

Practice transition

Plan for the unexpected

Preparing for a prolonged absence or the unexpected closure of your practice due to illness or death is a necessary part of your business plan. Consulting with legal and financial experts will help you understand the implications of a sudden change in your work circumstances.

These professionals can advise on topics which may include:

Accountant and/or Financial Planner:

- Business viability for an incoming family physician.
- Practice asset review.
- Audit requirements.
- Cost/benefit analysis of your contingency plan.
- Personal economic implications of implementing your plan, especially for incorporated companies.
- Superannuation.
- Personal tax implications.
- Economically sound timing to change work arrangements.

Legal professional:

- Legal requirements and implications of your estate plan.
- Conditions and contracts for an incoming family doctor.
- Insurance, particularly indemnity insurance.
- In addition to consulting professionals, it is important to talk to your colleagues about a plan for covering any absences and the impact on workloads and/or on-call arrangements.

Important questions to ask a legal professional

If a representative of the physician is left to handle the closure of a practice, a legal professional can assist with answering the following questions.

Though not an exhaustive list, when meeting with a lawyer, these are some important questions to ask:

In case of death:

- Did the deceased physician have a will (or wills)? Is it with the lawyer?
- If so, does the will have to go to probate?
- Who is named the executor of the estate in the will?
- What happens if there is no will?
- What happens to the deceased's property in the interim, such as a vehicle or home?
- Are there any insurance or tax requirements that need to be addressed?
- Am I/we eligible for any CPP-related payments?
- How do we claim any life insurance money?
- How do we deal with any investments in the deceased's name?

In case of sudden illness:

- Does the physician have an appointed Continuing Power of Attorney for Property?
- Does the physician have an emergency plan in place?
- How do we claim any disability insurance money?

General questions:

- How do we wind down the physician's practice?
- How do we deal with the physician's employees? What are our obligations?
- How do we deal with the physician's office lease, utilities payments, and any rented equipment?
- What happens to the physician's medical records? What are our obligations, if any?
- What happens to the physician's medicine professional corporation?
- How do we inform the College of Physicians and Surgeons of BC (CPSBC), the Canadian Medical Protective Association (CMPA), Doctors of BC, etc. that the physician is deceased or has ceased to practice?

Create your asset plan

Consider what you would like to do with practice assets if your work circumstances changed. Use the table below to outline your proposal for each asset.

Asset	Proposal
Clinical workload	
Clinical equipment	
Patient records	
Practice staff	
Computer hardware and software	
Goodwill	
Practice furniture	
Practice location	
Ongoing contracts or agreements	