



Short-Term Illness Certificate¹

Confirmation of a short term absence from work due to minor illness is a matter to be addressed between an employer and an employee directly. The CMA believes such an absence does not require physician confirmation of illness and represents an inefficient use of scarce health care resources. Similarly, confirmation of student absence from an educational institution for short term minor illness is not a medically necessary service.

Most minor illnesses are self-limiting and do not require the intervention of a physician. In many cases, physicians are asked to provide confirmation of illness certificates after the fact. Attendance to a physician should occur only if the illness requires medical diagnosis, education or intervention.

If an employer, educational institution or other third party requests an illness confirmation certificate for a short-term minor illness that would otherwise not have required medical attention, the party requesting such confirmation should recognize that the provision of this service is an uninsured service for which physicians are entitled to compensation.

If an illness requires attendance for medical diagnosis, education or intervention, and a

request for an illness confirmation certificate accompanies the visit, a physician can view the confirmation certificate request as a third party request for information. The physician's office policy regarding payment for third party information requests can then be invoked at his or her discretion.

¹ See related policies:

The Canadian Medical Association. *Code of Ethics*. Ottawa: CMA; 2004.

Canadian Medical Association. *Third-party Forms: The Physician's Role*: Ottawa: CMA; Update 2010. Canadian Medical Association. *The Physician's Role In Helping Patients Return to Work After an Illness or Injury*. Ottawa: Update CMA: 2010.