and allow for a smooth transition. The timeline will vary depending on the type of practice. The OMA recommends 12 to 24 months.

Begin physician recruitment (if applicable)

- Work with your **accountant** to determine the value of your practice
- Write a **practice profile** that describes its key elements to help find a suitable physician to be your successor
- For more information, visit [HealthForce Ontario’s transition resources](#).

Contact professional advisers

Lawyer: They will provide you with counsel regarding your contractual obligations (e.g., staffing and severance packages, lease agreement, medical records storage, etc.).

For more information, contact your lawyer, visit the [OMA Legal Affairs web page](#) or [email OMA Legal Services](#).

(see [Appendix A](#) for all legal queries)

Accountant: They will assist you with the business and financial aspects of closing a practice, including tax matters. If you are retiring, they can support your financial preparedness and the transition from medical incorporation.

OMA Insurance Adviser: If you are retiring, an [OMA Insurance](#) adviser will support your changing insurance needs from professional medical insurance to retirement insurance (e.g., long-term care, critical care, disability, travel insurance needs, etc.).

For more information, visit the [OMA Insurance](#) website or call 1-800-758-1641.

Office space

Contact your realtor if you **own** the building and want to sell it.

If you **rent**, talk to your leasing agent and review your lease agreement for:

- Whether it allows for termination before the expiry date
- When you must provide notice that you will not renew the lease (to avoid an automatic lease extension)

Consider setting a retirement date that corresponds with the end of the lease to avoid penalty fees. If the lease terms are unclear, it is advisable to speak with your lawyer prior to giving notice to terminate the agreement.

Inform partners or employers (if part of a group)

If you are part of a physician group, let your partners/employers know of your plans well in advance. Review your contract with them, which should state some of your professional obligations and responsibilities (e.g., taking over patients, staff, medical equipment, etc.).

Inform your staff

Employment law applies to physicians closing a practice. If you plan to terminate, consider:

- Whether there is a formal employment contract. Check the contract for information on notice requirements and ensure they align with the [Employment Standards Act](#)
- If there is no employment agreement, case law will determine your obligations to staff, which may exceed ESA requirements.

Ensure pay in lieu of working notice to staff aligns with [Ontario labour laws](#). This will vary dependent upon length of employment.

Selling a practice: Determine whether the incoming physician will use your staff. If the outgoing physician does not formally terminate the existing employees, the incoming physician assumes their employment under Ontario law. This can have financial ramifications for the incoming physician if they later wish to terminate their employment.

Group practice: If no one is taking over your practice, your colleagues may reduce staff hours. This raises the same legal considerations as termination and it is prudent to contact a lawyer.

Ways to support your staff:

- Offer financial bonus or other incentives to stay until closure and/or honour their employment
- Help staff find other employment with colleagues or connections

Retain staff records: Under the Employment Standards Act, you must:

- Retain employee records for a minimum of three years from the date staff employment ceased
- Retain record of the number of hours your employees worked (in each day and week) for three years after providing that information to them

For more information, consult with your lawyer about staff obligations, read the ESA or contact the Ontario Ministry of Labour at 1-800-531-5551 or [visit their website](#).

Settle accounts with tax and utility companies

- Tax offices: Canadian Revenue Agency and municipal office
- Canada Post (to have mail redirected)
- Utility companies (e.g., internet, phone, heat, hydro, water)

Note: Keep your phone line active for three months after practice closure to continue patient notification.

Wind down business with suppliers

Cancel standing orders and contractual obligations. The list of suppliers includes, but is not limited to:

- Pharmaceutical companies
- Medical and office supply vendors
- Health information technology vendors (OntarioMD, electronic medical records and OntarioHealth)
- Medical equipment vendors
- Biological waste removal
- Linen service
- Janitorial service
- Landscaping/plant service
- Subscriptions (e.g., magazines, journals)
- Website administrator

Liaise with computer software/hardware companies to secure patient information

- **Software vendor:** You can ask the vendor for assistance in maintaining patient confidentiality of EMRs.
- **Computer hardware:** If selling your computer hardware, you must ensure all patient information is removed. Simply deleting files does not remove confidential data.
- [Visit the OMA's practice support directory](#) for a list of companies in your community.

