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*A Position Statement does not carry the force and effect of law and rules but is adopted by the Board as a means of providing direction to licensees who seek to engage in safe nursing practice. Board Position Statements address issues of concern to the Board relevant to protection of the public and are reviewed regularly for relevance and accuracy to current practice, the Nursing Practice Act, and Board Administrative Code Rules.*

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Once an APRN accepts a patient in the practice, a provider-patient relationship is established. A good rapport and therapeutic relationship are critical to successful patient outcomes. Loss of that relationship may occur when the provider can no longer provide the services the patient needs, services contracted for are completed, the patient moves away, or when the provider must discharge a patient from the practice. Discharging the patient from practice may be driven by numerous reasons: uncooperative, disruptive, lack of therapeutic relationship, financial, no show, sexual advances, etc.

When an APRN terminates the patient relationship, the APRN has a responsibility to provide advanced notice to allow for continuity of care and an alternate provider to be secured. This notice to the patient should be in writing and be provided a minimum of 30 days and include:

- the reason for discharge,
- the date services are terminated,
- an offer to provide care during the 30 days, and
- an offer to help find a new provider.

Care during the 30-day period may include prescription refills, diagnostic testing required, referrals or urgent care needs.

NCBON recommends establishing policies and procedures that include patient behaviors or circumstances that may result in termination of services, expectations regarding attempted resolution and communication with the patient and/or other person(s) acting on behalf of the patient, and documentation for the preceding. Never terminate care of a patient without the practice or clinic owner's consent and discussion with the supervising physician.

Once the patient is discharged from the practice, the patient record should be flagged to avoid prescriptions being refilled or new appointments made. Medical records must be preserved and made accessible to the patient or alternate provider should they be requested. Patients must be told who to contact and how to request their medical records. It is best practice to provide the patient with a list of local providers accepting new patients.

APRNs are urged to review NC Medical Board's site for the document [The Doctor is Out: A Physician's Guide to Closing a Practice](#) and the position statement [2.1.1 The Licensee-Patient Relationship](#).