

# Virginia Administrative Code

## CHAPTER 20

### REGULATIONS GOVERNING THE PRACTICE OF MEDICINE, OSTEOPATHY, PODIATRY, AND CHIROPRACTIC

#### Part II

##### Standards of Professional Conduct

#### **18VAC85-20-25. Treating and prescribing for self or family.**

A. Treating or prescribing shall be based on a bona fide practitioner-patient relationship, and prescribing shall meet the criteria set forth in § 54.1-3303 of the Code of Virginia.

B. A practitioner shall not prescribe a controlled substance to himself or a family member, other than Schedule VI as defined in § 54.1-3455 of the Code of Virginia, unless the prescribing occurs in an emergency situation or in isolated settings where there is no other qualified practitioner available to the patient, or it is for a single episode of an acute illness through one prescribed course of medication.

C. When treating or prescribing for self or family, the practitioner shall maintain a patient record documenting compliance with statutory criteria for a bona fide practitioner-patient relationship.

#### **18VAC85-20-26. Patient records.**

A. Practitioners shall comply with provisions of § 32.1-127.1:03 of the Code of Virginia related to the confidentiality and disclosure of patient records.

B. Practitioners shall provide patient records to another practitioner or to the patient or his ~~authorized~~ personal] representative in a timely manner in accordance with provisions of § 32.1-127.1:03 of the Code of Virginia.

C. Practitioners shall properly manage patient records and shall maintain timely, accurate, legible and complete patient records.

D. Practitioners shall maintain a patient record for a minimum of six years following the last patient encounter with the following exceptions:

1. Records of a minor child, including immunizations, ~~which~~ shall be maintained until the child reaches the age of 18 or ~~the age of emancipation, whichever comes first, except the becomes emancipated, with a~~ minimum time for record retention ~~shall be of~~ six years ~~from the last patient encounter~~ regardless of the age of the child ~~at the last patient encounter~~; or

2. Records that have previously been transferred to another practitioner or health care provider or provided to the patient or his ~~legally authorized personal~~ representative; or

3. Records that are required by contractual obligation or federal law ~~may need~~ to be maintained for a longer period of time.

E. From (insert effective date of regulations) practitioners shall post information or in some manner inform all patients concerning the time frame for record retention and destruction. Patient records shall only be destroyed in a manner that protects patient confidentiality, such as by incineration or shredding.

F. When a practitioner is closing, selling or relocating his practice, he shall meet the requirements of § 54.1-2405 of the Code of Virginia for giving notice that copies of records can be sent to any like-regulated provider of the patient's choice or provided to the patient.

**18VAC85-20-27. Confidentiality.**

A practitioner shall not willfully or negligently breach the confidentiality between a practitioner and a patient. A breach of ~~confidence confidentiality~~ that is required ~~or permitted~~ by applicable law or beyond the control of the practitioner shall not be considered negligent or willful.

**18VAC85-20-28. Practitioner-patient communication; termination of relationship.**

A. Communication with patients.

1. Except as provided in § 32.1-127.1:03 F of the Code of Virginia, a practitioner shall accurately inform ~~patients a patient~~ or ~~their his~~ legally authorized representative of ~~any his~~ medical diagnoses,

prognosis and prescribed treatment or plan of care. A practitioner shall not deliberately make a false or misleading statement regarding the practitioner's skill or the efficacy or value of a medication, treatment, or procedure prescribed or directed by the practitioner in the treatment of any disease or condition.

2. ~~Practitioners~~ A practitioner shall present information relating to the patient's care to a patient or his legally authorized representative in understandable terms and encourage participation in the decisions regarding the patient's care.

3. Before surgery or any invasive procedure is performed, informed consent shall be obtained from the patient in accordance with the policies of the health care entity. Practitioners shall inform patients of the risks, benefits, and alternatives of the recommended surgery or invasive procedure that a reasonably prudent practitioner ~~practicing~~ in ~~similar practice in~~ Virginia ~~in the same or a similar specialty~~ would tell a patient.

a. In the instance of a minor or a patient who is incapable of making an informed decision on his own behalf or is incapable of communicating such a decision due to a physical or mental disorder, the legally authorized person available to give consent shall be informed and the consent documented.

b. An exception to the requirement for consent prior to performance of surgery or an invasive procedure may be made in an emergency situation when a delay in obtaining consent would likely result in imminent harm to the patient.

c. For the purposes of this provision, "invasive procedure" shall mean any diagnostic or therapeutic procedure performed on a patient that is not part of routine, general care and for which the usual practice within the health care entity is to document specific informed consent from the patient or surrogate decision-maker prior to proceeding.

4. Practitioners shall adhere to requirements of § 32.1-162.18 of the Code of Virginia for obtaining informed consent from patients prior to involving them as subjects in human research [that affects their care, with the exception of retrospective chart reviews].