Dispose of medical equipment

There are several options to dispose of your medical equipment, such as:

- Ask your medical equipment suppliers if they want to purchase it back
- Donate to non-profit organizations that accept medical equipment
- Ask colleagues. They may be interested in the equipment or know of other physicians who are
- Advertise it in medical publications (e.g., the Ontario Medical Review) or on hospital noticeboards
- **Group practice:** you may sell any portion of equipment (for which you are the partial owner) to the group or the new physician

Dissolve your Medicine Professional Corporation (MPC)

When a physician ceases to practice, the MPC is no longer eligible to remain as is. However, if you want the MPC to continue for income and tax-planning purposes, you must make changes to the corporation name and scope of activities for it to continue acting as a standard business corporation.

For more information, visit the OMA web page, [Converting your MPC into a regular OBCA corporation](#), call 1-800-268-7215 or [email the OMA](#).

Close your business account

You should cancel all business accounts, including business credit cards. However, leave a bank account open for outstanding OHIP payments for at least three months.

Need to retain: According to the CRA, you must keep manual or electronic documents to support your financial records for at least seven years.

For more information, consult your accountant or call the Ministry of Finance at 1-866-668-8297.

Notify patients

The College of Physicians and Surgeons (CPSO) stipulates patients must be notified at least **90 days** prior to an elective departure to give them time to arrange for a replacement physician.

However, the OMA encourages members give their patients a longer notice period (about six to nine months) to give them more time to find another physician, especially in under-resourced communities.

CPSO states physicians **must** notify the patient directly via one of the following methods:

- either in writing (i.e., letter-mail or secure email),
- by telephone, or
- in person at a scheduled appointment

Keep a log that includes the method and date of notification for all active patients. Save receipts from certified mail notices and copies of any public advertisements you place. In case of a legal dispute around providing proper notice, you will need evidence of publication (this could include an affidavit from a publisher, printer, etc. as to the publication of any legal notice).

For up to three months after your practice has closed, maintain a voice message that:

- Reminds patients you have closed
- Provides patients with information on finding another physician
- Provides details on where patients can retrieve copies of their medical records

(See [Appendix B](#) for notification templates – letter, phone, printed)

Maintain continuity of care for complex patients

Physicians have a legal and professional duty to exercise reasonable efforts to arrange appropriate transfer and follow up care for those patients who require it. Some patients need more than a notification that their physician is no longer available. You and/or the office staff should review a list of those patients, which would include:

- Urgent referrals
- Patients waiting on lab/test results (ensure alternate care and follow up for patients to avoid missed or delayed diagnoses)
- Chronic pain patients
- Patients on medications that require frequent, ongoing monitoring.
- Obstetrical patients (ideally, refer them to a physician at the delivery site)
- Patients who require ongoing care (e.g., in a hospital or other health facilities under your care) or post-operative follow up. For these patients, you must complete and document (in the medical record) the appropriate transfer of patient care to another physician

For more information, read the CMPA's information sheet, [Considerations when leaving a medical practice](#), and the CPSO's policy, [Closing a medical practice](#). Prior to taking any action, ensure you are looking at the most current version of the policy, as the CPSO reviews it every three years.

Review medical record storage guidelines and source companies

Medical records requirements

The CPSO's regulation requires physicians keep paper and electronic medical records for the following periods:

- Adult patients: 10 years from the date of the last entry in the record
- Patients, who are children: 10 years after the day on which the patient reached, or would have reached, 18 years old

The CMPA suggests maintaining records for a minimum of 15 years due to a provision in the Limitations Act, which states that some legal proceedings against physicians can be brought up to 15 years after the act or omission on which the claim is based.

