

# Re-locating your practice.

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Physicians move practices for various reasons.

This guide provides some steps you will need to consider prior to moving your practice.

For more information, contact: Ontario Medical Association

Phone: 1.800.268.7215 | Email: [info@oma.org](mailto:info@oma.org)

Website: [www.oma.org](http://www.oma.org)

## 1. Legal obligations

Determine your legal obligations and how it will impact others in your practice.

- Are you currently in a group? Review your group contract for your responsibilities when moving (e.g., notice period, contractual obligations, etc.). If you are part of a Family Health Organization (FHO), ensure your new location aligns with the [co-location requirements](#).
- Are you in a rental lease? Review your contract for your contractual responsibilities (e.g., notice period, penalty for breaking the lease).
- Do you employ staff? Will your move impact their employment status? If so, you must follow [Ontario's Employment Standards Act \(ESA\)](#) regarding termination notice/pay. Discuss the move with your staff prior to notifying your patients.

OMA Legal or your lawyer can provide guidance in understanding your legal responsibilities.



**Tip:** If you are moving to a new group and/or entering into a new lease agreement, OMA strongly recommends having your lawyer review the contract prior to signing it.

## 2. Patient obligations

### Notification

The College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario (CPSO) "[Closing a practice](#)" patient notification guidelines also apply for relocation of your practice.

You **must** provide your patients with **at least 90 days' notice by letter, email, phone call or in-person**.

When considering which channel is best for you, consider the balance of time (visits/calls) and cost (postal mail). If possible, delegate notification to your office staff. Update your new location, on your website, voicemail, email signature and business letters.

You **must** take reasonable steps to arrange for the ongoing care of patients when a practice is relocated, and patients are unable or choose not to move with the practice.

You should notify other healthcare professionals such as:

- Commonly referred/ referring physicians.
- Hospitals/long term care homes, where you have privileges (on-call group).
- Medical laboratories and diagnostic facilities.
- Local pharmacies.



## Health Report Manager (HRM)



Just like the post office, HRM needs to know where to deliver your reports. Moving? Switching Internet providers? Changing your Internet plan? Choosing a new EMR? These scenarios could potentially mean a change to your IT delivery address, disrupting your HRM feed and stopping your reports from hospitals and specialty clinics.

HRM only delivers to locations it trusts, so **don't forget to notify OMD** at [support@ontariomd.com](mailto:support@ontariomd.com) when making a change.

They need a **minimum of 7 business days** from the time they receive your complete request with a valid IP address to ensure you don't experience any disruptions to report delivery.

## Promotion

Depending on your new location, you may need to advertise in the new community.

OMA practice announcement - One-page announcements are distributed to the OMA's territorial divisions/branch societies via postal mail. There is a cost for this service. Specialists can indicate any subspecialties and provide a general timeframe for informing the referring doctor and/or patient.

**Specialists** could connect with local family physicians.

**Family physicians** could:

- Connect with pharmacies and diagnostic imaging centers in the community.
- Enroll in Healthcare Connect, a government initiative to connect family physicians and patients.
- Consider a mailout to the local community but be mindful of the cost.
- Ask patients to refer you and have signs in your office.



**Tip:** All promotional communication must adhere to CPSO's Advertising and Social Media guidelines.

### 3. Financial obligations



**OHIP:** The Ministry of Health (OHIP office where you submit claims) requires **30 days advance notice** of any changes to your banking arrangements, practice and/or mailing address. You will need to complete, print, sign and submit the below change of address form to the Ministry.

- [Change of Address for Health Care Professionals \(form 014-4885-84e\)](#).

**Insurance:** Contact your insurance provider to update your insurance.

**Cost of moving:** You may want to discuss the potential impact of moving on your finances with your financial advisor. Consider:

- The cost of moving (e.g. moving, cost of getting new furniture, cost of updating utilities, loss of income for a short period, as you settle.)
- The expenses of the 2 different sites (e.g., rent, utilities, property taxes.)



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## 4. Business obligations

You will need to notify any business vendors you work with. For example:

- Utilities (e.g., electricity, internet, water, telephone).
  - A big challenge when moving is the disruption that could affect patient results that arrive via fax and mail.

