



College of Physicians and Surgeons of British Columbia

Communications Briefing Note

Registration and Licensing

College position

The College's overriding interest is the protection and safety of patients. The primary function of the College is to ensure that physicians are qualified, competent and fit to practise medicine.

Key messages

- The College has legislated registration requirements that must be met before an applicant can obtain a licence to practise medicine in British Columbia.
- The College's registration and licensing process is robust and fair. This high level of scrutiny is what members of the public expect from a regulator to ensure that British Columbians receive the best medical care.
- The College is not responsible for access and supply of physician resourcing across the province.

Background

Before granting registration and issuing a licence to a physician, the College carefully reviews an applicant's credentials including education, training and relevant practice experience. The College also checks an applicant's character references and health status, and carefully considers any outstanding investigations, disciplinary actions or practice restrictions from other jurisdictions to ensure that only qualified, competent and ethical physicians are granted registration and issued a licence to practise medicine. Physicians who are registered with the College are referred to as registrants.

In order to apply for registration, all applicants must:

- satisfactorily complete and submit an application online through the Medical Council of Canada's Application for Medical Registration portal
- provide a certificate of professional conduct from the regulatory or licensing authority in each jurisdiction where the applicant has held medical licensure, dated within 60 days from the intended date of practice in BC
- complete a criminal record check authorization form
- provide reference letters

- meet the College's English language proficiency requirements

Primary-source verification of qualifications and documents is a fundamental part of credentialing. All qualifications and documents submitted by applicants must be verified by the source organization. To carry out primary-source verification, the College relies on the completion of official forms and certificates issued by the source organization and sent directly to the College. The College also relies on the services of the Physicians Credentials Registry of Canada for verification of an applicant's medical degree and other basic credentials.

Physicians who do not meet all of the requirements for obtaining registration in the full class for independent practice may be eligible for provisional registration, which permits them to practise medicine with limits and conditions granted by the Registration Committee.

Background check

All applicants who may work with or have unsupervised access to children or vulnerable adults must undergo a criminal record check (CRC). This CRC must be completed every five years, when there is a change in class of registration, or when a registrant has been charged and/or convicted of an offence.

Applicants and registrants undergoing a CRC may also be required to provide fingerprints. The requirement for fingerprinting, and the query parameters for determining who should undergo them, is based upon the federal RCMP's Canadian Criminal Real Time Identification Services (CCRTIS) policy.

CCRTIS changed their query parameters for determining who would undergo fingerprinting in August 2010 in order to uncover sexual offences where a record suspension (formerly a pardon) has been granted.

The search requires applicants who have the same combination of gender and date of birth to undergo fingerprinting to verify their identity. The vast majority of those fingerprinted will not have a suspended sexual offence; however, fingerprinting remains a necessity as it eliminates the possibility of an offender changing their name to circumvent a criminal record. Currently only British Columbia and Alberta require fingerprints upon a legal name change which results in the records for these individuals continuing to be associated.

There are fees associated with fingerprinting. These fees are set and collected by individual municipalities and their police, whether RCMP or municipal. The College does not provide reimbursement for the cost of fingerprinting.

Reference

- College website: [Registration and Licensing](#)
- Flow chart: [General/Family Practitioners](#)
- Flow chart: [Specialists](#)