



Health Professions and
Occupations Regulatory
Oversight Office

2024-2025 ANNUAL REPORT





**Health Professions and
Occupations Regulatory
Oversight Office**

September 2025

The Honourable Josie Osborne Minister of Health
PO Box 9050 STN PROV GOVT
Victoria BC
V8W 9E2

Dear Minister Osborne,

It is my pleasure to present the first annual report of the Health Professions and Occupations Regulatory Oversight Office in accordance with section 486 (1) of the *Health Professions and Occupations Act* (HPOA).

Also included is the annual report from the Director of Discipline, Benson Cowan, about his activities in establishing the Health Professions Discipline Tribunal, in accordance with section 485 of the HPOA.

This is the Office's first annual report and covers the period of August 15, 2024, to March 31, 2025.

Sincerely,

Sherri Young
Superintendent
Health Professions and Occupations Regulatory Oversight Office
Province of British Columbia

Territorial Acknowledgement

We are grateful to work on the homelands of First Nations across all of what we now call British Columbia (B.C.). We thank the caretakers of these lands and honour their long tradition of supporting the health and safety of their people. We are specifically grateful to the ləkʷəŋən (Lekwungen) Songhees, Xwsepsum, W̱SÁNEĆ, Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish Nation), xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), and selílwitlh (Tsleil-Waututh) Peoples, on whose territories our offices are located. We recognize and respect the distinct rights, cultures, and histories of all Indigenous Peoples—First Nations, Métis, and Inuit—who live in B.C.

We understand that land acknowledgements must be more than symbolic. They are a call to action—a reminder of our

responsibility to dismantle colonial systems, uphold Indigenous rights, governance, languages, and cultures. We acknowledge that these systems have excluded, harmed, and failed Indigenous communities, and that these impacts continue today. Our work is guided by the principles of reconciliation and equity.

The Office recognizes that making change is an ongoing journey, and we remain committed to advancing policies that support culturally safe, equitable, and rights-based health care for all.

May this acknowledgement guide us toward accountability, healing, and meaningful reconciliation in all aspects of our work.

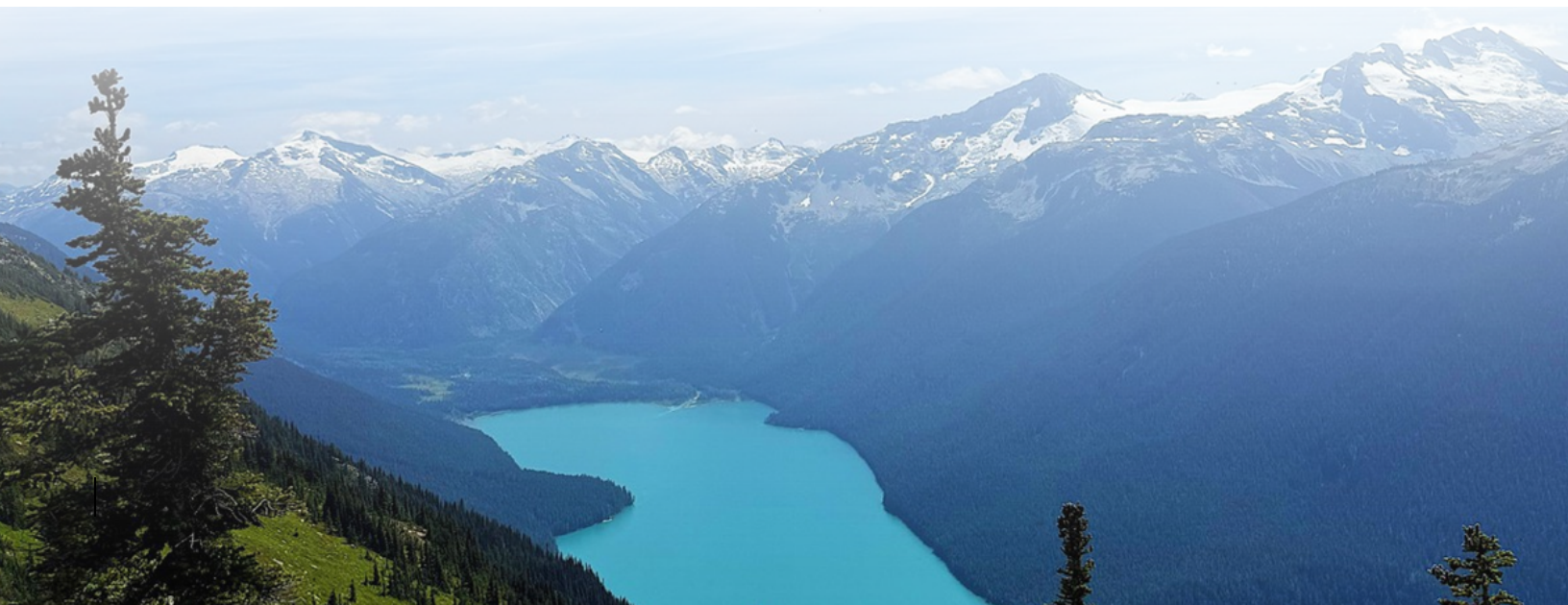


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Message from the Superintendent



There have been significant changes in health professional regulation over the past several years in British Columbia which has impacted health professionals and the regulatory colleges in particular.

