

# College of Physicians and Surgeons of Nova Scotia

## OBSERVERSHIPS FOR MEDICAL STUDENTS

### POLICY STATEMENT

As an observer medical students will interact with patients and will have access to private personal patient information. For these reasons observers require supervision by a fully licensed physician. The College of Physicians and Surgeons of Nova Scotia needs to ensure that a student observer is a legitimate medical student and is undertaking this observership to further their knowledge of medical practice in Nova Scotia.

Therefore, if a medical student wishes to act as an observer in Nova Scotia he/she must:

- be enrolled in a medical school found in the latest edition of the International Medical Education Directory (IMED) of the Foundation for Advancement of International Medical Education and Research (FAIMER),
- have the approval of the undergraduate medical education office of their medical school
- have a licensed physician supervisor in good standing with the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Nova Scotia
- provide a character reference from a resident of Nova Scotia who has known them for at least five years
- have the approval of the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Nova Scotia
- submit an application form to the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Nova Scotia for an observership permit

The permit will remain valid at the discretion of the College but will usually be time limited and location specific.

The medical student must submit a written application to the College for approval of their proposed observership. This must be accompanied by a sponsorship agreement from the supervising physician describing the proposed activities for the observership. If approval is granted by the College the observer and supervisor will be notified in writing outlining their duties/responsibilities/restrictions/limitations.

Observers may (with the patient's consent):

- observe
- conduct supervised (direct and indirect) interviews
- conduct examinations under direct supervision

Observers are **not** allowed to do the following:

- make entries on the patient's medical record unless cosigned
- give medical advice to a patient or make a medical diagnosis
- prescribe treatment
- take a telephone call regarding clinical matters on behalf of their supervisor or other physicians
- perform medical procedures
- discharge a patient from care.

Please refer to the guidelines for supervisors regarding confidentiality and consent. (to be developed)

*Approved by Council: May 28, 2010*