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Discontinuing a Patient from Your Practice

Noncompliant, abusive, and/or drug seeking patients can pose an increased risk to the practice. Failure to recognize and deal with these patients may result in a malpractice action. It is important to have office systems in place to identify these patients.



All contacts and interactions with these patients should be documented in their medical record including:

- Missed appointments.
- Failure by the patient to follow care instructions.
- All attempts to follow-up.
- Any other evidence of patient noncompliance including the patient's stated reason.

To discontinue a patient from your practice, you are required to:

- Provide 15-30 days notice, depending on medical specialty.
- Send a notification in writing. (CAP Risk Management & Patient Safety recommends sending a notice by both certified and regular mail.)

If your patient is hospitalized, requiring continued acute care, or the patient is pregnant, please call the Risk Management hotline for instructions.

You may obtain guidelines for this discontinuation process as well as a template letter from your CAP Risk Management Representative or by calling the hotline at 800-252-0555.

- Ann Whitehead, RN, Esq.
CAP Risk Management & Patient Safety

If you have any further questions, please use the "Contact Us" button to the left.

Published comments of this information should not be considered legal advice applicable to a specific situation. Legal guidance for individual matters should be obtained from a retained attorney.