It is recommended you have a record transfer, retention and access agreement with the storage company to ensure access to your medical records.

When creating access agreements:

- Include timing and appropriate destruction of the medical records (e.g., shredding of paper charts, or permanently deleting hard drives and backup records of electronic records)
- Negotiate patient retrieval rates, including them in patient communication
- Follow [CPSO guidelines](#)
- [Email OMA Legal Services](#) for assistance

eConsults

Store all eConsult data as part of your patients' electronic medical records. Ensure there are no pending requests or future eVisit appointments scheduled.

[Email OTN](#) to deactivate your account.

Medical storage companies

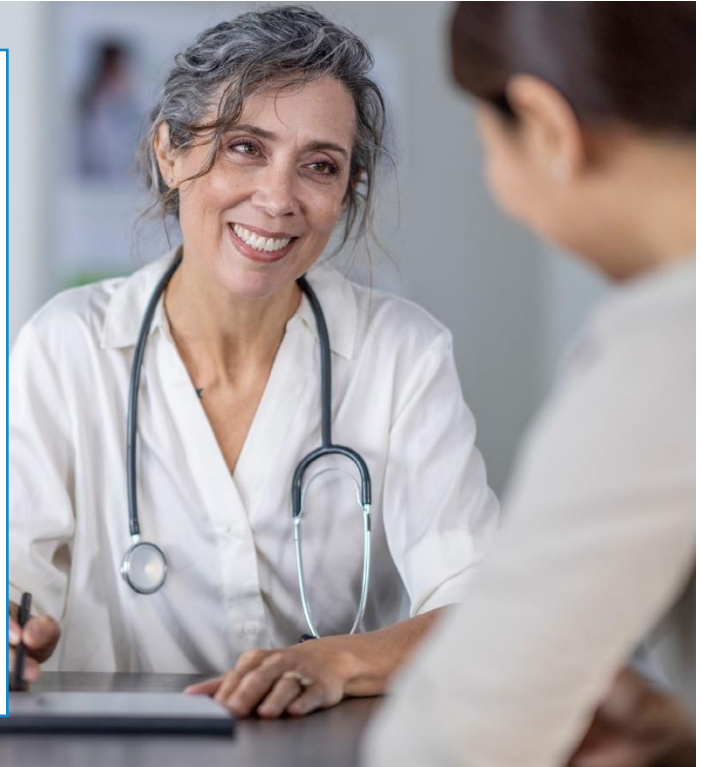
Visit the [OMA's practice support directory](#) for companies in your community.



The CPSO's regulation requires physicians keep medical records for the following periods:

- Adult patients: 10 years from the date of the last entry in the record.
- Patients who are children: 10 years after the day on which the patient reached, or would have reached, 18 years

The CMPA suggests maintaining records for a minimum of 15 years, as legal proceedings against physicians can be brought up to 15 years after the act or omission on which the claim is based.



How patients can obtain their records

Medical records are the physician's property. To release copies of the records, physicians need written authorization from the patient(s). (A release template is available in [Appendix C](#).) Do not give originals to patients and keep the written authorization with the records. For contact support, consult with your lawyer or [email OMA Legal Services](#).

For more information, visit the [CPSO's medical records management web page](#), or contact the physician advisory service at 1-800-268-7096, ext. 606.

Information is also available from the CMPA on its [managing your medical records web page](#) or at 1-800-267-6522.

Review your EMR vendor contract and user agreements

EMR is the gateway to digital patient data. Review your EMR contract with your vendor, as it may specify advance notice requirements needed to shut down.

- Let the providers of the digital health services integrated with your EMR know you are winding down your practice (e.g., OntarioMD, Ontario Health)
- [Email OntarioMD](#) for assistance

Deactivate digital health services integrated with your EMR

Digital Health Drug Repository/Ontario Laboratories Information System/ConnectingOntario ClinicalViewer

If you are the health information custodian, you must notify Ontario Health to have your DHDR / OLIS/cON deactivated. If you are not a health information custodian, your connection status can be updated directly within your EMR.

