A message from the registrar

Dear physician,

On behalf of the Board and all of the medical and professional staff who work at the College, I would like to welcome you as an applicant to the College, and wish you the very best as you proceed through the application process and launch your medical career here in British Columbia.

About 150 years ago, physicians were granted the opportunity to self-regulate their profession. This proud tradition is a privilege, not a right, and it carries with it a big responsibility. As registrants of the College, all physicians share this responsibility.

Every year, the College is in touch with registrants about regulatory matters that affect their practice: in January when they renew their licence; when we distribute our electronic newsletter, the College Connector six times per year; when registrants attend one of our educational workshops; or participate in an accreditation or assessment program. For most registrants, these are the only points of contact they have with the College throughout their professional lives.

Some registrants will become more involved with the College. As a professionally led regulatory body, much of the work of the College is done by committees comprised of practising physicians. The College has a governing board with 10 physician members and five public members, as well as 14 statutory committees. All registrants are encouraged to vote during board elections, or they may choose to run for a board position, participate on a committee, or work as one of our quality assurance program assessors.

A very small number of registrants will be involved in a complaint matter, which can be very stressful. It is important to know that the College favours an educational or remedial approach to addressing complaints—seeking to understand the circumstances surrounding the event, and identifying opportunities to ensure a similar situation doesn’t happen again. The College typically receives 1,000 complaints per year.

If you are granted registration, we hope you will stay informed about the work and activities of the College. This orientation you are about to participate in has been developed to provide you with a broad overview of who we are and what we do—and will give you a good sense of the resources available to you. After you have read the manual, you will be required to complete a brief online survey confirming your participation in this orientation.

Once again, welcome! I invite you to contact us at any time if you have a question or a concern.

Sincerely,

Heidi M. Oetter, MD
Registrar and CEO
How does professionally led regulation work?

Professional regulation

Professional regulation is granted by society on the understanding that professionals will exercise their authority in the public interest.

In British Columbia, there are 26 regulated health professions governed by 23 colleges under the Health Professions Act, and one under the Social Workers Act.

The 26 health professions are incorporated under the Society Act and collectively are referred to as the Health Profession Regulators of BC Society. The purpose of the society is to collaborate on the development of common approaches to core regulatory functions such as registration and licensing, handling complaints from patients, quality assurance activities, and the development of professional standards.

Health Professions Act

The role and authority of the College of Physicians and Surgeons of British Columbia is governed by the Health Professions Act and the Bylaws made under the Act.

All College registrants are expected to know and adhere to the Health Professions Act, College Bylaws and the College’s Professional Standards and Guidelines.

Other legislation

Registrants should also be familiar with other relevant legislation that governs their practice.

- Regulations
- Bylaws

Professional standards and guidelines

The College develops Professional Standards and Guidelines to assist registrants in meeting high standards of medical practice and conduct. The topics addressed focus on specific issues that are relevant to the practice of medicine.

Did you know?

There are 26 self-regulated health professions in BC governed by 23 colleges.

- College of Chiropractors of BC
- College of Dental Hygienists of BC
- College of Dental Surgeons of BC
- College of Dental Technicians of BC
- College of Denturists of BC
- College of Dietitians of BC
- College of Licensed Practical Nurses of BC
- College of Massage Therapists of BC
- College of Midwives of BC
- College of Naturopathic Physicians of BC
- College of Occupational Therapists of BC
- College of Opticians of BC
- College of Optometrists of BC
- College of Pharmacists of BC
- College of Podiatric Surgeons of BC
- College of Psychologists of BC
- College of Registered Nurses of BC
- College of Registered Psychiatric Nurses of BC
- College of Speech and Hearing Health Professionals of BC
- College of Traditional Chinese Medicine Practitioners and Acupuncturists of BC
- BC College of Social Workers
Our mandate

Regulation of the medical profession is based on the foundation that the College must act first and foremost in the interest of the public. The primary function of the College is to ensure that registrants are qualified, competent and fit to practise medicine. The College administers processes for responding to complaints from patients and for taking action if a registrant is practising in a manner that is incompetent, unethical or illegal. The College also develops standards for ethical practice, and oversees a number of quality assurance activities to ensure registrants remain competent throughout their professional lives.

Our mission

Serving the public by regulating physicians and surgeons.

Our values

The College has a legislated duty to serve and protect the public. It must establish and administer registration, inquiry and discipline procedures that are transparent, objective, impartial and fair.

