

Physician Safety Webinar:

Navigating clinical challenges during the pandemic



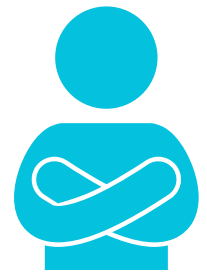
On October 28, 2021, Doctors of BC in collaboration with the College of Physicians and Surgeons of BC, and the Canadian Medical Protective Association, held a Physician Safety webinar titled: ***Practical advice and recommendations for navigating clinical challenges during the pandemic.***

Members asked a number of questions, and answers to the most frequently asked are listed here, accompanied by links to more information from the presenting organizations.

Frequently asked questions

What do I do if a patient refuses to wear a mask?

- Read the updated Ministry of Health policy communique on [Mask Use in Health Care Facilities During the COVID-19 Pandemic](#).
- Patients may refuse to wear masks for various reasons. It is important to explain the rationale for wearing masks in advance of attending in-person visits. CMPA has some helpful guidance on responding to [patients who refuse to wear a mask](#):



For patients who continue to decline to wear a mask, physicians may offer to see them using virtual care, if appropriate...Physicians will need to exercise their clinical judgement in every case to determine whether a patient should be prevented from receiving in person care for refusing to wear a mask, even in jurisdictions where mask wearing is mandatory.



How do I respond to a patient's aggressive behaviour and/or de-escalate a difficult situation?

- An important first step is to ensure you are prepared as much as possible in the event of an unsafe situation. [This Violence Prevention Guide](#) provides some practical tools that can be used and shared with your staff, so that everyone has the same information and can be better prepared.
- Another important tool that can be used is a non-harassment notice visible to all patients at your medical practice. [Download](#) a printable poster endorsed by the CPSBC, CMPA, the Physician Health Program and Doctors of BC.
- Doctors of BC hosted webinars on preventing physical and online attacks in November, 2021. [Visit our YouTube channel](#) to watch a recording.
- Communication skills are necessary for effective patient care. This is also true when faced with a challenging patient encounter. The links below provide helpful information from the CMPA when facing such situations:
 - Learn about a combination of skills and strategies that can be helpful in these situations, from [the CMPA](#).
 - In [this article](#), the CMPA gives physicians practical advice and tips on how to best manage conflict and aggressive behaviour in your medical practice.
 - For information on managing your virtual presence and reputation, read [this CMPA article](#).



What do I tell a patient who wants an exemption to the vaccine (religious or other reasons)?

- There are very few exemptions to receiving COVID-19 vaccines, and the criteria are clear. The Provincial Health Officer has outlined the only valid reasons for a COVID-19 exemption or deferral on [this form](#).
- The College of Physicians and Surgeons of BC offers some [advice on verifying a legitimate exemption](#).
- The CMPA also offers some guidance on exemptions and declining a patient's request, if required.





Physicians should generally only complete these documents if the request is clinically indicated and in keeping with published guidelines. Any statements made should be truthful and based on objective clinical information...It is reasonable to decline completing exemption notes if the request is not clinically indicated or you do not have the sufficient knowledge or expertise to opine on the issue.



[Read more about exemptions.](#)

Are there alternative therapies I can offer my patients as preventative treatment for COVID-19?

The Practice Standard on Complementary and Alternative Therapies published by the College of Physicians and Surgeons outlines that a registrant must:

“Advise the patient unambiguously if the safety and/or effectiveness of a proposed intervention is contrary to the accepted views of the medical

profession and counsel the patient, to the best

of their ability and knowledge, about the risks, benefits and alternatives of all options (including the option of no treatment) so that the patient can give informed consent.”



This is relevant if the registrant chooses to provide their patient with a complementary or alternative medicine. Read the full [Practice Standard](#) document for further details.

Based on the current scientific evidence and best-practice guidelines, the College of Physicians and Surgeons of BC, the College of Pharmacists of BC and the BC College of Nurses and Midwives do not approve of the use of ivermectin for either treatment or prophylaxis for COVID-19 and registrants must not prescribe it for this purpose. [Click here](#) to read the joint message published in October 2021.

For more information, or further questions related to physician safety, please email advocacy@doctorsofbc.ca