- For more support, email [Ontario Health](#) or call 1-866-250-1554

Deactivate Health Report Manager and Insights4Care Dashboard

- Notify OntarioMD to deactivate your i4C Dashboard and HRM. This process can take up to 15 business days. (A notification template is available in [Appendix D](#).)
- Let [Sending Facilities](#) know where to send any forthcoming reports (you could opt to revert to paper, fax to another address, etc.)
- [Email OntarioMD](#) for assistance

Inform hospital, long-term care facilities, laboratories, pharmacies and referring/referred colleagues

- Inform any hospital/long-term care facility and/or other health-care institutions you regularly work with.
- Send a notice to frequently referring/referred colleagues you work with. This includes notifying the eReferral program. To do this, [email the Ontario eServices program](#) or call 519-885-0606.
- Where applicable, it would be useful to share the name of a replacing physician, the physician's forwarding address or where to send a report if alternate arrangements have not been made.

Inform the Ministry of Health

You must notify the OHIP office where you submit claims of your intent to cease practice **at least three months** in advance to resolve any outstanding claims, queries and/or payments. (A notification template is available in [Appendix E.](#))

Visit the [OHIP claims office](#) online or call them at 1-800-262-6524.

Inform colleges and professional associations of address change and practice status

Notify associations at least three months before your practice closure.

Canadian Medical Association

Visit the [CMA website](#) or call 1-800-267-9703.

Canadian Medical Protective Association

If medical-legal difficulties arise from medical professional activities performed while your CMPA membership is active, you and your estate remain eligible for assistance.

Group practice: For a clinic to be eligible for assistance, all physician owners must be CMPA members. If you are a physician owner (or part owner) and you retire from medical practice, you and any family members must dispose of all ownership shares/proprietary interest for the clinic to remain eligible for assistance.

Locums: You will need to change your CMPA coverage if you decide to work in a locum.

Notify the CMPA of any contact information changes, so they can contact you regarding any medical-legal concerns.

For more information, visit the [CMPA's web page on interrupting or ending your membership](#) or call 1-800-267-6522.

College of Family Physicians of Ontario

[Email the college](#), call 1-800-387-6197, ext. 250, or [visit the CFPC website](#).

College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario

You must notify the CPSO about where your medical records are stored and how patients may access them.

To do this, [email the CPSO](#), go to the [resignation from membership web page](#), or call them at 1-800-268-7096, ext. 673, or 416-967-2673.

Ontario College of Family Physicians

Visit the [OCFP website](#) or call them at 416-867-9646 or 1-800-670-6237.

Ontario Medical Association

You can retain your membership under the retired fee category, at a reduced membership fee, to continue to receive OMA benefits and services, including OMA Insurance and member discounts.

For more information, [email the OMA](#) or call 1-800-268-7215.

Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada

[Email the Royal College](#), call 1-800-461-9598 or read their [membership web page](#).



OMA Membership:
Depending on your retirement date, you may be eligible to receive a reduced membership fee category for this year or the following year.

After-closure obligations

Maintain contact mechanism

For up to three months after closure

- **Keep a bank account open** for outstanding OHIP payments
- **Keep a voice message for patients** (after the practice is closed or after you leave the group practice)

Update contact information

- **CPSO:** For access and retrieval of patient medical records
- **CMPA:** Medical-legal issues that arise after retirement

Follow up reports and requests for medical records

You are responsible for:

- Following up on any outstanding reports (lab, medical/legal, consultations, etc.)
- Responding promptly, usually within six weeks of the request for medical records

Documents that need to be retained

Financial documents: Retain financial records for at least seven years for tax purposes.

Employee records: Retain for a minimum of three years from when staff cease to be employed.

