

COLLEGE OF PHYSICAL THERAPISTS OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

PRACTICE STANDARD

Number 1

Effective: April 1, 2008

Replaces: March 1, 2007
January 2000

CLINICAL RECORDS

1. An accurate, legible, permanent, clinical record must be maintained for each patient.
2. Only abbreviations which are recognizable to health professionals in your place of practice may be used.
3. Identification that is unique to each patient must appear on every page of a clinical record.
4. The clinical record must contain all consents given by a patient or their legal representative. See the Practice Standard on Consent to Treatment.
5. All entries in a clinical record must be chronological, record the date of the entry and identify the physical therapist making the entry. Late entries must be recorded as such.
6. Any corrections to the clinical record must leave the original entry legible and the correction must be dated and initialed by the physical therapist.
7. Physical therapists' first entry in a chart must be signed in full and note professional title. Subsequent entries in the clinical record shall be either initialed or signed in full by the physical therapist.
8. Information in a clinical record regarding the assessment of the patient must include: history of presenting complaint, relevant medical history, current prescribed medications, subjective findings, objective findings, physical therapy diagnosis.
9. Any precautions and/or contraindications communicated to the patient, related to assessment and treatment, must be documented in the clinical record.
10. If the physical therapist utilizes information from the records of another health professional the source of that information must be referenced in the clinical record.
11. Assessment findings must be recorded. Any conclusions drawn from an assessment and all actions taken by a physical therapist relevant to the assessment or treatment of a patient must be recorded in the clinical record of the patient.
12. The clinical record must contain a proposed treatment plan. Treatment, the patient's response to treatment and all subsequent changes to the treatment plan must be recorded.
13. The clinical record must contain the initial dosage for a treatment modality and any changes made to the dosage parameters. See the Practice Standard on Electro-physical Agents.

14. There must be a patient specific record of all physical therapy visits which identifies the provider. If this record does not form part of the patient record, it must be maintained with the security of a clinical record and be made available upon request.
15. The clinical record must contain documentation of any change in patient status and/or any change in treatment provided, including advice given to the patient.
16. When the patient is discharged the clinical record must contain a discharge summary.
17. When the physical therapist assigns a portion of the physical therapy treatment plan, the physical therapist must document the assignment in the clinical record. See the Practice Standard on Assignment of Task to a Physical Therapist Support Worker.
18. The physical therapist is responsible for reviewing chart entries made by support personnel. See the Practice Standard on Assignment of Task to a Physical Therapist Support Worker.
19. The physical therapist is responsible for reviewing and countersigning chart entries made by physical therapy students.
20. The clinical record must contain evidence of any written referral and any communication about the patient with third parties.

Record Retention and Disposal

1. There is currently no statute of limitations in B.C. The College requirement for retention of records is a minimum of 6 years from the date of the last entry, with the exception of minors and newborns, which should be retained to the age of majority (19 years in BC) plus 6 years = 25 years. While this is a minimum standard, practitioners should assess their own practices and should be aware that there are circumstances in which the usual limitation period for personal injury of two years can be extended, particularly where the client is not immediately aware that an injury has occurred or where there is an allegation of sexual misconduct. If a registrant has concerns about specific cases, they should seek advice from their insurer or solicitor, and refer to the *Limitations Act*.
2. When a clinical record is destroyed it is by effective shredding, burning, computer or video erasure.
3. In the absence of an agreement to the contrary the property right to a clinical record remains with the clinic/facility/institution where the record was compiled.

Treatment of Clinical Records When a Practice Closes

1. When a physical therapist closes a practice or ceases to practice he/she must transfer the records to another physical therapist or make appropriate arrangements to store the records safely and securely. When transferring clinical records to another person for processing, storage or disposal the physical therapist must ensure that the confidentiality and physical security of the records will be maintained.
2. The physical therapist must ensure that the clinical records can be accessed by former patients and their representatives.
3. The physical therapist must notify the College of where the clinical records are stored.

Additional Resources:

For information on informed consent see the *Health Care (Consent) and Care Facility (Admission) Act* at www.qp.gov.bc.ca/statreg/stat/H/96181_01.htm and the *Infant's Act* at www.qp.gov.bc.ca/statreg/stat/I/96223_01.htm.

For more information on confidentiality and disclosure see the *Personal Information Protection Act (PIPA)* at [www.oipc.bc.ca/legislation/PIPA/PIPA\(2006\).pdf](http://www.oipc.bc.ca/legislation/PIPA/PIPA(2006).pdf) and the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FOIPPA)* at [http://www.oipc.bc.ca/legislation/FIPPA/FIPPA-ACT\(21June2007\).pdf](http://www.oipc.bc.ca/legislation/FIPPA/FIPPA-ACT(21June2007).pdf) on the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner for BC website at www.oipc.bc.ca. PIPA Hotline: 250 356 1851.

For more information on record retention see page 8 of the summer 2005 edition of *Update* available on the College website at: www.cptbc.org/pdf/NewsLetters/Summer2005.pdf and the *Limitations Act* at: http://www.qp.gov.bc.ca/statreg/stat/L/96266_01.htm.