

BC Health Regulators Annual Report 2020/21

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In addition to ongoing leadership and coordination around shared issues for regulatory practice, the past year saw BC Health Regulators (BCHR) serve as a hub and resource to member colleges as they navigated significant new challenges.

COVID-19 response

BCHR provides the framework for collaboration and information sharing between BC's health regulatory bodies and is well-positioned to support a consistent and aligned approach between the colleges in response to COVID-19. Early in the pandemic, BCHR established a line of communication with the Office of the Provincial Health Officer to inform the recommendations and information that each college shared with registrants.

The regular BCHR meetings provided an effective forum for the colleges to share and learn from their responses to new issues and needs. Topics included:

- Enabling temporary emergency registrations and making changes to standards and requirements for registrants
- Responding to practice inquiries
- Adapting regulatory activities normally conducted in person (e.g., site reviews and examinations)
- Addressing emerging regulatory issues (e.g., virtual care provided in BC by out-of-province health professionals)
- Developing guidance, protocols and standards for post-COVID practice
- Providing supports for staff working from home
- Meeting legislated requirements (e.g., annual reports, AGMs, audits)
- Assessing financial impacts of the pandemic on colleges
- Advancing other priority projects during a pandemic

Communications leaders from the member colleges also held regular meetings to collaborate, share information and resources, and align messaging where possible.

Regulatory Modernization

In August 2020, the provincial government released its final recommendations for the modernization of the health profession regulatory framework, which have implications for all health profession regulatory colleges in BC. BCHR and its member colleges have engaged in discussions with the Ministry of Health and submitted ideas and thoughts on how to update the *Health Professions Act* in response to the recommendations for regulatory modernization.

In alignment with modernization recommendations, two proactive amalgamations were successfully completed:

- On August 31, 2020, the College of Podiatric Surgeons of BC was amalgamated with the College of Physicians and Surgeons of BC.

- On September 1, 2020, the BC College of Nursing Professionals amalgamated with the College of Midwives of BC to form the new BC College of Nurses and Midwives.

Additionally, the four colleges that regulate BC's oral health professionals began discussions toward the formation of a new College of Oral Health Professionals that will oversee all six regulated oral health professions: certified dental assistants, dental hygienists, dental technicians, dental therapists, dentists, and denturists.

Cultural Safety and Humility

BCHR continues to support collective efforts between the colleges to uphold the Declaration of Commitment to Cultural Safety and Humility, signed with the First Nations Health Authority (FNHA) on March 1, 2017. Much of this work is spearheaded by BCHR's Cultural Safety and Humility Task Force. In the past year, activities have included:

- Conducting a survey to capture and document the cultural safety and humility activities taken by individual colleges.
- Publishing [Three years in: A report on the achievements since signing the Declaration of Commitment to Cultural Safety and Humility](#) (PDF).
- Hosting a presentation by Diana Clarke, Director, Cultural Safety & Humility at First Nations Health Authority (FNHA), to provide an overview on FNHA's cultural safety and humility strategy and discuss ways to support the strategy.
- Delivering a half-day education symposium for all college staff members around their organizations' continued commitment to cultural safety and humility.
- Initiating a project to develop a common framework for colleges to ensure cultural safety and humility education for their registrants. The project includes establishing entry-level cultural safety and humility competency standards for entry-level registrants and those coming into BC; and providing support for the maintenance of cultural safety and humility competencies in current practicing registrants.

BCHR's focus on cultural safety and humility has gained increased prominence and urgency related to broader provincial efforts to identify and address systemic issues that affect the health and wellness of Indigenous peoples.

Racism in health care

BCHR and its member colleges welcomed the investigation launched by the BC Ministry of Health into Indigenous-specific racism in BC health care and responded to requests for information by the investigation team, led by Dr. Mary Ellen Turpel-Lafond. BCHR had the opportunity to hear about the outcomes of the investigation from Dr. Turpel-Lafond upon the release of her report [In Plain Sight: Addressing Indigenous-specific Racism and Discrimination in B.C. Health Care](#). Since then, BCHR members have been able to further refine their planned actions and strategies in support of the report's recommendations.

More broadly, BCHR and member colleges also disseminated statements in support of the global movement to end racism and discrimination against Black and Indigenous communities and all people of colour.

Communications

BCHR communications activities increased significantly in 2020/21 to support organizational needs. This included:

- Launching a refreshed BCHR website to accommodate updated content and enable timely posting of relevant news posts that can be shared by the member colleges
- Providing enhanced communications support to BCHR and member colleges including:
 - Media monitoring
 - Developing common messaging and statements for use by for BCHR members on key issues
 - Developing shared communications templates, FAQs and other materials in support of college communications around regulatory modernization recommendations
 - Working with the Provincial Health Office to develop, prepare and share communications messaging and materials around the COVID-19 vaccination strategy for use by member colleges

Other activities

BCHR continued to offer its *Governance 101* education session to orient Board members to the colleges' regulatory functions, as well as its *Chair as Facilitator* course in support of college Board and Committee Chairs.

About BCHR

BC Health Regulators (BCHR) brings all 19 health profession regulators – known as [health regulatory colleges](#) – in British Columbia together, providing an administrative and organizational foundation for collaboration between the colleges. Our shared mandate is to serve and protect all British Columbians, ensuring regulated health care providers deliver qualified, safe, and ethical care to their patients and clients.

Respectfully submitted,



Cynthia Johansen, MAL, MSc
Chair, BCHR