

FAQs – Consultation on the Draft Managing New Patient Requests Standard

Please note that these FAQs were created solely to support the consultation. Feedback is being requested on the draft Standard only, not on the FAQs.

Why was this Standard of Practice developed?

RCDSO Council directed that the College develop this new Standard of Practice to outline dentists' legal, professional and ethical obligations regarding new patient requests in non-emergency and emergency situations.

The draft Standard is being developed as part of the [Access to Care Strategic Project](#) to help increase access to oral health care by supporting fair, non-discriminatory, transparent and clear decision-making regarding whom to accept as patients in non-emergency situations.

The draft Standard also responds to the need to clearly articulate foundational expectations in an area of practice where there has historically been limited formal guidance.

It is intended to:

- support dentists in meeting their legal, professional and ethical obligations
- promote fair and transparent decision-making
- provide clarity for both dentists and patients about what can reasonably be expected when responding to new patient requests.

Does the draft Standard require dentists to accept all individuals as patients in non-emergency situations?

No. The draft Standard does not require dentists to accept every individual requesting to become a patient. However, the draft Standard requires that decisions about whether or not to accept an individual must be fair, non-discriminatory, transparent and supported by a clear rationale.

Does the draft Standard require dentists to accept individuals who rely on publicly funded oral health programs?

No. The draft Standard does not require dentists to accept all individuals who rely on such programs, nor does it require that dentists participate in publicly funded oral health programs. However, dentists must ensure that their decision not to accept an individual aligns with their

legal obligations under the [Ontario Human Rights Code](#). The draft Standard advises dentists to obtain independent legal advice if they are unsure about whether their decision aligns with their legal obligations under the [Ontario Human Rights Code](#).

Does the draft Standard impose new obligations on dentists related to accessibility, accommodation, and discrimination?

No. The draft Standard simply reflects dentists' existing legal obligations with respect to accessibility and human rights. These legal obligations are not created by the RCDSO and apply regardless of whether they are set out in a Standard of Practice.

To support dentists in understanding and implementing these existing legal obligations, the draft Standard includes links to relevant external resources.

Can dentists decline to accept individuals as patients due to scope of practice or capacity of the practice?

Yes. The draft Standard enables dentists to decline to accept individuals as patients in non-emergency situations for reasons related to their scope of practice or the capacity of the practice.

Does the draft Standard require dentists to document every decision not to accept an individual as a patient?

No. The draft Standard does not require dentists to document every decision not to accept an individual as a patient. However, dentists are required to communicate their rationale if asked by the individual or the RCDSO, and dentists have the flexibility to determine how best to remember that rationale.

Is the obligation to manage dental emergencies new?

No. The draft Standard reflects dentists' existing obligations, as outlined in this [RCDSO article](#).