Patient medical records (if you did not transfer them to another physician):

CPSO Requirements:

- Adult patients: 10 years from the date of the last entry in the record
- Patients who are children: 10 years after the day on which the patient reached, or would have reached, 18 years
- The CMPA recommends maintaining records for a minimum of 15 years.



Appendix

Appendix A

- Sales considerations when selling a practice
- Legal obligations

Appendix B: patient notifications templates

- Medical practice closure (without a physician taking over)
- Medical practice closure (with a physician taking over)
- Office poster template (without a physician taking over the practice)
- Office poster template (if a physician is taking over the practice)
- Voice message template for patients after practice closure

Appendix C

- Authorization form for the release of medical records

Appendix D

- Closure notification of hospitals/long-term care/pharmacies/laboratories/other providers (if a physician is taking over the practice)

Appendix E

- Notification to OHIP/professional bodies/business contacts

Practice closure: checklist

List of resources and association contacts



Determining the value of a practice

If selling your practice appears to be the best option, enlist an accountant's assistance.

The accountant will determine the book value of your practice's hard assets and the value associated with the "goodwill" of your practice. The overall value becomes a calculation that will inform potential purchasers and provide you with knowledge of the practice's theoretical value.

Some factors to consider when thinking about selling your practice:

- The history and specialties of the medical practice
- The current and forecasted economic climate
- Physician supply and demand, locally and provincially
- Estimated value of intangibles
- Estimated cost of equipment and other materials
- Location and historical ability to recruit physicians to the area
- Marketability of the practice
- Desirable assets, such as an EMR system

Develop a practice profile to determine readiness

A practice profile describes key elements of your practice to help you find a physician who would be the best fit for the practice. This includes:

- Roster size and type of patients
- Staff
- Overhead expenses
- Technology and equipment
- Existing agreement

Some physicians have found it advantageous to take on an associate for a year or two prior, with the intent that they will then buy the practice.

Discuss

- Transfer of medical records
- Retention of staff

Considerations for group practitioners

Your options will be based on your agreement with the other physicians. For example, the agreement may allow for the buyout of a departing partner or shareholder. If it doesn't, you may have to negotiate the purchase price of your stake in the practice. It may also be possible to sell your practice independently, similar to if you were practicing on your own.

It is essential to review the agreement to determine the notice required prior to the act of withdrawal and any obligations upon departure (e.g., dealing with assets, patients' medical records, etc.).

If a group corporation continues to exist after the physician's departure, you must transfer ownership shares to another physician licensed in Ontario. Directors of medical professional corporations have to be licensed members of the CPSO.

If you are in a group practice without an agreement, give your partners and/or associates plenty of notice. Ideally, try to arrange to leave at the end of the current lease (if your name is on it). This gives your colleagues time to decide what they want to do with the practice.

Consult with a lawyer, an accountant, or other tax advisers concerning the legal and tax considerations involved in the disposition of a practice.

OMA Legal Affairs provides:

- A template agreement for the purchase/sale of a medical practice. It's a useful starting point, but will need to be updated and modified to account for your particular circumstances
- A medical records transfer, retention and access agreement template

Note: The transfer/sale/purchase of a practice involving other physicians and OMA members creates a conflict of interest. As such, the guidance and information OMA legal counsel can provide is limited. The OMA encourages members to work with an independent corporate/commercial lawyer with experience in the complexities of transferring medical practices.

Appendix A | Legal obligations

When meeting with your lawyer, discuss the following items regarding your contractual obligations.

Business:

- Group agreement contract, if part of a group practice
- Office lease and any rented equipment agreements
- Obligations to any employees. Ensure termination/severance packages align with ESA/case law
- Dissolving your MPC
- Contract to transfer/sell your practice (including patient records, medical equipment, etc.)

Patient:

- Obligations for patient medical records—paper and EMR
- Contract with the medical storage company

Appendix B | Letter template: Medical practice closure (without a physician taking over)

Dear Patient,

I wish to inform you that I will [*be retiring from the practice of medicine/closing my practice of medicine*] on _____.