B. Termination of the practitioner/patient relationship.

1. The practitioner or the patient may terminate the relationship. In either case, the practitioner shall make a copy of the patient record available, except in situations where denial of access is allowed by law.

2. Except as provided in § 54.1-2962.2 of the Code of Virginia, a practitioner shall not terminate the relationship or make his services unavailable without documented notice to the patient that allows for a reasonable time to obtain the services of another practitioner.

**18VAC85-20-29. Practitioner responsibility.**

A. A practitioner shall not:

1. Knowingly allow subordinates to jeopardize patient safety or provide patient care outside of the subordinate's scope of practice or area of responsibility. Practitioners shall delegate patient care only to subordinates who are properly trained and supervised;

2. Engage in an egregious pattern of disruptive behavior or interaction in a health care setting that interferes with patient care or could reasonably be expected to adversely impact the quality of care rendered to a patient;

3. Exploit the practitioner/patient relationship for personal gain.

B. Advocating for patient safety or improvement in patient care within a health care entity shall not constitute disruptive behavior provided the practitioner does not engage in behavior prohibited in A 2 of this section.

**18VAC85-20-30. Advertising ethics.**

A. Any statement specifying a fee, whether standard, discounted or free, for professional services which does not include the cost of all related procedures, services and products which, to a substantial likelihood, will be necessary for the completion of the advertised service as it would be understood by an ordinarily prudent person shall be deemed to be deceptive or misleading, or both. Where reasonable disclosure of all relevant variables and considerations is made, a statement of a range of prices for specifically described services shall not be deemed to be deceptive or misleading.

B. Advertising a discounted or free service, examination, or treatment and charging for any additional service, examination, or treatment which is performed as a result of and within 72 hours of the initial office visit in response to such advertisement is unprofessional conduct unless such professional services rendered are as a result of a bona fide emergency. This provision may not be waived by agreement of the patient and the practitioner.

C. Advertisements of discounts shall disclose the full fee that has been discounted. The practitioner shall maintain documented evidence to substantiate the discounted fees and shall make such information available to a consumer upon request.

D. A licensee ~~[or certificate holder's authorization of or use in any advertising for his practice of the term "board certified" or any similar words or phrase calculated to convey the same meaning shall constitute misleading or deceptive advertising under §54.1-2914 of the Code of Virginia, unless the licensee or certificate holder discloses the complete name of the specialty board which conferred the~~ forementioned certification shall disclose the complete name of the specialty board which conferred

the certification when using or authorizing the use of the term “board certified” or any similar words or phrase calculated to convey the same meaning in any advertising for his practice].

~~It shall be considered unprofessional conduct for a~~ A licensee of the board to publish an advertisement shall not advertise information which is false, misleading, or deceptive. For an advertisement for a single practitioner, it shall be presumed that the practitioner is responsible and accountable for the validity and truthfulness of its content. For an advertisement for a practice in which there is more than one practitioner, the name of the practitioner or practitioners responsible and accountable for the content of the advertisement shall be documented and maintained by the practice for at least two years.

**18VAC85-20-40. Vitamins, minerals and food supplements.**

A. ~~The use or recommendations~~ recommendation or direction for the use of vitamins, minerals or food supplements and the rationale for that use or recommendation shall be documented by the practitioner. The rationale for said use must be therapeutically proven and not experimental recommendation or direction shall be based upon a reasonable expectation that such use will result in a favorable patient outcome, including preventive practices, and that a greater benefit will be achieved than that which can be expected without such use.

B. Vitamins, minerals, or food supplements, or a combination of the three, shall not be sold, dispensed, recommended, prescribed, or suggested in ~~toxic~~ doses that would be contraindicated based on the individual patient’s overall medical condition and medications.

C. The practitioner shall conform to the standards of his particular branch of the healing arts in the therapeutic application of vitamins, minerals or food supplement therapy.

**18VAC85-20-50. Anabolic steroids.**

~~It shall be considered unprofessional conduct for a licensee of the board to~~ A practitioner shall not sell, prescribe, or administer anabolic steroids to any patient for other than accepted therapeutic purposes.

**18VAC85-20-60 to 18VAC85-20-70. [Repealed]**

**18VAC85-20-80. Solicitation or remuneration in exchange for referral.**

~~It shall be unprofessional conduct for a licensee of the board to~~ A practitioner shall not knowingly and willfully solicit or receive any remuneration, directly or indirectly, in return for referring an individual to a facility or institution as defined in §37.1-179 of the Code of Virginia, or hospital as defined in §32.1-123 of the Code of Virginia.

Remuneration shall be defined as compensation, received in cash or in kind, but shall not include any payments, business arrangements, or payment practices allowed by Title 42, §1320a-7b(b) of the United States Code, as amended, or any regulations promulgated thereto.