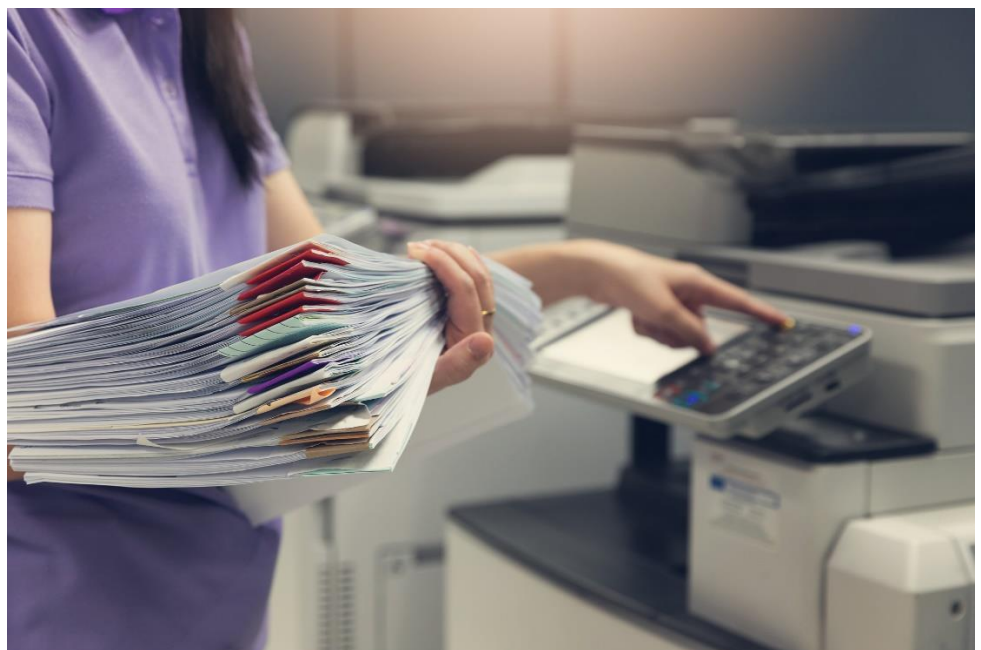
**Moving fax/phone lines:** Work with your service provider to find ways to move the fax/phone line with as little or no interruption as possible (often when traffic is low). You will need to discuss how much downtime to anticipate and determine a plan for what happens to faxes that occur in the interim. Some options may include:

- Porting your fax line to an electronic service and not a fax machine.
- Contacting some of the major healthcare providers (e.g., labs, hospitals) you liaise with and inform them of the expected disruption.

- Canada Post
  - Request your mail be forwarded for a year. The year can also be used to reduce paper test results as much as possible. It may take several requests for some organizations to update your address/fax/phone numbers on their system.
- Medical and office supply vendors (gloves, business cards, prescription pads, etc.)
- Linen service
- Janitorial service
- Landscaping service
- Hazardous waste removal service.

You may need to determine what to do with your office equipment and furniture.

- Will you be taking it to your new location?
- If not, you may consider selling, donating or transferring it to other physicians.



## 5. Professional associations

You **must** notify your professional associations of your new location of practice.

- [Ontario Medical Association \(OMA\)](#)
- [College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario \(CPSO\)](#) (within 30 days)
- [Canadian Medical Protective Association \(CMPA\)](#)
- [Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada \(RCPSC\)](#) – for specialists
- [College of Family Physicians of Canada \(CFPC\)](#) – for family physicians
- [Ontario College of Family Physicians \(OCFP\)](#) – for family physicians
- [Canadian Medical Association \(CMA\)](#)



## 6. Setting up your new practice

OMA's [Starting a practice checklist](#) can aid you as you set up your new location.

This may also be a great time to reflect on your practice and consider changes to [improve efficiency in your clinic](#) and/or implement a healthy work-life balance schedule.

Moving is a big transition in one's life. Give yourself time to adjust to your new practice space and community.

