

6. If the patient or a subsequent treating health care professional is unable to read the treatment record, either because it is illegible or prepared in a language other than English, the licensee shall provide a transcription at no cost to the patient.

7. The licensee shall not refuse to provide a professional treatment record on the grounds that the patient owes the licensee an unpaid balance if the record is needed by another health care professional for the purpose of rendering care.

(d) Licensees shall maintain the confidentiality of professional treatment records, except that:

1. The licensee shall release patient records as directed by a subpoena issued by the Board of Medical Examiners or the Office of the Attorney General, or by a demand for statement in writing under oath, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 45:1-18. Such records shall be originals, unless otherwise specified, and shall be unedited, with full patient names. To the extent that the record is illegible, the licensee, upon request, shall provide a typed transcription of the record. If the record is in a language other than English, the licensee shall also provide a translation. All x-ray films and reports maintained by the licensee, including those prepared by other health care professionals, shall also be provided.

2. The licensee shall release information as required by law or regulation, such as the reporting of communicable diseases or gunshot wounds or suspected child abuse, etc., or when the patient's treatment is the subject of peer review.

3. The licensee, in the exercise of professional judgment and in the best interests of the patient (even absent the patient's request), may release pertinent information about the patient's treatment to another licensed health care professional who is providing or has been asked to provide treatment to the patient, or whose expertise may assist the licensee in his or her rendition of professional services.

4. The licensee, in the exercise of professional judgment, who has had a good faith belief that the patient because of a mental or physical condition may pose an imminent danger to himself or herself or to others, may release pertinent information to a law enforcement agency or other health care professional in order to minimize the threat of danger. Nothing in this paragraph, however, shall be construed to authorize the release of the content of a record containing identifying information about a person who has AIDS or an HIV infection, without patient consent, for any purpose other than those authorized by N.J.S.A. 26:5C-8. If a licensee, without the consent of the patient, seeks to release information contained in an AIDS/HIV record to a law enforcement agency or other health care professional in order to minimize the threat of danger to others, an application to the court shall be made pursuant to N.J.S.A. 26:5C-5 et seq.

(e) Where the patient has requested the release of a professional treatment record or a portion thereof to a specified individual or entity, in order to protect the confidentiality of the records, the licensee shall:

1. Secure and maintain a current written authorization, bearing the signature of the patient or an authorized representative;

2. Assure that the scope of the release is consistent with the request; and

3. Forward the records to the attention of the specific individual identified or mark the material "Confidential."

(f) Where a third party or entity has requested examination, or an evaluation of an examinee, the licensee rendering those services shall prepare appropriate records and maintain their confidentiality, except to the extent provided by this section. The licensee's report to the third party relating to the examinee shall be made part of the record. The licensee shall:

1. Assure that the scope of the report is consistent with the request, to avoid the unnecessary disclosure of diagnoses or personal information which is not pertinent;

2. Forward the report to the individual entity making the request, in accordance with the terms of the examinee's authorization; if no specific individual is identified, the report should be marked "Confidential"; and

3. Not provide the examinee with the report of an examination requested by a third party or entity unless the third party or entity consents to its release, except that should the examination disclose abnormalities or conditions not known to the examinee, the licensee shall advise the examinee to consult another health care professional for treatment.

(g) (Reserved)

(h) If a licensee ceases to engage in practice or it is anticipated that he or she will remain out of practice for more than three months, the licensee or designee shall:

1. Establish a procedure by which patients can obtain a copy of the treatment records or acquiesce in the transfer of those records to another licensee or health care professional who is assuming responsibilities of the practice. However, a licensee shall not charge a patient, pursuant to (c)4 above, for a copy of the records, when the records will be used for purposes of continuing treatment or care.

2. Publish a notice of the cessation and the established procedure for the retrieval of records in a newspaper of general circulation in the geographic location of the licensee's practice, at least once each month for the first three months after the cessation; and

3. Make reasonable efforts to directly notify any patient treated during the six months preceding the cessation, pro-

viding information concerning the established procedure for retrieval of records.

Repeal and New Rule, R.1990 d.176, effective March 19, 1990.

See: 21 N.J.R. 3253(a), 22 N.J.R. 978(a).

Amended by R.1992 d.429, effective October 19, 1992.

See: 24 N.J.R. 50(a), 24 N.J.R. 3729(d).

Revised (b).

Amended by R.1994 d.119, effective April 4, 1994.

See: 25 N.J.R. 4862(a), 26 N.J.R. 1522(a).

Amended by R.1998 d.184, effective April 6, 1998.

See: 29 N.J.R. 840(b), 30 N.J.R. 1295(a).

In (a), added exception at the end of the sentence; in (c)3, substituted "patient's mental or physical condition will be adversely affected upon being made aware" for "patient may be harmed by release"; in (c)3iii, added "through an employee thereof; or" at the end of the sentence and added a new iv; in (d)4, added the last two sentences; in (h)1, inserted "a copy of the" preceding "treatment records" and added the last sentence.

Petition for Rulemaking.

See: 36 N.J.R. 4333(a).

Amended by R.2005 d.120, effective April 18, 2005.

See: 36 N.J.R. 4633(a), 37 N.J.R. 1203(a).

Rewrote (c).