TRANSPARENT
- Regulatory processes and policies are clear, accessible and applied consistently
- Information about the mandate and work of the College is readily available and easy to understand
- Relevant information about registrants and accredited facilities is accessible to the public
- Public is involved in regulatory proceedings and policy development

OBJECTIVE
- Regulatory decisions are evidence-based and rationale is clearly explained and defensible
- Board and committee membership is diverse, reflective of the public, and inclusive of a broad range of opinion, perspective, qualification and experience

IMPARTIAL
- Regulatory processes and decisions are unprejudiced and free of bias
- Board and committee members identify and address perceived or real conflict of interest in advance of proceedings
- All points of view are heard and considered

FAIR
- Regulatory processes and proceedings are conducted according to established rules of order and the law
- All individuals are treated equally with dignity, courtesy and respect, and without discrimination

Who
does the work of the College?

Board
A board of 10 peer-elected physicians and five members of the public appointed by the Ministry of Health govern the College. The College Board controls and administers the College’s affairs in accordance with the Health Professions Act, Regulations and Bylaws. Specifically, the Board is required to:

- set strategic direction and empower management
- evaluate performance measures
- shepherd resources
- account to the public through the legislature, stakeholders and registrants

The College is governed by a board that is made up of:

- 10 elected physicians
- five members of the public appointed by the BC Ministry of Health

Committees
The College has 10 statutory committees made up of board members, medical professionals and public representatives who review issues and provide guidance and direction to the Board and the College staff, ensuring a well-rounded and equitable approach to regulation.

Registrar and College staff
The daily operations of the College are administered by the registrar and other medical and professional staff.

Each of the following core areas is led by a member of the senior management team:

- Communications and Public Affairs
- Complaints and Practice Investigations
- Diagnostic Accreditation Program
- Legal Services
- Library
- Health Monitoring
- Non-Hospital Medical and Surgical Facilities Accreditation Program
- Operations and Administration
- Physician Practice Enhancement Program
- Prescription Review Program
- Professional Medical Corporations
- Records, Information and Privacy
- Registration
How does the College grant registration to physicians?

The College has legislated registration requirements that must be met before a physician can obtain a licence to practise medicine in British Columbia. Applicants who meet all of the requirements of their class of registration and have paid the applicable fees may begin independent medical practice within their scope.

CRIMINAL RECORD CHECK

All new registrants of the College are required to consent to the Ministry of Justice’s criminal record check as part of their application process. Criminal record checks are conducted thereafter on a five-year cycle for all registrants, or at any time a registrant’s class of registration changes. Sometimes there is an additional fingerprinting requirement. Additionally, if a registrant is charged with or convicted of a relevant or specified offence(s) at any time subsequent to the criminal record check, s/he must report the charge or conviction to the College without delay. The registrant must then provide the College with a new signed Consent to a Criminal Record Check form found on the Ministry of Justice website.

CERTIFICATE OF PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

All new registrants of the College must provide an original certificate of professional conduct from all jurisdictions where they currently hold or have held a licence for medical education or to practise medicine. If a registrant practises outside of British Columbia, s/he is required to provide a certificate of professional conduct directly from that jurisdiction’s medical regulatory authority before s/he commences practice in British Columbia. If a registrant practises in a jurisdiction where there is no medical regulatory authority (e.g. volunteer work), s/he is required to have the medical director leading the team provide a letter indicating whether or not there are any issues that the College needs to be aware of.

In practice, a registrant should advise the College immediately if there is an outstanding issue (e.g. a complaint against him/her, or being named in a coroner’s inquest). If there are no issues, a registrant can start practising in BC prior to the College receiving a certificate of professional conduct from the other jurisdiction.

Registrants who regularly travel to another jurisdiction to practise multiple times in a year may be eligible to provide a certificate of professional conduct by March 31 of each year from that other jurisdiction. Registrants should contact the College if they regularly travel to other jurisdictions to practise.

Request a certificate of professional conduct from the College here.
Renewing your licence each year

All physicians registered with the College must complete a comprehensive questionnaire about their practice and pay a renewal fee on or before February 28 or 29. Those who neglect to complete the process by the deadline are subject to penalties and may have their registration suspended. Physicians cannot practise medicine, prescribe or charge for services rendered without being registered with the College. Upon completion of this process, the registration status is updated in real time and displayed on the College website.

Completing the questionnaire

The annual licence renewal process is conducted online through the College website. Registrants are required to log in to their account to complete the process using their CPSID number and a strong password.

