

STANDARDS OF PRACTICE

REFERRALS

Name:	Referrals
Date Approved:	09/30/2016
Date Updated:	
Number:	SP-PM-5
Type:	Practice Management Standards (PM)
Reference:	Professional Bylaws - Professional Misconduct (8.1) (q) Treats or attempts to treat a vision problem which the member recognizes or should have recognized as being beyond their experience or competence:

A referral is a request for consultation and/or the provision of treatment made to another regulated health care professional when a patient requires care that exceeds the optometrist's scope of practice or ability.

It is considered an act of professional misconduct: (8.1)

- To exceed the scope of practice of the profession
- To treat or attempt to treat an eye or vision system condition which the member recognizes or should recognize as being beyond their experience or competence
- To fail to refer a patient when a member recognizes or should recognize a condition of the eye or vision system that appears to require such referral

Clinical Standard of Referral

Optometrists must be proficient in determining the necessity of appropriate referral for care. Decisions should be made about the urgency and choice of consultant based on ocular or systemic conditions and the risk factors for their patients.

Once the decision to refer has been made, the member is required to:

- Have appropriate documentation of when the referral was requested
- Document the name of the consultant and the reason for referral
- Ensure the consultant has been provided with the appropriate clinical information
- Ensure when the referral letter has been written, that a copy be sent to the patient's primary health care provider when relevant
- Promptly refer acute conditions that pose an immediate threat to the health or vision of a patient