### Case Notes

Any error in trial court's failure to charge jury concerning duty specialist physician had to communicate his findings of stress test he performed on patient to patient's primary care physician, was harmless in medical malpractice action brought by executrix of patient's estate against specialist after patient died within two weeks after having undergone stress test; no dispute existed that specialist advised patient of his preliminary findings, told him that they were essentially normal, and sent a written report to primary physician, but alleged negligence at issue went to specialist's evaluation of patient's condition. *Sinclair v. Roth*. N.J.Super.A.D., 2002.

Physician's disclosure of patient's medical records to patient's husband's attorney in response to subpoena that did not include patient's authorization to disclose, or a notice of physician's deposition, and which patient and her attorney were not copied on, supported a cause of action against physician, in lawsuit against physician alleging breach of confidentiality, violation of physician-patient privilege, medical malpractice, intentional infliction of emotional distress, and negligent infliction of emotional distress. *Crescenzo v. Crane*, 350 N.J.Super. 531.

To the extent that a contract purports to insulate the examining physician from liability for breaching the duty to communicate abnormalities found in a pre-employment exam, it violates public policy of New Jersey in addition to common law notions. *Reed v. Bojarski*, 166 N.J. 89 (2001).

Board of Medical Examiners neither abused its statutory authority nor mistakenly exercised its discretion when it refused to expunge or otherwise modify consent order disciplining a doctor for failing to keep adequate patient medical records; consent order was legally entered into with doctor's consent, and the Board had authority to file order and fine doctor accordingly. In re *D'Aconti*, 316 N.J.Super. 1, 719 A.2d 652 (N.J.Super.A.D. 1998).

Verification may be required before personal injury protection benefits are paid. *State Farm Mut. Auto. Ins. Co. v. Dalton*, 234 N.J.Super. 128, 560 A.2d 683 (A.D.1989) certification denied 117 N.J. 664, 569 A.2d 1356, certiorari denied 110 S.Ct. 1131, 493 U.S. 1078, 107 L.Ed.2d 1037.

Reprimand by Board for failure to prepare patient record noted; transcript of Board proceeding not records within the meaning of the Right to Know Law, but are public records under common law; injury action's plaintiff's right to examine and inspect records superior to Board's interest in confidentiality (citing former N.J.A.C. 13:13-6.12). *Beck v. Bluestein*, 194 N.J.Super. 247, 476 A.2d 842 (App.Div.1984).

Physician licensee, a compulsive gambler, was guilty of professional misconduct by soliciting money loans from a patient on two occasions in violation of Medical Board orders and by failing to prepare and maintain truthful patient records. Physician's license was suspended for 24 months and physician was ordered to reimburse the improper loans, cease gambling, participate in the Gamblers Anonymous program, perform community service, and pay attorney fees and costs. In re *Suspension or Revocation of License of Singh*, OAL Dkt. No. BDS 1638-05N, 2006 N.J. AGEN LEXIS 426, Initial Decision (June 30, 2006).

Since there was no justification for a limb length discrepancy examination in the record where a victim patient was being examined without a chaperone for a toe injury, and the surrounding circumstances showed that it was only a pretext to get the patient to disrobe, the physician's conduct constituted sexual misconduct and sexual harassment, and therefore was in violation of N.J.S.A. 45:1-21(h). In re *Suspension or Revocation of License of Hakimi*, OAL Dkt. No. BDS 11873-04, 2006 N.J. AGEN LEXIS 148, Initial Decision (February 24, 2006).

Use of improper procedures at abortion clinics and failure to supervise staff support suspension of doctors operating facility. In the *Matter of Miro and Steck*, 97 N.J.A.R.2d (BDS) 1.

Revocation of license; psychiatrist who engaged in *sexual contact* with patients. In the *Matter of the Suspension or Revocation of the License of Schermer*, 94 N.J.A.R.2d (BDS) 33.

Performing numerous cardiac procedures without sufficient medical justification, failing to maintain accurate patient records, along with other acts of negligence, malpractice and incompetence, warranted license revocation; penalty and costs also assessed. In *Matter of Suspension or Revocation of License of Rodriguera*, 93 N.J.A.R.2d (BDS) 33.

Surgeon's license revoked; unauthorized prescriptions for controlled dangerous substances, failure to maintain medical records, and prescribing medications in manner deviating from accepted professional standards. In *Matter of Suspension or Revocation of License of Makarenko*. 92 N.J.A.R.2d (BDS) 1.

### 13:35-6.6 Standards for joint protocols between advanced practice nurses and collaborating physicians

(a) The following words and terms, when used in this section, shall have the following meanings, unless the context clearly indicates otherwise.

"Collaboration" means the ongoing process by which an advanced practice nurse and a physician engage in practice, consistent with agreed upon parameters of their respective practices.

"Device" means an article, other than medication, for use in the diagnosis, cure, mitigation, treatment or prevention of disease, injury, pain or deformity or physical or emotional condition or health problem in humans or intended to affect the structure or function of the human body.

"Joint protocol" means an agreement or contract between an advanced practice nurse and a collaborating physician which conforms to the standards established by the Director of the Division of Consumer Affairs pursuant to this rule.

"Medication" means any substance for which a prescription is required which is intended for use in the diagnosis, cure, mitigation, treatment or prevention of disease, injury, pain or deformity or physical or emotional condition or health

problem in humans or intended to affect the structure or function of the human body.

with whom they are in collaboration shall develop a joint protocol, which shall be:

(b) Advance practice nurses who seek to prescribe or order medications or devices and the collaborating physician(s)

1. In writing;