



Termination Letter

Rationale

This tool will provide the elements that are necessary to terminate a patient-physician relationship so that the physician can discharge a patient and not be accused of abandonment.

- When a physician and patient do not have a satisfactory relationship, it may be necessary to withdraw from the patient's care.
- Habitual non-compliance with physician's recommendations may be a reason to terminate care. The noncompliance should be documented in the chart, but does not need to be detailed or repeated in the letter.
- Physicians should document telephone conversations, follow-up letters, and any other attempts to establish a satisfactory physician-patient relationship.
- If a decision is made to terminate, a letter should be sent both certified and regular mail, and a follow-up letter should be sent within two weeks if there is no response from the patient.
- Normally, the date would be 30 days from the expected delivery of the letter. However, if your specialty is scarce in the region or if there is only a limited supply of alternative caregivers in the area, you may wish to consider a longer period to allow the patient to find another caregiver. Further, if the patient is currently in the midst of a medical crisis, discharge is not recommended until the immediate crisis is resolved, if that is possible.

Rationales and the tools are not legal advice and are not meant to substitute for medical judgment. You may have other tools, systems or protocols in your practice which may make this tool, or a part of it, unnecessary. Further, the tool, or parts of it, may not be applicable to your specialty or practice. You should use or adapt the tools only if appropriate for your practice. You should always consult your own legal counsel for current legal advice as laws and regulations may change.

Termination of Care

Dear *[patient's name]*:

This letter shall serve as notice that I am withdrawing as your personal physician. After *[insert the exact date]*, I will no longer be responsible for your medical care.

I suggest that you place yourself under the care of another physician. To give you time to make those arrangements, I will continue to be available to attend you until *[insert exact date as above]*.

[Normally, the date would be 30 days from the expected delivery of the letter. However, if your specialty is scarce in the region or if there is only a limited supply of alternative caregivers in the area, you may wish to consider a longer period to allow the patient to find another caregiver. Further, if the patient is currently in the midst of a medical crisis, discharge is not recommended until the immediate crisis is resolved, if that is possible.]

This period of time should give you an ample opportunity to select a physician of your choice. I will forward your medical records to the physician you choose upon your authorized request. I request that you, or the physician of your choice, inform me in writing upon the transfer of your care to his or her services.

Very truly yours,