The College is mandated to collect information about registrants, some of which is available to the public—such as contact information, qualifications and disciplinary actions. This information is initially gathered upon registration, and is updated annually through the licence renewal process. The questionnaire also requires registrants to describe their practice, and attest to certain things such as their enrolment and compliance with continuing medical education requirements of either the Royal College of Physician and Surgeons of Canada (RCPSC) or the College of Family Physicians of Canada (CFPC).

Notification of the licence renewal process is provided by email to all registrants in late December and early January each year.

Information collected from registrants during the annual licence renewal process is stored and accessed according to British Columbia’s Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act.

Keeping contact information current

Registrants of the College are required to keep their contact information up to date at all times. Business contact information can be updated during the annual licence renewal process or at any time throughout the year by logging in to the College website. Only College registrants are authorized to access their online profiles and make changes to their contact information.

Note: The College collects email addresses from registrants with the express understanding that email addresses are not disclosed to the public, and only communication related to the College’s regulatory mandate is distributed electronically. Under no circumstance does the College provide its email distribution list to individuals or outside agencies, including the government of British Columbia.
Medical corporation permits

Medical corporations ensure that the practice of medicine is fully and completely controlled by registered physicians who remain responsible for the quality of care provided. Applications for medical corporation permits must be submitted to the College for review and approval. A medical corporation permit renewal application and permit renewal fee is required each year at the time of licence renewal.

Professional liability protection

All registrants who provide medical services must maintain professional liability coverage or protection through the Canadian Medical Protective Association (CMPA), or through a BC-licensed company that provides coverage of at least C$10 million and extends to all areas of practice, or through the Canadian federal government coverage under the Treasury Board Policy on Legal Assistance and Indemnification.
International medical graduates (IMGs)

International medical graduates registered in the provisional class are permitted to practise medicine with specific limits and conditions granted by the Registration Committee, including the requirement to have both a sponsoring organization and a supervisor approved by the College. A provisional registrant is required to complete Canadian qualifying exams within a specified time period, or s/he may be eligible to participate in a comprehensive workplace assessment to advance to the full class of registration.

Provisional class sponsorship and supervision requirements

Following initial registration in the provisional class, the provisional registrant's supervisor must provide reports to the College, the sponsoring agency and the registrant at three months, 12 months and thereafter, annually. The report must contain evidence attesting to the registrant's competency and professionalism. The registrant should be apprised on a regular basis of his/her performance and be provided with opportunities for response.

If a provisional registrant's supervision is withdrawn due to competency concerns, registration is cancelled.

If a provisional registrant's supervision is withdrawn for reasons other than competency concerns, and an alternate supervisor is not identified within seven days, registration is cancelled.

If a provisional registrant's sponsorship is withdrawn at any time, registration is cancelled.

Provisional class locum policy

A new registrant in the provisional class who is initially registered to complete a locum must have a locum position for a minimum of three months in duration.

A current registrant in the provisional class requesting additional locum tenens experience(s), in addition to their primary practice location, must seek initial approval from his/her sponsor and then, subject to requested documentation being provided to the College, may be approved for such locum services by the College on a case-by-case basis.

It is the provisional registrant’s responsibility to notify the College prior to leaving British Columbia for any work conducted in another jurisdiction. The College must also be notified prior to any extended absence from the province, generally two months or longer.
**GENERAL TIME FRAME FOR WRITING CANADIAN QUALIFYING EXAMS:**

### GENERAL PRACTITIONERS

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>TIME FRAME</th>
<th>QUALIFICATION REQUIRED</th>
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<tr>
<td>Within three (3) years of being registered with the College</td>
<td>Obtain licentiate of the Medical Council of Canada (LMCC) or United States Medical Licensing Examination (USMLE)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Within five (5) years of being registered with the College</td>
<td>Obtain certification with the College of Family Physicians of Canada (CFPC)</td>
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### SPECIALISTS

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<th>TIME FRAME</th>
<th>QUALIFICATION REQUIRED</th>
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| Within one (1) year of being initially registered with the College | 1. Submit application and appropriate documentation of postgraduate training for assessment of eligibility to sit Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada (RCPSC) certification exams:  
  a. Practice Eligibility Route (PER) A, or  
  b. PER Route B (available to psychiatrists only)  
  2. Confirm route chosen to RCPSC certification |
| Within five (5) years of being initially registered with the College | 1. Obtain licentiate of the Medical Council of Canada (LMCC) or United States Medical Licensing Examination (USMLE)  
  2. Obtain certification with Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada (RCPSC) |

**Note:** Specialists who have been certified by the American Board of Medical Specialists may have the option of a summative assessment after two (2) years of practice in British Columbia if PER route B is not available.
Job shadowing/preceptorships

The College supports the practice of job shadowing or observing by individuals who are enrolled as students of health professions regulated by the *Health Professions Act*, and who wish to observe as part of their curriculum. However, these individuals must be registered and licensed by the regulatory college that governs them, and provide evidence to the physician that they are registered and licensed at the time of the job shadowing or observing.