The role health professionals play in our lives is immeasurable; people trust them to be there when needed to provide the best care possible. Having a modern regulatory framework grounded in the public interest while meeting our obligations under the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* is essential to ensure that our health system is more holistic and built around those it serves. For this to be successful we must also ensure we recognize, acknowledge and respect the unique cultures, histories, rights, laws, and governments of different Indigenous Peoples—First Nations, Inuit and Métis.

This report covers my first six months as Superintendent where my focus has been to establish the Office and start gaining insights and perspectives that will help inform our work. Those I have met with, particularly in the health regulatory colleges, have experienced significant change. It is remarkable to see their resolve and continued commitment to improving the regulation of health professionals in the province. I am grateful for the candor, interest, honesty and support that I have witnessed in these conversations and I look forward to collaborating more in the future while broadening engagement with others to learn more and build new relationships.

As a small independent office of government, we rely on support from within the Ministry of Health and across government for specific services. My thanks to colleagues for their support and willingness to work with us and find solutions to enable us to be as efficient as possible in our future operations while maintaining our independence.

To be ready for when the legislation comes into force, I have focused on building a strong, passionate and dedicated team, as well as establishing our physical and online presence. Our first Strategic Plan was created as a starting point to help define who we are, outline our strategic priorities and the outcomes that will shape our work going forward.

My team and I are dedicated to help make a difference in the lives of people: everyone that we serve and work with. I am committed to grounding all our work in the Guiding Principles of the *Health Professions and Occupations Act* and creating a staff culture that puts people at the centre of everything that we do. Knowing that every individual is unique in their culture, background and lived experience, my team is dedicated to respecting these differences, in all the interactions and processes that we create. It is a privilege to be given this responsibility.

Sincerely,



Sherri Young,

Superintendent
Health Professions and Occupations Regulatory Oversight Office
Province of British Columbia

Context and history

The regulation of health professionals in B.C. has undergone extensive modernization over the last decade.

The first step government took in modernizing the regulation of health professionals was to amalgamate health regulatory colleges. The first amalgamation of health regulatory colleges began following amendments to the *Health Professions Act* in 2017 and was completed in 2024, reducing the number of health regulatory colleges from 22 to six.

In April of 2019, the Minister of Health appointed Harry Cayton, a leading expert in the field of professional regulation, to lead an independent inquiry into the health regulatory colleges. The report, *An Inquiry into the Performance of the College of Dental Surgeons of British Columbia and the Health Professions Act*¹ (the Cayton Report), found that, “A complete overhaul of the way health professional regulation is conceived and delivered is required.”

The Cayton Report’s recommendations led to the then-Minister of Health establishing a multi-party steering committee (formed by Adrian Dix, Minister of Health, with Norm Letnick, health critic of the Official Opposition, and Sonia Furstenau, health critic and house leader of the third party) to look at modernizing health profession regulation in B.C.

After numerous rounds of consultation, the Steering Committee released its final report² to modernize the province’s health profession regulatory system.

This report laid out the recommendations that the Ministry of Health used as the foundation for new legislation known as the *Health Professions and Occupations Act* (HPOA) which was passed by the legislature in November 2022.

¹ An Inquiry into the performance of the College of Dental Surgeons of British Columbia and the Health Professions Act, Harry Cayton, 2018
<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/health/practitioner-pro/professional-regulation/cayton-report-college-of-dental-surgeons-2018.pdf>

² Recommendations to modernize the provincial health profession regulatory framework, Steering Committee on Modernization of Health Professional Regulation, 2020
<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/health/practitioner-pro/professional-regulation/recommendations-to-modernize-regulatory-framework.pdf>



The Ministry of Health developed the HPOA in alignment with the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act*³ and was informed by the *In Plain Sight* report⁴ that had exposed widespread discrimination and Indigenous-specific racism in the health-care system.

Two of the recommendations of the report gave rise to the Health Professions and Occupations Oversight Office (the Office) as well as the Health Professions Discipline Tribunal (Discipline Tribunal). These recommendations were:

1. Create an oversight body to oversee health regulatory colleges and ensure they are acting in the public interest.
2. Create a new adjudication body, separate from health regulatory colleges, to make discipline decisions regarding regulated health professionals.

