

Q7 WHAT TAKES PLACE DURING THE VISIT?

A visit to a private practice includes an inspection of your facilities, in particular, the consulting room, secretarial area and registers, a review of the medical records and a recapitulation meeting.

Your presence is required at the start of the visit for purposes of reviewing the questionnaire with you and answering your questions.

The inspector or medical expert then reviews the medical records of selected patients to evaluate your record-keeping and the quality of your practice. **Your presence is not usually required at this stage**, unless it is needed, as when records are illegible or according to certain characteristics of electronic patient's record.

When a professional inspection visit takes place in an institution, the PED inspector will read your institutional professional file and possibly meet with your department head or the director of professional services.

In certain situations, direct observation of the clinical activities of the physician being visited may be necessary, particularly when the practice involves technical components. In this case, the physician being visited is notified of such beforehand and takes part in organizing this part of the evaluation.

A review meeting (during which your presence is obviously required) **takes place at the end of the visit** to discuss some of the records reviewed, to initiate a semi structured interview, or to validate certain items of information. This final meeting offers a choice opportunity for exchange and discussion on the observations made during the visit.

The PIC may submit the physician to a structured oral interview (one-day evaluation during which the physician is exposed to a variety of clinical situation scenarios) or an evaluation using psychometric testing; in other circumstances, the physician may be required to serve an evaluation period. Other inspection tools can be used depending on your specialty.

Q8 MAY THE PHYSICIAN BEING VISITED BE ACCOMPANIED DURING THE VISIT?

The physician may be accompanied during a professional inspection visit, in keeping with the provision in the *Regulation respecting the professional inspection committee of the Collège des médecins du Québec*, which stipulates: "[...] Out of respect for the rules regarding professional secrets, the physician may be assisted by a single person of his choice who acts as observer. This person may not be present during the study of a medical record." (sec. 18).

Q9 WHAT HAPPENS AFTER THE PROFESSIONAL INSPECTION VISIT?

Following the professional inspection visit, the inspector submits a report to the PIC, which, after having read it, decides on the necessary actions.

Q10 WHAT DIFFERENT ACTIONS CAN BE TAKEN BY THE PIC?

The PIC may consider various actions, notably:

- › When the visited physician's practice is deemed appropriate, a letter is sent to him or her, attesting to the Committee's satisfaction.
- › Recommendations conducive to improving the physician's practice may be sent to him or her, with no further action taken. Continuing professional development activities (workshops, directed reading, training, etc.) may also be suggested as needed.
- › The PIC may decide on a control visit to verify whether the recommendations made to the visited physician have been applied.
- › The PIC may also recommend to the Board of Directors of the Collège that a professional development activity be imposed, with or without restriction of professional practice. The physician who is the subject of a recommendation of this kind is then asked to meet with the secretary of the PIC and a member of the PED and, if he/she so wishes, to make written representations.

TO CONCLUDE...

Many organizations recognize the evaluation of medical practice as a tool to ensure and continually improve its quality; they also see it as an opportunity to pinpoint education needs; indeed, some grant education credits for this activity. The sharing of non-identifying information in scientific publications or national or international conferences supports the study of these education needs.

We hope the information in this leaflet will facilitate the professional inspection visit process, which seeks to improve the practice of physicians so as to protect the public and help improve the health of Québécois.

The inspector responsible for your professional inspection visit remains available at all times to answer your questions.

› FOR MORE INFORMATION ON PROFESSIONAL INSPECTION AND PED ACTIVITIES:

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THE PROFESSIONAL INSPECTION VISIT

› YOU HAVE JUST RECEIVED THE PROFESSIONAL INSPECTION VISIT'S PREPARATORY QUESTIONNAIRE. IN READING IT, MANY QUESTIONS MAY COME TO YOUR MIND.

THIS LEAFLET PREPARED BY THE PROFESSIONAL INSPECTION COMMITTEE AND PRACTICE ENHANCEMENT DIVISION SHOULD ANSWER MOST OF THESE QUESTIONS.

Q1 WHAT IS A PROFESSIONAL INSPECTION VISIT?

A professional inspection visit is a **peer-assessment** of the quality of your practice. Its purpose is to ensure that you practice with competence and according to established standards.

It advocates preventive and educative action with its prime objective being **to help physicians improve their professional practice.**

Professional inspection is an obligation stipulated in the *Professional Code*, the law governing all professional orders in Québec.

Q2 WHAT IS THE PROFESSIONAL INSPECTION COMMITTEE?

The Professional Inspection Committee (PIC) of the Collège des médecins du Québec supervises professional practice and assures the professional competence of physicians.

In its supervisory functions, the PIC in particular inspects records, books, registers, medications, products, substances, apparatus and equipment relative to the physician's practice.

The PIC is composed of eleven physicians, nine of whom are in active practice representing various medical and surgical disciplines. The PIC members are appointed by the Board of Directors of the Collège des médecins du Québec.

This Committee meets regularly to read the reports of visits as presented to it and to decide, if required, on actions to be taken to improve the professional practice of the physicians visited.

Q3 WHAT IS THE PRACTICE ENHANCEMENT DIVISION?

The Practice Enhancement Division (PED) is formed by the professional inspection department and continuing medical education department. This duality comes from a need to link medical practice monitoring activities to educational activities so as to improve medical practice.

The PED's main activity sectors are monitoring the professional practice of physicians (mainly through the use of quality indicators and professional inspection visits) and improving this practice (through the publication of practice guides and guidelines, the organization of group and individual continuing education activities, etc.). The PED is involved in continuing professional development and also intervenes in the administrative follow-up of physicians experiencing difficulty.

Q4 WHO PARTICIPATES IN THE PROFESSIONAL INSPECTION VISIT?

Usually, the PIC members do not make the inspection visits. To assist the PIC, the Board of Directors of the Collège appoints inspectors. These are PED associated physicians whose main function is to make professional inspection visits.

The inspector responsible for your file will make the visit. The PIC could also designate a medical expert in your activity sector to accompany the inspector.

Q5 WHY ME?

The PIC determines the professional inspection programs to be approved by the Board of Directors of the Collège des médecins du Québec. A few examples of programs are listed below:

- › Physicians chosen at random
- › Physicians who completed their MD over 35 years ago
- › Requests from the Inquiries Division (After an inquiry, the syndic could ask the PIC to assess whether a professional inspection visit would be appropriate.)
- › Information following an institution visit or from other source.

You are the subject of a professional inspection visit because you meet the criteria defined in one of the programs established by the PIC.

Q6 HOW IS THE PROFESSIONAL INSPECTION VISIT PREPARED FOR?

Once the name of a physician is retained for a professional inspection visit, an inspector is appointed to conduct the visit.

To begin with, the inspector sends you a questionnaire to obtain information, particularly on the organization of your practice and your places of practice, your type of practice as well as your continuing professional development activities. You must complete the questionnaire and return it to the inspector so that he or she can then organize the visit.

After having read your answers, the inspector will notify you by mail of the arrangements for the visit (date, time, places to be visited).

Do not be taken aback when the correspondence on the professional inspection visit process comes to you by registered mail; this is in keeping with provisions in the regulation.

On occasion, the PIC may also use different tools to facilitate the organization of the visit. Thus, documents such as a profile of activities in an institution (ex.: list of patients operated on), a profile of billings to the Régie de l'assurance maladie du Québec, or a prescriptions profile (for patients covered by the public drug insurance plan), may be requested.