

**DEPARTMENT OF LABOR, LICENSING AND REGULATION  
BOARD OF MEDICAL EXAMINERS  
NOTICE**

In accordance with Section 1-23-40 of the 1976 Code of Laws of South Carolina, as amended, notice is hereby given that the State Board of Medical Examiners of South Carolina has adopted the following statement as guidance for its licensees regarding termination of physician-patient relationships under the South Carolina Medical Practice Act. For purposes of discipline and licensure in matters before the Board, failure to practice in compliance with this statement may lead to discipline as a violation of the Medical Practice Act (40-47-5, *et seq.*).

**SOUTH CAROLINA BOARD OF MEDICAL EXAMINERS POLICY  
RELATIVE TO TERMINATION OF PHYSICIAN-PATIENT RELATIONSHIPS**

When it is in the interest of the patient and/or the physician to terminate the physician/patient relationship, and for the physician to withdraw from the case, a physician in this State cannot do so without giving sufficient, advance notice to the patient in order to ensure continuity of care and to permit another medical attendant to be secured.

The purpose and intent of this statement is to provide guidance to the physician as it relates to the laws concerning patient abandonment and neglect. *See also AMA Code of Medical Ethics Opinions 8.11 (Neglect of Patient) and 8.115 (Termination of the Physician-Patient Relationship).*

1. The patient or the patient's legal representative (relative, responsible friend) should be notified in writing, sent by certified mail, to the patient's or his or her legal representative's last known address.
2. The physician must at minimum offer to refer the patient to another qualified physician or appropriate medical professional.
3. The physician must provide emergency care to the patient for up to thirty (30) days.
4. The physician must comply with the S.C. Physician's Patient Records Act (§44-115-10, *et seq.*) and the "Closing a Medical Practice" guidance document, if applicable. This document is available on the Board's website (<http://www.llr.state.sc.us/POL/Medical/index.asp?file=MDDOPolicies.HTM>).

ADOPTED BY THE BOARD OF MEDICAL EXAMINERS ON  
DATE: FEBRUARY 1, 2011  
REVISED AUGUST 8, 2014