Accordingly, registrants should not permit individuals who are not enrolled in a regulated health profession educational program* to:

- be present during patient interviews or diagnostic or clinical examinations
- be present in the operating room or during surgical procedures
- be allowed access to patient medical records

*This does not include individuals who are employed in specific roles in registrants’ offices and who are members of the office staff.

Any registrant who is supervising another physician must verify the supervisee’s registration and licensure with the College. This includes clinical trainees and preceptorships.
Medical record keeping

Whether in paper or electronic format a registrant’s medical records must contain comprehensive documentation of the clinical care provided to a patient, including:

- documentation of patient history, complaints and symptoms, examinations, and laboratory and imaging reports
- copies of emails or other communication with the patient, related to clinical care and follow-up, including documentation of telephone consultations or prescriptions
- copies of operative procedures, consultation reports, discharge summaries and other information created by other physicians or health-care practitioners which is relevant to the patient’s medical care

The statutory requirements for medical records are defined in sections 3-5 to 3-8 of the Bylaws made under the Health Professions Act. The Bylaws state that the medical record must:

a. be in English
b. explain the reason for the visit
c. provide the history and record of any examination, investigations, diagnoses, treatments, and medications, and
d. include a follow-up plan

Unlawful practice

The College’s public protection mandate includes ensuring that people who are not registered or licensed with the College do not provide any service or treatment that is considered the “practice of medicine.” The practice of medicine is a designated health profession under the Health Professions Act. Only physicians and surgeons who are licensed and registered with the College (known as College registrants) are authorized to practise medicine in BC.

Individuals who claim to be College registrants, and/or who offer medical services without being licensed and registered with the College are engaging in unlawful practice.
Keeping current in practice

The College fully endorses the principle that continuing medical education (CME) and continuing professional development (CPD) are essential components of professionalism.

Each year at the time of licence renewal, registrants are required to attest that they are enrolled and compliant with the CME requirements of either the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada (specialists) or the College of Family Physicians of Canada (general/family practitioners).

DID YOU KNOW?

Many organizations can offer continuing medical education (CME) or continuing professional development (CPD) credits as long as their program meets the requirements and is approved by either the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada or the College of Family Physicians of Canada.

General/family practitioners

General/family practitioners are assigned a five-year Mainpro+® cycle through the College of Family Physicians of Canada (CFPC). During each five-year Mainpro+ cycle, general/family practitioners must complete and report a minimum of 250 total credits, at least 125 of which must be certified. A minimum of 25 credits must be earned and reported per year.

- Learn more about the Mainpro+ program of the College of Family Physicians of Canada.

Specialists

Specialists are required to complete a minimum of 25 credits in each section of the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada’s Maintenance of Certification (MOC) Program during a five-year MOC cycle. The annual minimum of 40 credits and an overall cycle minimum of 400 credits are still applicable.

- Learn more about the MOC Program of the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada.

Note: Some registrants may maintain their continuing medical education through one of the recognized American Board of Medical Specialties (e.g. allergy and immunology, dermatology). As long as certification with a recognized American Board of Medical Specialties is maintained, registering and maintaining credits with the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada is not required.

scope of practice

Registrants of the College must remain current within their scope of practice. Currency means physicians must be actively practising for a minimum of 24 weeks over three consecutive years for a total of 960 clinical practice hours.

Note: Clinical practice consists of direct patient care for the purpose of making a diagnosis and/or treatment and includes diagnostic specialties such as pathology and radiology. Research, teaching, administration or medical regulation does not constitute clinical practice.

ARE YOU CURRENT IN YOUR SCOPE OF PRACTICE?

For example, if you are a GP who has only practised emergency medicine in the last three years, and not community-based medicine, you are only current for emergency medicine and must contact the College for guidance on what you need to do before returning to community-based practice.
Courses offered by the College

The College sponsors and hosts a variety of conferences, workshops and courses to assist physicians in their lifelong learning endeavors.