I recognize that changing physicians may be stressful. I encourage you to seek continuity of care by contacting Health Care Connect at 1-800-445-1822 or visiting ontario.ca/healthcareconnect for information on other physicians in the area. [*For example, if you know of colleagues close by who are accepting patients, include it here.*]

Since your medical records are confidential, a copy can only be transferred to another doctor, or released to you, with your written permission authorizing their release using a medical record form.

I have enclosed this authorization form to transfer your medical records to a physician of your choice. [*If there will be a cost to patients, please indicate here.*]

After [*date*] _____, all my medical records will be transferred and stored at [*name of company, address, phone and email contact information*]. They can provide a copy of your records for a fee after this time.

Thank you for the privilege of being your doctor. I wish you all the best and a healthy life.

Sincerely,

(See [Appendix C](#) for the authorization form that should be attached to this letter)

Appendix B | Letter template: Medical practice closure (with a physician taking over)

Dear Patient,

I wish to inform you that I will [*be retiring from the practice of medicine/closing my practice of medicine*] on _____.

I feel very fortunate in finding Dr. _____ to take over my practice. Dr. _____ received training at _____ and completed residency in _____.

It is very gratifying to have found such a caring and competent doctor to take my place. Dr. _____ will begin working with me on _____.

Your medical records will automatically remain with Dr. _____, unless I receive written authorization (*form enclosed*) from you to transfer them to another physician. I recognize that changing physicians may be stressful. I encourage you to seek continuity of care by contacting Health Care Connect at 1-800-445-1822 or visiting ontario.ca/healthcareconnect for information on other physicians in the area.

Thank you for the privilege of being your doctor. I wish you all the best and a healthy life.

Sincerely,

(See [Appendix C](#) for the authorization form that should be attached to this letter)

Notice of Retirement/Closure

Name

Address

Phone No.:

I regret to announce the closure of my practice.

My last day in office will be: _____

To find a new physician:

Call: 1-800-445-1822 or visit ontario.ca/healthcareconnect

To access your medical records:

To obtain a certified copy of your medical record, please contact:

[medical record storage company name, address, phone number, email address and cost and EMR record details].

Thank you for the privilege of being your physician.

Notice of Retirement/Closure

Name

Address

Phone No.:

I regret to announce the closure of my practice.

My last day in office will be: _____

Dr. _____ will be taking over my practice on: _____

If you wish to find another physician:

Call: 1-800-445-1822 or visit ontario.ca/healthcareconnect

Your medical records:

Your medical records will remain with Dr. _____.

Thank you for the privilege of being your physician.

Appendix B | Voice message template for patients after practice closure

Hi, I regret to announce that I, [*name and clinic*], have closed my practice due to retirement/illness. My last day in office was: _____

To obtain a certified copy of your medical record, please contact:
[*medical record storage company name, address, phone no and email*].

To find another physician in your community, please contact Health Care Connect at 1-800-445-1822 or visit ontario.ca/healthcareconnect.

Appendix C | Authorization form for the release of medical records

Sample authorization for release of medical records

1. Patient (complete in full):

Name — Last, first, middle

Health card number

Date of birth

Address — City, province, postal code

Home phone

Cellphone

Email

2. Records released from:

Name — Last, first, middle

Address — City, province, postal code

Telephone _____

3. Records released to:

Name — Last, first, middle

Address — City, province, postal code

Telephone _____

I hereby authorize [*name of physician*] to make all of my medical records and reports available to Dr. _____ located at _____.

I understand that this is an uninsured service not covered by my medical insurance plan. I realize there may be a charge for this service and that I am responsible for it. Please contact me concerning the fee before copying my records.

