

NGMFM DISCHARGE FROM PRACTICE POLICY

General Policy Statement:

We at Northern Green Mountain Family Medicine (NGMFM) are honored to provide care for our patients and value our long term patient relationships. For that reason, we are committed to working with our patients to resolve issues that arise in the course of our care. On rare occasions, however, NGMFM, in our sole discretion, may seek to terminate a provider-patient relationship. Reasons for doing so may include:

- A patient has “no-showed” for two or more appointments
- NGMFM concludes that a patient’s conduct undermines or threatens to undermine the well-being of NGMFM staff, providers or patients, or the practice itself
- A patient fails to pay bills, and does not establish and follow a payment plan
- A breakdown in the patient-provider relationship

In the rare case when NGMFM seeks to terminate a patient relationship, we will generally attempt to communicate with the patient to resolve the issue before making a final decision, will provide the patient written notice if NGMFM opts to terminate the patient relationship, and will try to work with the patient to develop a reasonable plan to transition patient’s medical care to another provider to ensure continuity of care.

Grounds for Termination: This list of reasons for NGMFM’s terminating the patient relationship is not exclusive; NGMFM may terminate the patient relationship in its discretion, including for reasons not listed here. The purpose of this policy is to give patients notice about some of the conduct may lead to termination of our provider-patient relationship

- Excessive “no-shows” : “No shows” can be disruptive to NGMFM’ practice, and our efforts to schedule patient appointments as timely as we can. A “no show” is defined as a failure to show up for a scheduled appointment, or to cancel/reschedule the appointment at least two work days in advance. A last minute cancellation (meaning less than two days’ notice) due to a medical emergency, or to snow or other weather emergency, will not count as a “no show” as long as you contact us in advance. In exceptional circumstances, NGMFM may agree to exclude other last minute cancellations or failures to cancel. We may seek to terminate a patient relationship if a patient “no-shows” two times.
- Inappropriate patient conduct : NGMFM is committed to the well-being of all of our patients, as well as our staff and providers. We will terminate our work with patients whose conduct, in NGMFM’s view, undermines the safety and comfort of the NGMFM environment for our providers, staff, and other patients. Such conduct may include, among other things, abusive language, threatening words or behavior, loud or disruptive communications, physical harm to or theft of NGMFM property.
- Failure to pay bills or establish and adhere to a payment plan : NGMFM is committed to working with patients to come up with payment plans for outstanding bills. But a patient’s sustained failure to pay outstanding bills, or to agree to and then follow a reasonable repayment plan, may be grounds to terminate the patient relationship.
- Breakdown of patient-provider relationship : Good patient relationships are central to NGMFM’s mission, and our providers work hard to collaborate with patients to overcome challenges. But in some cases, NGMFM may conclude that the patient-provider relationship is too strained to repair. This can occur for a variety of reasons. For example, a patient may be committed to pursuing a care plan the provider cannot support, a provider may conclude that the patient is not cooperating in their diagnosis or treatment; or the personal relationship between patient and provider may be unduly strained. In such cases, NGMFM may seek to terminate the patient relationship.

NGMFM is committed to diversity, equity and inclusion, and will not terminate a patient's care on the basis of race, creed, color, national origin, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or disability.

Process for Terminating Patient Relationship

Every case is different, and NGMFM may not always follow these procedures. But as a general matter, the process of terminating a patient relationship will involve multiple steps

Outreach to Patient : Generally, NGMFM will not terminate the patient relationship without communicating with the patient and giving the patient an opportunity to respond. This is an important conversation. In some cases, this conversation may lead to an agreed plan of action short of termination. If a patient does not respond to NGMFM's reasonable efforts to communicate in person, through the portal, by telephone, or by mail, then NGMFM may go ahead and terminate the patient relationship without having directly discussed it with the patient.

Written Notice : If NGMFM decides to terminate the patient relationship, we will send you written notice to the address we have on file for you. In that letter, we will initiate the process of facilitating your transition to another care provider, and we will outline the time frame for terminating our relationship. In most cases, we will provide at least 30 days' notice.

Transition : NGMFM will work with patients facing termination to develop a reasonable transition plan to ensure continuity of care for the patient. That may include identifying other providers for the patient to contact and promptly providing medical records to new providers. It will also include continuing to provide necessary ongoing and/or emergency treatment during the transition. Patients are expected to participate in this process. If a patient does not respond to reasonable efforts by NGMFM to reach out and develop a transition plan, NGMFM may terminate the relationship at the conclusion of the notice period.