Topics include:

- boundaries, ethics and professionalism
- prescribing for chronic pain
- medical record keeping
- searching skills for finding high quality clinical evidence

Learn more about professional development and upcoming events sponsored by the College.

Professional standards and guidelines

The College develops Professional Standards and Guidelines to assist physicians in meeting high standards of medical practice and conduct. The topics addressed focus on specific issues that are relevant to the practice of medicine. Physicians are encouraged to become familiar with the College's Professional Standards and Guidelines, available on the College website.

A **standard** reflects the minimum standard of professional behaviour and ethical conduct on a specific topic or issue expected by the College of all registrants. Standards also reflect relevant legal requirements and are enforceable under the Health Professions Act, RSBC 1996, c.183 (HPA) and College Bylaws under the HPA.

A **guideline** reflects a recommended course of action established based on the values, principles and duties of the medical profession. Registrants are expected to exercise reasonable discretion in their decision-making based on the guidance provided.

The Professional Standards and Guidelines serve as a benchmark against which the conduct of individual registrants is measured. Registrants seeking specific advice or clarification on any of the documents or other professional matters should contact the College and make an appointment to speak with a member of the College's registrar staff.

**REMEMBER**

It is your responsibility to be aware of and familiar with the College’s Professional Standards and Guidelines.

Currency and...
Disciplinary information about physicians

Registrants who are subject to formal discipline by the College may face restrictions, which limit or prohibit their ability to practise medicine for a period of time. They may also be required to pay costs associated with the investigation into the complaint, as well as any legal fees paid by the College. Disciplinary actions are released to the media and are published on the College website. When a registrant is disciplined by the College it remains on his/her record forever.

Health Professions Review Board

Under the Health Professions Act, the provincial government has established the Health Professions Review Board (HPRB) as an independent tribunal tasked with reviewing the thoroughness of the College’s investigation and the reasonableness of the decision.

Patients who are dissatisfied with the College’s review and adjudication of their complaint have the right to submit the matter to the HPRB for further evaluation and review of the College’s action and conclusions within 30 days of receipt of the College’s adjudication letter.

- Learn more about the CMA’s Code of Ethics
- Learn more about the College’s complaints process
- Learn more about the College’s Professional Standards and Guidelines

Complaints and discipline

The College receives around 1,000 complaints against registrants per year. All complaints are investigated to ensure a just and fair process for both complainants and physicians.

Complaints brought to the College are initially triaged and categorized into three broad categories:

- clinical performance
- professional conduct
- boundary violations

Every complaint filed with the College is reviewed by a panel of the Inquiry Committee.

The Inquiry Committee is a standing committee under the Health Professions Act. The work of the Inquiry Committee begins with a review of the material obtained through the investigation of a complaint to determine the next course of action. This may be remedial; or it may involve the registrant agreeing to specific undertakings and/or a reprimand; or, if the matter is serious enough, it may be referred to the Discipline Committee.

What should you do if you receive a complaint letter?

1. Open the letter immediately. Do not leave it sitting there ominously.
2. Do not despair. Receiving a complaint is not uncommon and the matter is often resolved by way of remediation or focused education, rather than punishment.
3. If you require legal support, contact the Canadian Medical Protective Association (CMPA) as soon as possible.
4. Complete and submit your written response to the complaint allegations, along with the requested documentation as soon as possible.

Note: The Health Professions Act imposes strict timelines within which a complaint must be resolved. As a result, the College expects registrants to give complaints their immediate attention. Open complaints must be reported to the College on certificates of professional conduct upon request. Although delays in the process may occur, it is in a registrant’s best interest to provide a response along with other requested documentation as soon as they are able.

DID YOU KNOW?

On average, registrants can expect to receive between zero to four complaints during their careers. The most likely response to a complaint by the College is remedial and won’t lead to formal disciplinary action. The College strives to apply a standard of reasonableness in its decision making, and expects physicians to embrace constructive feedback about their conduct and clinical performance. A complaint represents an opportunity for reflection.

TIPS FOR AVOIDING COMPLAINTS

- Be clear – provide clear explanations of your clinical opinion and the need for sensitive exams.
- Be polite – show common courtesy and respect towards patients.
- Seek consent – keep your relationship strictly professional and always ask for a patient’s consent.
- Maintain detailed records – maintaining comprehensive records of patient interactions helps to support your response to a complaint.
Physician monitoring

Registrants have an ethical, professional and legal responsibility not to practise if they are impaired by mental or physical health diagnoses, including addictions. The College encourages registrants to self-report such conditions.