Signature of patient

Date

If not signed by the patient, please indicate relationship: _____ [*Parent or guardian of minor patient, or guardian or conservator of an incompetent patient*]

Name of guardian/representative

Legal relationship

Date

Witness

Appendix D | Closure notification of hospitals/long-term care/ pharmacies/laboratories/other providers template (if a physician is taking over the practice)

[Letterhead or your name/clinic name/contact information]

Date: _____

To: _____

I wish to notify you that I will be closing my practice as of *[date of closure]*. Please update your records accordingly.

To ensure patients' continuity of care, please send any outstanding reports/letters to my office by *[suggest two weeks before closure]*.

as of *[departure date]*, please forward all correspondence to *[my successor, Dr. _____]*, at:

[Address, phone number, fax number, e-mail]

I have contracted with *[name of medical records service provider]* to securely store all of my patient records. *[add if applicable]*

If you need further information after *[closure date]*, forward all correspondence to:

Telephone: _____ Email: _____

New address: _____

Thank you for all your support over the years, and my best wishes to you.

Sincerely,

Appendix E | Notification to OHIP/professional bodies/business contacts template

[Letterhead or your name/clinic name/contact information]

Date: _____

To Whom It May Concern:

I wish to notify you of the practice closure for:

Dr. _____ on [date of closure]

OHIP provider #/membership/account # _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____ Fax: _____

Email: _____

Please amend your records accordingly or cancel my membership as of my retirement date.

If you need further information, please contact me at:

New address: _____

Telephone: _____ Email: _____

Patient medical records will be stored at: (if applicable)

Name of organization: _____

Address: _____

Telephone _____ Email: _____

Sincerely,



12 months to five years before closure:

- Choose your transition plan (closure, gradual, part-time, sell, or locum)
- Set a retirement date
- Begin physician recruitment



Six to 12 months before closure:

- Contact professional advisers, including:
 - Lawyer (staff, group agreement, lease, medical records storage)
 - Accountant/financial adviser (retirement plan, tax)
 - Realtor/leasing agent (office building)
- Find medical records storage/source companies
- Send notifications of practice closure to:
 - Partners/employers
 - Staff (notice to align with Ontario labour laws)
 - Hospitals, long-term care facilities, labs, pharmacies, other providers
 - Colleagues you refer to/who refer to you
 - Patients (e.g., letters, notice in office, website, newspapers)



Two to six months before closure:

- Ministry of Health/OHIP (at least three months before retirement)
- Colleges and professional associations, including:
 - the CPSO (to update address and patient files)
 - the CMPA (to update address)
 - the OMA, RCPSC, OCFP, CFPC and the CMA
- Tax offices (e.g., the CRA and municipal tax office)
- Utility companies (keep the phone number active for three months)
- Canada Post (have mail redirected)
- Business supply contacts, including:
 - Pharmaceutical companies
 - Medical and office supply vendors
 - Medical equipment vendors
 - Biological waste removal
 - Linen service, janitorial service, landscaping/plant service
 - Subscriptions (e.g., magazines, journals)
- Health information technology vendors to deactivate all systems and discuss patient medical files storage/disposal
- Dispose of medical equipment (sell, donate)



One to two months before closure:

- Dissolve MPC, if applicable
- Contact financial institutions to close business accounts (keep one open for three months after closure)
- Collect outstanding debts (OHIP, third parties)
- Pay outstanding bills

One month prior to closing your practice – finalize loose ends

- Review checklist for outstanding business-related loose ends
- Submit outstanding claims from uninsured services billing and third-party accounts (OHIP, insurance, lawyers, etc.) and settle any outstanding bills
- Wrap up any patient follow up to ensure continuity of care (lab work, prescription refills, etc.)

