

Provider Obligations When Leaving a Healthcare Practice

Providing high-quality care for all patients is utmost for healthcare practices and providers, even when a provider leaves a practice. In these circumstances, providers are ethically obligated to complete care for their patients or ensure the proper transfer of care.

Departing providers have responsibilities when they leave, including informing patients, professional liability companies, third parties, state boards, and more; completing treatment for patients, referring patients to other providers if necessary, and declining new patient requests; completing documentation in health records for patients; consulting state regulations and attorneys as needed; reviewing and adhering to all contracts; and more.

The following checklist present some specific tasks and considerations related to leaving a healthcare practice. Practitioners can use this tool for helpful reminders and to help determine whether they are fulfilling their obligations.¹

	Yes	No
Did you submit a written resignation letter to your practice, and did the submission adhere to any advance notice stipulations within your employment contract?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you stopped accepting new patients?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are you aware of, and have you complied with, state requirements and organizational policy for notifying established patients of your departure via written notice?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you considered how you will verbally discuss your departure with your patients?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you initiated referrals for any patients for whom you will be unable to complete treatment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	Yes	No
Are you referring patients to providers who are qualified to take over their treatment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you completed all health record documentation for your established patients?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are you careful not to share your personal phone number and other contact information with established patients?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you complied with all the requirements of the agreements and contracts that you signed when hired?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you reviewed your state regulations and consulted with an attorney to determine whether your noncompete agreements/contracts are valid?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you informed any third parties, any companies with whom you have a contract, and the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, if applicable, of your change in status?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you notified your professional liability company and state licensing board of your change in status?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you reviewed your professional liability insurance policy carefully to determine whether you need tail coverage (liability coverage that extends beyond your claims-made medical malpractice insurance policy)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you understand that the practice retains ownership of patients' health records and protected health information?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you considered your patients' care needs when you determine your last day at the practice so their care will not be compromised as a result?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you read your contract, reviewed state regulations, and consulted an attorney about soliciting practice employees?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you have any repayment obligations to the practice, including student loan repayments, sign-on bonuses, etc.?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Resources

- [American Academy of Family Physicians: Closing Your Practice Checklist](#)
- [ECRI: Ask ECRI: When a Provider Leaves a Practice](#)
- [Physicians Practice: 5 Ways to Cover a Physician's Departure from Your Practice](#)

Endnotes

¹ This checklist is based on information from the following sources: Walls, J. D. (2005, October). A must-do list for the departing physician. *Family Practice Management*, 12(9), 54–56. Retrieved from www.aafp.org/pubs/fpm/issues/2005/1000/p54.html; Jackson LLP Healthcare Lawyers. (n.d.). *Leaving for a new practice? Here's what healthcare professionals need to know*. Retrieved from <https://jacksonllp.com/legal-issues-when-leaving-a-healthcare-practice/>

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