Registrants with a mental or physical health diagnosis, which may affect their ability to practise medicine, may be required to either withdraw from practice for a period of time, or participate in a program of regular monitoring of their condition.

During an absence from practice for health reasons, registrants’ status in the register is changed to temporarily inactive and absences of more than two months can result in a refund of licence renewal fees.

Registrants have a similar responsibility to be aware of their serological status with respect to blood-borne communicable diseases, especially if they are engaging in exposure-prone procedures, and to comply with the guidelines of the Blood Borne Communicable Diseases Committee.

Getting the support you need

Registrants and their families who need support or advice when dealing with personal or professional challenges have access to the Physician Health Program (PHP), an independently operated program, which receives funding from the Doctors of BC and the BC Ministry of Health. The PHP holds information in confidence, except as required by law, and will assist anonymous callers.

Obligations to other health-care providers

All registrants have a legal obligation under the Health Professions Act to notify the College if they believe a colleague is impaired or unfit to practise medicine.

They have an additional legal duty to report any other health professional they believe is impaired or unfit to practise to their respective college.

Taking care of your health

If you are struggling with a mental or physical health diagnosis, including addiction, you are encouraged to self-report your condition to the College.

If you are impaired in any way, you have a legal and ethical obligation not to practise medicine.

You will be asked health-related questions on your Annual Licence Renewal Form, which you are required to answer honestly.

Quality
assurance

The College has four quality assurance programs to ensure that every registrant in the province is practising to the highest professional standards and that all of BC’s diagnostic and private medical/surgical facilities are accredited.

- Diagnostic Accreditation Program (DAP)
- Non-Hospital Medical and Surgical Facilities Accreditation Program (NHMSFAP)
- Physician Practice Enhancement Program (PPEP)
- Prescription Review Program (PRP)

Accreditation programs

British Columbia has 57 accredited private medical and surgical facilities, 284 private diagnostic facilities and 393 public diagnostic facilities. Registrants must have College approval to provide services in accredited facilities outside of hospitals.

DIAGNOSTIC ACCREDITATION PROGRAM (DAP)

The Diagnostic Accreditation Program (DAP) establishes, evaluates and monitors performance standards, provides education and consultation in diagnostic health care, and administers 23 accreditation programs covering the five diagnostic services: diagnostic imaging, laboratory medicine, neurodiagnostics, pulmonary function and polysomnography.

The scope of the DAP includes all public and private diagnostic facilities, irrespective of their funding source.

NON-HOSPITAL MEDICAL AND SURGICAL ACCREDITATION FACILITIES PROGRAM (NHMSFAP)

The Non-Hospital Medical and Surgical Facilities Accreditation Program (NHMSFAP) requires private facilities to maintain high standards of practice. The program establishes accreditation standards to ensure the delivery of quality health services. The 700 physicians who work in private facilities across the province must be granted privileges by the College.

All facilities, regardless of the scope of services they provide, undergo a comprehensive review prior to being awarded a term of accreditation. To ensure public protection, if a facility does not meet accreditation standards, it may be required to close until the deficiencies are corrected.

Note: Registrants who are planning to practise at a non-hospital medical/surgical facility should advise their College file manager.
Physician Practice Enhancement Program

The Physician Practice Enhancement Program (PPEP) is a collegial program that proactively assesses and educates registrants to ensure they meet high standards of practice throughout their professional lives. The goal of the program is to promote quality improvement in medical practice by highlighting areas of excellence and identifying opportunities for professional development.

PPEP is comprised of three assessment components:

1. **Peer assessment of recorded care**
   This component is based on the premise that an experienced physician can review another physician’s procedures and medical records and effectively assess the quality of care being provided.

2. **Physician multi-source feedback assessment**
   This component consists of a questionnaire which is distributed to patients, physician colleagues and non-physician co-workers. Topics covered in the questionnaire include medical competency, communication skills, and general office management.

3. **Office assessment of premises and processes**
   This component reviews the operational management of a physician’s medical office. It includes topics such as: disinfection and sterilization of medical instruments; medical record storage and retention; infection control and prevention; drug storage; and response to patient emergencies.

At the conclusion of all three modules, an assessment report with benchmarks for similar practices is shared with the registrant. Depending on the assessment outcomes, a registrant may be required to participate in remedial or educational activities to enhance his/her practice. The program is run on an eight-year cycle. Registrants who are over the age of 70 or who work in isolated or unsupported practice settings may be assessed on a more frequent basis.