The HPOA received Royal Assent in November of 2022 and sections of it

were brought into force to stand up the Office in October of 2023.

The HPOA, which governs our office, is one of the first pieces of legislation to be passed in the B.C. legislature after the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* was brought into force. It was informed by the *In Plain Sight* report especially as it recognizes discrimination as a form of misconduct or actionable conduct and requires anti-discrimination measures to be taken by health professionals and those that regulate them. The HPOA includes provisions that support and promote the awareness of reconciliation with Indigenous people and the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People*. There are also provisions in the HPOA for those who have been subject to sexual assault, sexual misconduct or discrimination, that provide support services such as support workers and counselling services.

³ *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act*, 2019 <https://www.bclaws.gov.bc.ca/civix/document/id/complete/statreg/19044>

⁴ *In Plain Sight: Addressing Indigenous-specific Racism and Discrimination in B.C. Health Care*, Mary Ellen Turpel-Lafond, 2019 <https://engage.gov.bc.ca/app/uploads/sites/613/2020/11/In-Plain-Sight-Full-Report-2020.pdf>

Health regulatory colleges the **Office** oversees



British Columbia College of Nurses & Midwives

BCCNM regulates:

- Licensed Practical Nurses
- Midwives
- Registered Nurses (including Nurse Practitioners)
- Registered Psychiatric Nurses



British Columbia College of
Oral Health Professionals

British Columbia College of Oral Health Professionals

BCCOHP regulates⁵:

- Dental Hygienists
- Dentists
- Dental Technicians
- Denturists



College of
COMPLEMENTARY HEALTH
PROFESSIONALS OF BC

College of Complementary Health Professionals of BC

CCHPBC regulates:

- Chiropractors
- Massage Therapists
- Naturopathic Physicians
- Traditional Chinese Medicine Practitioners and Acupuncturists

⁵ Certified Dental Assistants, though regulated by BCCOHP, are not regulated professions under the HPOA.



College of Health and Care Professionals of BC

CHCPBC regulates⁶:

- Audiologists
- Dietitians
- Hearing Instrument Practitioners
- Occupational Therapists
- Opticians
- Optometrists
- Physical Therapists
- Psychologists
- Speech Language Pathologists

College of Pharmacists
of British Columbia



College of Pharmacists of British Columbia

CPBC regulates:

- Pharmacists and Pharmacy Technicians



College of Physicians and Surgeons of British Columbia

CPSBC regulates⁷:

- Physicians and
- Podiatric Surgeons

⁶ Psychotherapists have been designated and will be regulated November 2027 by CHCPBC.

⁷ Clinical Perfusionists, Respiratory Therapists, Radiation Therapists, and Medical Laboratory Technologists have been designated and will be regulated November 2027 by CPSBC.

About the Office

The Health Professions and Occupations Regulatory Oversight Office is an independent office of government created under the HPOA.

The Health Professions Discipline Tribunal (Discipline Tribunal) is housed within the Office and is led by the Director of Discipline. This independent body resolves, hears, and decides on conduct and competence allegations against health professionals.

Although some provisions of the HPOA to stand up the Office and the Discipline Tribunal are in force, the Office is not authorized to oversee health regulatory colleges or conduct disciplinary hearings until April 1, 2026 when the HPOA comes fully into force.

The Office was created to protect the public from harm and discrimination by providing independent, trusted and responsive oversight of the regulation of health-care professions and occupations in British Columbia.

The role of the Office is to:

- Provide advice and recommendations to the Minister of Health to:
 - **IMPROVE** the performance of health regulatory colleges consistent with the HPOA
 - **IDENTIFY** legislative and regulatory improvements to the HPOA
 - **APPOINT** health regulatory college board members through a merit-based process
 - **ASSESS** if a profession or occupation should be recommended for designation and regulation under the HPOA by the Minister
- Promote and ensure adherence to the HPOA's Guiding Principles
- Promote consistency and best practices among health regulatory colleges
- Share information and records that are in the public interest
- Lead an effective, accessible and independent tribunal after an investigation of a complaint against a regulated health-care professional and then determine disciplinary action

Getting started

Since its inception in October of 2023, significant work has been done to stand up the Office beginning with the appointment of the first Superintendent, Sherri Young, who started in August of 2024. The first Discipline Tribunal director, Benson Cowan, started work in September of 2024.

During the first six months, physical space needs were identified in Vancouver and Victoria with temporary space being secured, the website was launched and

hiring staff began. Getting to know the health regulatory college registrars and meeting with health regulatory college boards and professional associations was also a key priority.