For up to three months after closure

- Leave voice message notifications on office phone
- Leave one business account open for outstanding claims

Items to retain

- Patient medical records (if practice has not been transferred)
- Business documents for taxes
- Staff employment records

List of OMA resources

| Website | Contact information |
|--|---|
| <u>OMA</u> | Email the OMA or call 1-800-268-7215 or 416-599-2580 |
| <u>OMA Insurance</u> | Email OMA Insurance or call 1-800-758-1641 |
| <u>OMA Legal Affairs</u> | Email OMA Legal Services |
| <u>Physician Health Program</u> | Email PHP or call 1-800-851-6606 |
| <u>The OMA's practice support directory</u> | N/A |
| <u>Converting your MPC into a regular OBCA corporation</u> | Email the OMA Incorporation service or call 1-800-268-7215 |
| <u>Ontario MD</u> | Email OntarioMD or Call: 1-866-744-8668 |
| <u>OMA's locum resources</u> | N/A |



Professional guidelines:

- [Closing a medical practice \(CPSO\)](#)
- [Practice management considerations for physicians who cease to practice, take an extended leave of absence or close their practice due to relocation \(CPSO\)](#)
- [Closing or leaving a practice \(CMPA\)](#)

Storing or disposing of medical information:

- The CPSO has a physician advisory service. Call 1-800-268-7096, ext. 606, or visit the [medical records management web page](#).
- Call the CMPA at 1-800-267-6522 or visit the [how to manage your medical records web page](#).

Ministry/legal guidelines/business resources

- [Employment Standards Act](#)
- [Ontario Ministry of Labour](#)
 - Phone: 1-800-531-5551
- [OHIP claims office:](#)
 - Phone: 1-800-262-6524
- Ministry of Finance
 - Phone: 1-866-668-8297
- Ontario Health Support (EMR)
 - Phone: 1-866-250-1554
 - [Email Ontario Health Support](#)
- OTN (deactivate account)
 - [Email OTN](#)
- Ontario eServices Program:
 - Phone: 519-885-0606
 - [Email Ontario eServices](#)
- [Health Care Connect](#) (for patients to find another physicians)
 - Phone: 1-800-445-1822
- [HealthForce Ontario](#) (locums, find physician to buy practice)

Professional associations contact list

Ontario Medical Association (OMA)

- Phone: 1-800-268-7215
- [Email OMA membership](#)

College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario (CPSO)

- Phone: 1-800-268-7096, ext. 673, or 416-967-2673
- [Email CPSO membership](#)

Canadian Medical Protective Association (CMPA)

- Phone: 1-800-267-6522
(in Ottawa area: 613-725-2000)

Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada (RCPSC)

- Phone: 1-800-461-9598
- [Email the Royal College](#)

Ontario College of Family Physicians (OCFP)

- Phone: 1-800-670-6237 or 416-867-9646

College of Family Physicians (CFPC)

- Phone: 1-800-387-6197 x 250
- [Email the CFPC](#)

Canadian Medical Association (CMA)

- Phone: 1-800-267-9703



Practice closure timeline

| | |
|--|--|
| Two to five years before closure | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a plan • Consider your professional transition plan |
| 12 to 24 months before closure | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choose a departure date • Contact professional advisers (lawyer, accountant, insurance adviser, real estate agent) • Begin physician recruitment |
| Nine to 12 months before closure | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inform partners, employers and colleagues • Inform staff • Start winding down • Review medical record storage policies and source companies • Review your EMR contract • Inform providers of digital health services integrated with your EMR |
| Six to nine months before closure | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inform patients • Inform hospital and long-term care facilities, laboratories, pharmacies and referring/referred colleagues |
| Four to six months before closure | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inform MOH/OHIP • Inform colleges and professional associations (change in address and practice status) |
| Two to four months before closure | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Settle accounts with tax/utility companies • Wind down business with suppliers • Deactivate digital health services integrated with your EMR • Liaise with computer software/hardware companies to secure patient information • Dispose of medical equipment |
| One to two months before closure | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dissolve your MPC • Close business accounts • Finalize loose ends |
| After closure | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain contact mechanism for three months • Follow up on request for medical records • Maintain records (medical, staff, business) |

Note: Not all tasks will apply to all physicians.