Prescription Review Program (PRP)

The Prescription Review Program (PRP) is a practice quality assurance activity, which assists physicians with the challenging task of prescribing opioids, benzodiazepines and other potentially addictive medications. The work of the program is informed by the PharmaNet database.

Registrants are expected to employ suitable vigilance when prescribing opioids for chronic non-cancer pain.

Certain drugs require the use of a **duplicate prescription**.

Learn more about the College's standard: *Safe Prescribing of Drugs with Potential for Misuse/Diversion.*
Library

The College library is a prime source of reliable clinical information to support registrants in practice. Each year, registrants contact the library over 12,000 times and receive responses from College librarians to over 1,500 in-depth clinical inquiries.

The library offers:

- professional librarians who search literature, compile reference lists and find useful resources
- virtual library—access to clinical decision support tools, e-books, e-journals, multimedia on the web
- physical library—access to 100 free printed journal articles per year, and all books, which are sent and received by mail for free
- access to Canada QBank and other exam preparation resources for international medical graduates
- one-to-one instruction and group workshops on searching literature for high quality clinical evidence

Cites & Bytes e-newsletter

*Cites & Bytes* is a monthly e-newsletter with a list of articles to assist registrants in staying current with new developments in medicine. Articles are selected from authoritative, peer-reviewed journals on topics of current interest.

**ADDRESS**
300–669 Howe Street
Vancouver BC V6C 0B4
Telephone 604-733-6671
Toll Free 1-800-461-3008
Fax 604-737-8582
Email medlib@cpsbc.ca

**HOURS**
Monday to Friday
8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
Communications

College website – www.cpsbc.ca

The College website was designed to address the needs of users, where information is current, clear and easy to locate. The physician directory is by far the most frequently accessed section of the site. The directory extracts information in real time from the College’s registrant database, including business addresses, phone and fax numbers, and details about qualifications. All regulatory actions are published on registrants’ online profiles.

From the home page you can access:

- news and announcements
- the physician directory
- the College Connector and other publications
- the library
- professional standards and guidelines
- information about the College’s quality assurance and accreditation programs
- requirements for registration
- information about continuing medical education courses and workshops
- access to the secure login area for registrants
- relevant links to other organizations and resources

College Connector

The College Connector is the official publication of the College and is sent electronically to every registrant six times a year. The objective of this e-newsletter is to provide updates on College matters, including quality assurance programs, professional standards and guidelines, and new developments affecting the College and the practice of medicine. The College Connector also alerts registrants when pertinent legislation is enacted or amended. Case studies from the Inquiry Committee are included to educate and inform, and disciplinary actions are published to fulfill the College’s legislated mandate.

Note: While registrants are eligible to opt out of receiving emails from the College about educational events and workshops where fees apply, they may not opt out of receiving emails related to regulatory matters, including the College Connector.

Annual Report

Each year, the College publishes an Annual Report, which is submitted in accordance with provincial legislation to the BC Ministry of Health.

The Annual Report provides an overview of the College’s activities during the year including statistics relating to registration and complaints, and financial statements. The chairs of each of the College’s committees are required to submit a written report of their specific activities and accomplishments to the Board.

TIP
Add the College to the “safe sender” list on your email account to ensure successful delivery of correspondence from the College.

DID YOU KNOW?
The College collects email addresses from registrants with the express understanding that email addresses are not disclosed to the public, and only communication related to the College’s regulatory mandate is distributed electronically. Under no circumstance does the College provide its email distribution list to individuals or outside agencies, including the government of British Columbia.

Answering your questions

The College’s deputy registrars are available to support registrants in practice. Contact the College to discuss a concern related to ethics and professionalism, a standard or guideline, registration status, statutory compliance or any other topic covered in this orientation guide.

CONTACT THE COLLEGE
300–669 Howe Street
Vancouver BC V6C 0B4
Telephone 604-733-7758
Toll Free 1-800-461-3008
Fax 604-733-3503
Email Form www.cpsbc.ca/contact-us
ORIENTATION GUIDE FOR APPLICANTS

MEDICAL COUNCIL OF CANADA (MCC)
The MCC is responsible for the development and provision of the examinations which form the basic standard for qualification to practise medicine in Canada. Completion of all MCC examinations leads to recognition as a Licentiate of the Medical Council of Canada (LMCC). For more information regarding the Medical Council of Canada’s evaluating and qualifying examinations, contact:

Medical Council of Canada Attention: Exam Department 2283 St. Laurent Blvd, Suite 100 Ottawa ON K1G 5A2 Canada
Telephone 613-520-2240 Fax 613-248-5234 Email service@mcc.ca www.mcc.ca

