

Request for medical/sick note: Letter to employer

Note: The below content can be cut and pasted, and modified to suit the individual physician.

Dear Employer,

One of your employees visited me to obtain a medical note to satisfy your company's absenteeism policy.

Employers requiring employees to provide medical notes for missed time puts an added burden on the health-care system.

Sick people – who otherwise wouldn't see a doctor – spread germs to others in physician office, walk-in clinic and emergency department waiting rooms. Other impacts include the person seeking a note limits the time available to see sick patients and the physician spends more time each day on paperwork – both decrease time spent on direct patient care.

I am seeking your support to help alleviate an unnecessary pressure on the health-care system by changing your policy. Remove the requirement for your employees to obtain a medical note for missed time. In most cases, the best remedy for a patient with an isolated illness (i.e., gastrointestinal virus, influenza or common cold) is to stay home, rest and drink fluids. Visiting a doctor's office or an emergency room for a medical note does not complement their recovery.

The request for a medical note is a non-insured service, not funded by Medical Services Insurance. I find it difficult to charge the patient for a requirement demanded by the employer.

If you continue to require a physician to authorize an employees' absenteeism, I will require your employees to supply a written request from your organization for the medical note. Upon providing the service I will invoice your company \$_____ per medical note. This is a standard practice to fulfill non-medically necessary services for third-party organizations.

As Canadians we are lucky to have our health-care system, but the ability to access its services in a timely fashion is a growing problem. Health-care providers, business operators, governments and individuals must work together to ensure its sustainability. I hope you will consider changing your current absenteeism policy to help reduce the unnecessary burden on our health-care system and improve access for all Nova Scotians.

Sincerely,

PHYSICIAN SIGNATURE