CLOSING OF A PHYSICIAN’S OFFICE

Connecticut State Medical Society – October 2003

SUGGESTIONS FOR THE TRANSITION

1. Notify all patients under your care at least sixty days, if possible, prior to your intention to terminate practice, that “on or after a certain date, you are terminating practice” and offer to assist them in making a transfer to another physician.

2. Patient’s records are important and confidential records, which should be carefully preserved. However, all original records are property of the physician. Written authorization to release copies of the records is necessary and should be retained with the original records. All patients’ records need to be kept for seven years. When possible records can be microfilmed and stored indefinitely.

3. It is desirable to retain the services of either a receptionist or answering service for thirty to sixty days following the closing of the office to take care of any patients who might have been overlooked or not received the notice of your termination of practice.

4. Some arrangement with a colleague should be made in regard to patients in the hospital at the time of your termination of practice.

5. If your practice is being transferred to another physician, you should notify all of your patients that after a certain date, Dr. (Name) is taking over your practice and that all records are being transferred to him/her. In addition, you should inform your patients they might have their records transferred to another physician if they provide you will all appropriate authorization.

RETIRING FROM PRACTICE

If the physician is retiring, a courtesy letter should be sent to all patients seen with the last three years. The letter should include:

- Date of retirement.
- Names of other physicians in the area.
- Where a patient can obtain a copy of their medical record for their new physician.

DEATH OF A PHYSICIAN

It is the responsibility of the surviving relative or executor to inform patients of the death of a physician. All patients seen within the three years preceding the date of the physician’s death should be notified.

By law a public notification indicating where a patient may obtain their records must be made by placing a notice in a daily, local newspaper published in the community, which is the prime location of the practice. The notice should be no less than two columns wide and no less than two inches in height. It should appear twice, seven days apart. This is requested for a physician retiring from practice and the death of physician.

Note: Medical records of all patients must be retained for at least sixty days following both the public and private notice to patients.
DATE

Dear {Patient’s Name}:

Please be advised that because of {my retirement, reasons of health, etc.}, I am discontinuing the practice of medicine on {date}. After that time I will not be able to attend to you professionally.

a.) I suggest that you arrange to place yourself under the care of another physician. If you are not acquainted with another physician, I suggest you contact the {name of local county medical society or specialty association and telephone number}.

b.) Dr. {Name} will be assuming the practice at this address and will be available for medical services to those who prefer that their records remain with him/her.

I will make a copy of your medical records available to the physician you designate. Since these records are confidential, I will require your written authorization to make them available to your new physician. For this reason, I am including an authorization form. Please complete the form and return it to me.

I am sorry that I cannot continue as your physician. I offer my best wishes for your future health and happiness.

Sincerely,

{Name}

Enclosure