

BC Health Regulators Annual Report 2022/23

February 28, 2023



BC Health Regulators (BCHR) provides the framework for collaboration and information sharing among BC's health profession regulators, known as regulatory colleges. Over the past fiscal year, BCHR member colleges continued to support each other to fulfill our individual roles as health profession regulators, collaborate on a range of new and emerging issues, and collectively advance priority initiatives that benefit the regulatory system as a whole.

Regulatory modernization

The ongoing modernization of the province's health regulatory framework requires BC's health regulators to plan and adapt their operations in alignment with government direction. The work to modernize health profession regulation is guided by [Recommendations to modernize the provincial health profession regulatory framework](#), released in 2020.

College amalgamations

On September 1, 2022, four of BC's regulatory colleges amalgamated to create the [BC College of Oral Health Professionals](#) (BCCOHP). The new organization brings together the former College of Dental Hygienists of BC, College of Dental Surgeons of BC, College of Dental Technicians of BC, and College of Denturists of BC to serve as the sole regulator for 16,000 oral health professionals in BC.

BCCOHP is the third of five organizational amalgamations to be completed as part of regulatory modernization. The BC College of Physicians and Surgeons and the BC College of Nurses and Midwives both underwent amalgamations in 2020.

New legislation

On November 24, 2022, the new [Health Professions and Occupations Act](#) (HPOA) received Royal Assent. While this means the Act is now a law of the Province of British Columbia, BC's health profession regulatory colleges will continue to operate under the current [Health Professions Act](#) until the new Act comes into force.

HPOA contains important changes to the way regulatory colleges fulfil their mandate to serve and protect British Columbians, including transformed governance, oversight, complaints and discipline processes.

BCHR has provided a forum for ongoing communication with the Ministry of Health, enabling colleges to better understand the implications of the new legislation and the preparatory work that lies ahead. BCHR is providing joint planning and communications supports to the colleges. BCHR has also been encouraged to continue its collaborative work in areas relevant to the HPOA, such as with regulatory practices related to Indigenous Cultural Safety, Humility and Anti-Racism.

Indigenous Cultural Safety and Humility

Regulators continue to share and collaborate on work that advances their efforts to uphold the [Declaration of Commitment to Cultural Safety and Humility](#) signed with the First Nations Health Authority (FNHA) on March 1, 2017. Notable work for 2022/23 includes:

Shared practice standard work

Eleven BC health profession regulatory colleges have adopted a new Indigenous Cultural Safety, Humility and Anti-racism Standard of Practice, based on a practice standard co-developed by the BC College of Nurses and Midwives and the College of Physicians and Surgeons of BC. Of the 11 regulatory colleges, 10 circulated to their respective registrants a common survey on the Standard, which will assess current attitudes/beliefs and identify what supports are needed to implement the Standard. The colleges will be reviewing the results in the coming months. The College of Physical Therapists of BC has invited other colleges to participate in its work to develop an education curriculum for registrants based on the ICSH standard.

ICS&H education for colleges

BCHR continued to support the development of ICS&H awareness and knowledge among staff at all colleges through a one-day facilitated symposium on Building Anti-racism Allyship Skills.

Support for Indigenous board and committee members

The colleges continue to collectively support Indigenous leadership in health regulation governance and decision-making through a central community of practice for board and committee members who self-identify as Indigenous. This group consists of 13 members who met seven times over the last year.

Indigenous Engagement Group

BCHR supported the development of a new working group that will support its members in their journey to regulate in a manner that is culturally safe. The group consists of 13 Indigenous registrants and public members who hold positions on BC health regulatory boards and committees. They will engage with various health regulatory colleges to provide their Indigenous perspectives, thoughts and feedback. This is a new initiative, and at the time of writing, the group had met once.

Partner engagement

BCHR provides opportunities through the year for college members to learn about and participate in partner-led work. This has included:

- Learning about BC's new *Anti-Racism Data Act* and working with the BC First Nations Health Authority (FNHA) to develop consistent approaches in the collection of Indigenous identity data.
- Learning about FNHA's partnership with Health Standards Organization (HSO) to develop the BC Cultural Safety and Humility Standard, which will guide organizations to address indigenous-specific racism and build a culturally safe health care environment.
- Learning about work underway to help create a culturally safe and appropriate complaints process, presented by the chair of the Complaints Working Group responding to the *In Plain Sight* report.

- Learning from ICS&H advisers about the Safe Spaces Project, aimed at ensuring that board and committee spaces are safe for its Indigenous members and that support is provided while they experience colonial processes and structures.

COVID-19 response

BCHR continued to serve as a hub for communication between government and the colleges regarding the implementation of COVID-19 public health orders affecting regulatory colleges and their registrants. BCHR developed communications materials to support member colleges in sharing relevant information and guidance from the Provincial Health Officer (PHO) with registrants and the public. It also supported joint planning among the colleges to operationalize PHO requirements.

Central supports for board and committee education

BCHR continues to offer its *Governance 101* education session to help orient board members to the colleges' regulatory functions, as well as its *Chair as Facilitator* course to support college Board and Committee Chairs in their roles. Both workshops are offered twice yearly. Last year, 57 people attended in total.

BC Patient Advisory Network (BC-PAN)

BCHR supports the [BC Patient Advisory Network \(BC-PAN\)](#) to bring the public voice and perspective to multiple health regulators in the province. Last fiscal year, BC-PAN members provided their perspectives about college amalgamations, communication from a health care provider to a patient/client, and expectations for virtual care. In addition, BC-PAN's feedback was sought on the accessibility and effectiveness of various communications resources for the public.

New BCHR leadership role

In acknowledgment of BCHR's value in leading and coordinating initiatives of interest to all regulators, member colleges have endorsed the creation of the new role of BCHR Executive Director (ED). In this part-time leadership position, the ED will provide strategic leadership and governance support, working collaboratively with BCHR's administrative, communications and finance teams. At the fiscal year-end, recruitment was underway.

Respectfully submitted,



Cynthia Johansen, MAL, MSc
Chair, BCHR