

Establishing The Nurse Practitioner-Patient Relationship: Standards for Nurse Practitioners

(Not in effect until approved)

Purpose

This standard sets out the expectations for nurse practitioners (NPs) when establishing patient relationships to ensure **equitable, transparent** and **culturally safe** care. It provides guidance on patient selection, communication and respecting patient autonomy while promoting non-discriminatory practices and adhering to ethical and legal obligations.

Criteria

To meet this standard, NPs must:

1. Recognize an **established patient relationship** is when care is expected to continue beyond a single encounter.
 2. Select patients on a "**first come, first served**" basis, ensuring the NP has the clinical competency to meet the patient's health-care needs.
 3. Clearly communicate and document any patient selection criteria, including conditions or restrictions.
 4. Inform potential patients of any conditions or restrictions on the NP's practice permit.
 5. Provide care to the best of the NP's ability to a patient in an urgent situation when no other provider is available, regardless of whether a formal relationship has been established.
 6. Respect patient autonomy and decisions, even if patients choose not to follow the NP's advice.
 7. When offering **introductory appointments**:
 - 7.1. Inform patients in advance if the appointment is non-clinical or administrative in nature.
 - 7.2. Not charge fees for introductory appointments.
 - 7.3. Adhere to privacy legislation when handling any patient information.
 - 7.4. Provide clear reasons to the patient if choosing not to establish a relationship unless disclosure could harm the patient or pose a risk to public safety.
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- 8.** Not refuse to establish a NP-patient relationship based on:
- 8.1.** Discriminatory factors such as age, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, medical complexity or the time required to provide care.
 - 8.2.** The patient choosing not to pay a **block fee** or purchase **uninsured services**.
 - 8.3.** The patient's care requiring more time than another patient with fewer medical needs.

Glossary

BLOCK FEE – A fixed fee for designated uninsured services provided over a specific time period.

CULTURALLY SAFE – Providing care that recognizes and respects the cultural identities of patients, avoids power imbalances and fosters a safe environment free of discrimination and judgment.

ESTABLISHED PATIENT RELATIONSHIP – Both the NP and patient have a reasonable expectation the care provided will extend beyond a single encounter. These relationships may include longitudinal care through an identified NP or for a defined period of time based on presenting concern or medical condition and/or referral consultation.

FIRST COME, FIRST SERVED – A non-discriminatory approach to patient selection that prioritizes patients in the order they seek care, ensuring fairness and transparency.

INTRODUCTORY APPOINTMENT – A meeting offered by an NP to discuss potential care arrangements, which may be non-clinical or administrative in nature.

UNINSURED SERVICES – Services that individuals must pay for themselves. Examples include copying or transferring health records, travel immunizations and form completion.

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