**18VAC85-20-90. Pharmacotherapy for weight loss.**

A. ~~It shall be unprofessional conduct for a physician to~~ A practitioner shall not prescribe amphetamine, Schedule II, for the purpose of weight reduction or control.

B. ~~It shall be unprofessional conduct for a physician to~~ A practitioner shall not prescribe ~~anorectic drugs~~ controlled substances, Schedules III through VI, for the purpose of weight reduction or control in the treatment of obesity, unless the following conditions are met:

1. ~~A comprehensive~~ An appropriate history, and physical examination, ~~and interpreted~~ electrocardiogram are performed and recorded at the time of initiation of ~~treatment~~ pharmacotherapy for obesity by the prescribing physician, and the physician reviews the results of laboratory work, as indicated, including testing for thyroid function;

2. If the drug to be prescribed could adversely affect cardiac function, the physician shall review the results of an electrocardiogram performed and interpreted within 90 days of initial prescribing for treatment of obesity;

~~2~~ 3. A diet and exercise program for weight loss is prescribed and recorded;

~~3~~ 4. The patient is ~~weighed at least once a month~~ seen within the first 30 days following initiation of pharmacotherapy for weight loss, by the prescribing physician or a licensed practitioner with prescriptive authority working under the supervision of the prescribing physician, at which time a

recording shall be made of blood pressure, pulse, and any other tests as may be necessary for monitoring potential adverse effects of drug therapy;

~~4. No more than a 30 day supply of such drugs shall be prescribed or dispensed at any one time;~~

~~5. No such drugs shall be prescribed or dispensed for more than 90 days unless the patient:~~

~~a. Has a recorded weight loss of at least 12 pounds in the first 90 days of therapy;~~

~~b. The treating physician shall direct the follow-up care, including the intervals for patient visits and~~

~~the continuation of or any subsequent changes in pharmacotherapy. Continuation of prescribing for~~

~~treatment of obesity shall occur only if the patient Has has continued progress toward achieving or~~

~~maintaining a target weight; and e. Has has no significant adverse effects from the prescribed program.~~

~~C. It shall be unprofessional conduct for a physician to prescribe amphetamine like substances for use~~

~~as an anorectic agent in children under 12 years of age.~~

**18VAC85-20-100. Sexual contact ~~with patients.~~**

A. For purposes of § [~~54.1-2914 A 7 and A 16 14~~ 54.1-2915 A 12 and A 19]of the Code of Virginia and this section, sexual contact ~~between a practitioner and a patient~~ includes, but is not limited to,

sexual behavior or ~~involvement with a patient including~~ verbal or physical behavior which:

1. May reasonably be interpreted as intended for the sexual arousal or gratification of the practitioner, the patient, or both; or

2. May reasonably be interpreted as romantic involvement with a patient regardless of whether such involvement occurs in the professional setting or outside of it.

B. Sexual contact with a patient.

1. The determination of when a person is a patient for purposes of [~~§54.1-2914 A 16 14~~ 54.1-2915 A 19] of the Code of Virginia is made on a case-by-case basis with consideration given to the nature, extent, and context of the professional relationship between the practitioner and the person. The fact that a person is not actively receiving treatment or professional services from a practitioner is not



determinative of this issue. A person is presumed to remain a patient until the patient-practitioner relationship is terminated.

2. The consent to, initiation of, or participation in sexual behavior or involvement with a practitioner by a patient does not change the nature of the conduct nor negate the statutory prohibition.

~~C. A patient's consent to, initiation of, or participation in sexual behavior or involvement with a practitioner does not change the nature of the conduct nor lift the statutory prohibition.~~ Sexual contact between a practitioner and a former patient.

Sexual contact between a practitioner and a former patient after termination of the practitioner-patient relationship may still constitute unprofessional conduct if the sexual contact is a result of the exploitation of trust, knowledge, or influence of emotions derived from the professional relationship.

D. Sexual contact between a practitioner and a key third party shall constitute unprofessional conduct if the sexual contact is a result of the exploitation of trust, knowledge or influence derived from the professional relationship or if the contact has had or is likely to have an adverse effect on patient care.

For purposes of this section, key third party of a patient shall mean: spouse or partner, parent or child, guardian, or legal representative of the patient.

E. Sexual contact between a medical supervisor and a medical trainee shall constitute unprofessional conduct if the sexual contact is a result of the exploitation of trust, knowledge or influence derived from the professional relationship or if the contact has had or is likely to have an adverse effect on patient care.

**18VAC85-20-105. Refusal to provide information.**

~~It shall be considered unprofessional conduct for a licensee to~~ A practitioner shall not willfully refuse to provide information or records as requested or required by the board or its representative pursuant to an investigation or to the enforcement of a statute or regulation.

## Certification

*I certify that this regulation is full, true, and correctly dated.*

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William L. Harp, M.D.  
Executive Director  
Virginia Board of Medicine

Date: \_\_\_\_\_