



Ministry of
Health

Visit Services

The Ministry of Health has become aware that some physicians are advising their patients that it is the policy of the Ministry that physicians are to address only one health care issue per patient visit (i.e. only one medical issue per each partial assessment or subsequent visit that is billed) and, as a result, physicians are required to follow this pattern of practice. It is our understanding that this direction is being relayed to patients through patient-physician/office staff conversations, written handouts and signs posted in physician offices.

The Ministry has **not** provided this direction and it is our position that patients are **not** to be advised verbally, in writing, through posted signs or other means that it is Ministry policy for physicians to address only one health care issue per patient visit.

The Ministry recognizes that the length of each visit can vary from a brief to an extended period of time depending on the patient and the nature and number of their health care issues. We also recognize that that physicians face pressures in managing patient flow efficiently as part of their practices and that there may be some instances where all of a patient's concerns cannot be addressed in a single visit. A physician dialogue with patients to prioritize patient concerns would help allow the concerns to be managed in a manner that would not result in an unnecessarily high frequency of service. It would also help ensure that physician billing is in accordance with the intent of the negotiated fee for a partial assessment or subsequent visit. The negotiated fee is considered an overall payment that provides appropriate compensation for the average length of time for this type of visit.

If you need to discuss this issue further, please contact Dr. Jim Coucill at 306-787-7430 or Dr. Dan Ash at 306-787-3445.

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