COLLEGE OF FAMILY PHYSICIANS OF CANADA (CFPC)
Founded in June 1954, the College of Family Physicians of Canada (CFPC) is the national medical association which supports family physicians in providing quality health care to their patients. The CFPC is the accreditation body for certification in family medicine and administers the appropriate examinations. For more information regarding certification in family medicine, contact:

College of Family Physicians of Canada 2630 Skymark Avenue Mississauga ON L4W 5A4 Canada
Telephone 905-629-0900

Toll Free 1-800-387-6197 Fax (toll free) 1-888-843-2372 Email info@cfpc.ca www.cfpc.ca

CANADIAN RESIDENT MATCHING SERVICE (CaRMS)
The Canadian Resident Matching Service (CaRMS) works in conjunction with Canadian medical schools and students to provide two services: an electronic application service and a computer match for entry into graduate medical training programs. For information on the resident matching service, contact:

Canadian Resident Matching Service (CaRMS) 171 Nepean Street, Suite 300 Ottawa ON K2P 0B4 Canada
Telephone 613-237-0075 Toll Free 1-877-227-6742 Email help@cars.ca www.cars.ca

HEALTH MATCH BC
A comprehensive, no-fee health-care professional recruitment service established by the BC Ministry of Health for the province of British Columbia, Canada. Health Match BC 200–1333 West Broadway Vancouver BC V6H 4C6 Canada
Telephone 604-736-5920 Toll Free 1-877-867-3061 Fax 604-736-5963 Email welcome@healthmatchbc.org www.healthmatchbc.org

CANADIAN INFORMATION CENTRE FOR INTERNATIONAL CREDENTIALS
The Canadian Information Centre for International Credentials provides information for IMGs currently overseas and IMGs who are already in Canada. www.cicic.ca

HEALTH PROFESSIONS REVIEW BOARD
The Health Professions Review Board (HPRB) is an independent tribunal tasked with reviewing registration decisions. If an applicant is dissatisfied with the Registration Committee’s decision, s/he can submit the matter to the HPRB for further evaluation and review of the College’s action and conclusions within 30 days of receipt of the decision letter from the Registration Committee. For more information or to submit an appeal, contact:

Health Professions Review Board PO Box 9429 Stn Pro Govt Victoria BC V8W 9V1 Telephone 250-953-4956 Toll Free 1-888-953-4986 Fax 250-953-3195 www.hprb.gov.bc.ca

DOCTORS OF BC
A provincial division of the Canadian Medical Association (CMA) and formerly known as the British Columbia Medical Association (BSCMA), Doctors of BC is a voluntary democratic association that advocates on behalf of its physician members. The association serves to help standardize the medical community in Canada and is governed by the Society Act and bylaws of the BSCMA. www.doctorsofbc.ca

FOUNDATION FOR ADVANCEMENT OF INTERNATIONAL MEDICAL EDUCATION (FAIMER) / WORLD DIRECTORY OF MEDICAL SCHOOLS (WDMS)
FAIMER is a non-profit foundation committed to improving world health through education. FAIMER was established in 2000 by the Educational Commission for Foreign Medical Graduates (ECFMG®). In partnership with ECFMG, FAIMER promotes excellence in international health professions education through programmatic and research activities. FAIMER provides access to the World Directory of Medical Schools (WDMS).

www.faimer.org

GPSC PROVINCIAL RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION STEERING COMMITTEE (PRRSC)
The PRRSC works collaboratively to create, influence and support province-wide, locally sensitive initiatives to enhance access to primary care. It brings together representatives from divisions of family practice, the GPSC, provincial and municipal governments, health authorities, educational and training institutions, professional medical associations and rural coordinators. The committee aims to understand, align, and optimize efforts to retain family doctors in BC, and recruit new physicians to meet current and future primary care needs.

Email randrcommittee@doctorsofbc.ca

www.practiceinbc.ca

GUIDELINES AND PROTOCOLS ADVISORY COMMITTEE (GPAC)
GPAC is an advisory committee of the Medical Services Commission and a joint collaboration between Doctors of BC and the BC Ministry of Health. GPAC supports both the effective utilization of medical services and high quality, appropriate patient care, by developing evidence-based, user-friendly clinical practice guidelines known as BC Guidelines. BC Guidelines are focussed on circumstances in BC and are available online and in a free mobile app.

www.bcguidelines.ca

www.bcguidelinesapp.ca