



ACO ADVISORIES

CLOSING AN OPTOMETRY PRACTICE ADVISORY

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CLOSING AN OPTOMETRIC PRACTICE

Optometrists close their practices for a variety of reasons, including personal health, retirement, relocation, leave of absence, unexpected death, etc. The guiding principle is that when an optometrist closes his/her practice, the continuity of patient care must be assured and access to the patient records must be preserved.

Should it become necessary to close an optometric practice, the following checklist can be used to assist those responsible for this duty:

- a) Notify all patients that one of the following two options have occurred:
 - That you have transferred custodianship of your patient files to another optometrist or ophthalmologist along with their pertinent contact information. The successor custodian must ensure that:
 - Patients have access to their records for a minimum of ten (10) years from the patient's last appointment.
 - Estates of patients must have access to the file information for a minimum of two (2) years following the death of the patient.
 - That you have put their patient files in a secure storage facility and include appropriate instructions on how they may access their previous file information.
 - Patients must have access to their previous records for a minimum of ten (10) years from the patient's last appointment.
 - Estates of patients must have access to the file information for a minimum of two (2) years following the death of the patient.
- b) Notify colleagues and other health care providers you have been sharing patient care with over the years of your office closure or transfer of custodianship.
- c) Notify the Alberta College of Optometrists, the Alberta Association of Optometrists, the Canadian Associations of Optometrists, Alberta Health Practitioner Registry, and your insurance carrier of the date of your closure along with your future contact information.
- d) Advise the practice's accountant and legal counsel of the impending closure so that appropriate steps are taken to wind up the practice, professional corporation or LLP (if applicable), and outstanding billings and receivables comprising the practice's assets. Your legal counsel and accountant will advise you on the appropriate measures required to properly wind down these business entities.
 - According to Section 114 of the Health Professions Act, upon the death or loss of licensure of an optometrist, professional corporations have ninety (90) days to cancel or dissolve their professional corporation.

Although, it is not considered a mandatory obligation, optometrists are encouraged to assist their patients in their search for a new optometrist and undertake transfer of their office records before the actual closing date.

The Alberta College of Optometrists strongly advises a practitioner who wishes to close his/her practice to obtain appropriate legal and financial advice.