



ADVISORY NO. CCOP - 2

[Please file in your ACO Practitioner Manual in the “Advisories” Section - Replaces Advisory No. CCOP-1]

Date: January 1, 2008

Subject: **CHECKLIST FOR 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 the patient records must be preserved.

Should it become necessary to close a practice, the following checklist can be used to assist those responsible for this duty (preferably several months in advance)

- ✓ Notify patients, colleagues, other health care providers, the Alberta College of Optometrists, the Alberta and Canadian Associations of Optometrists, Alberta Health and Wellness, and your insurance carrier.
- ✓ Ensure that patients have access to the information contained in their patient record by selling or transferring the records to a regulated optometrist, licensed ophthalmologist, or appropriate medical storage facility. Those who take over control of the patient records should ensure that patients have access to their records for a minimum of ten years after their last eye exam or that the records are available to the estate for two years after the patient’s death.
- ✓ 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. According to the Health Professions Act (HPA), only regulated members may be partners in a LLP or shareholders in a Professional Corporation. Your legal counsel and accountant will advise you on the appropriate measures required to properly wind down these business entities.

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You may assist your patients in their search for a new optometrist and undertake transfer of their records before the actual close date. Please refer to Advisory No. PFOM-1 for protocols regarding patient file ownership, maintenance and transfer.

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