The first Strategic Plan was developed to define the priorities and identify the outcomes that will guide the Office's work once operational. The plan is grounded in the Guiding Principles of the HPOA and protecting the public from harm and discrimination.

Vision

We uphold public safety in the delivery of health care in B.C. by providing oversight of health regulatory colleges, conducting investigations, determining disciplinary actions and recommending improvements.



Role

OVERSIGHT

The Office evaluates the performance of the overall health profession regulatory system, including regulatory colleges, through audits, reviews, and investigations.

COMPLAINTS

The Office accepts complaints about the operations of regulatory colleges, or how health professions and occupations are regulated.

BOARD APPOINTMENTS

The Office works to create well-functioning diverse boards that act in the public interest by using merit-based evaluations and recommending board members to the Minister.

DESIGNATION ASSESSMENTS

The Office assesses whether a group of health practitioners should be regulated and makes recommendations to the Minister.

HEALTH PROFESSIONS DISCIPLINE TRIBUNAL

This independent body resolves, hears, and decides conduct and competence allegations against health-care professionals fairly, effectively and in the public interest.

People

The Office, as an independent office of government, shares the B.C. Public Service corporate values of curiosity, service, passion, teamwork, accountability and courage.

The Office strives to be people-focused and dedicated to continuous improvement. This means:

- culturally safe, accessible and inclusive;
- conscious of upholding Indigenous Specific Anti-Racism measures;
- fair, efficient, and timely;
- evidence-informed, transparent and accurate.

To support the people of British Columbia that we serve, the focus has been on building a strong team dedicated to taking on this new responsibility. As of March 31, 2025, the Office hired six full-time staff.

Recognizing the differences in the work to build and establish the Office from being fully operational and fulfilling our mandate, the team worked together to create strategic outcomes to focus our work over the next two years. The intent is to capture the work needed to build the office while being focused on its primary responsibilities over the long term. A continuous improvement lens is being embedded, and it is expected the strategic outcomes will evolve and improve over time as we move forward towards operationalizing our responsibilities under the HPOA.



Strategic outcomes

Merit-based board appointment process that results in diverse and unbiased boards acting in the public interest

In preparation for broader consultation, the Office conducted preliminary engagement with the health regulatory colleges. This was done to inform future development of policies and procedures for board appointments. Sections of the HPOA are already in force to allow the Office to recommend the appointment of board members to the Minister prior to April 1, 2026. There are also transition provisions in the HPOA available should they be needed.

Oversight activities and processes into health regulatory colleges are conducted in a collaborative, safe, transparent manner and prioritized based on risk to the public

The Office engaged other offices with oversight responsibilities, including those who work in professional regulation, along with government ministries, to learn from their experiences such as the Ombudsperson's Office, British Columbia Health Regulators, Health Professional Review Board, Office of Professional Governance, and many other policy, digital, financial and legal experts within government.

The Office's complaints process is accessible, transparent, efficient and culturally safe

Work began on processes for receiving complaints from the public about health regulatory college governance and their operations, and complaints about the HPOA and its regulations. The process will include offering a web presence for complaints to be submitted and ensuring the systems for receiving complaints are both secure and accessible.

At the same time, work has also begun on building pathways for complaints that do not fall within the office's jurisdiction. Collaboration with other offices has begun to ensure complaints are transferred to the right organization.

Objective, actionable advice is provided to the Minister to determine if it is in the public interest for a health profession or occupation to be designated and regulated under the HPOA framework

Research began to develop criteria for conducting designation assessments. This included analyzing legislative requirements for designation assessments under the HPOA and to identify potential pathways for future engagement and consultation.

The public is aware of the Office, its mandate, actions, recommendations and decisions through clear communication that is timely and transparent

A brochure website was launched in September 2024 to provide a publicly accessible online presence for the Office. Basic information about the Office's role and the legislation which established it is available online. Future iterations of the website will include more functionality and details about our processes to prepare for the Office when it is fully operational.

The Office is resourced to meet its legal mandate

Temporary office space in Victoria and Vancouver was secured, and basic digital infrastructure has been set up. Throughout the fall and spring, we recruited and onboarded new staff and began to arrange for core government services support. These arrangements will allow for the Office to run as efficiently and as cost effectively as possible while maintaining its independence.

The Discipline Tribunal conducts safe and fair hearings

The Office provides administrative support to the Health Professions Discipline Tribunal and shares office space. Please see the appendix for the Tribunal's Annual Report.

Conclusion

Building on the work over the past year, momentum has increased and we continue to develop policies and processes to help us achieve our strategic outcomes in anticipation of being fully operational.

The Office is on track to meet its mandate and open its doors to the public on April 1st, 2026. In doing so, it will help contribute to improving public protection by ensuring health regulatory colleges are focused on patient safety and the public interest, enhancing cultural safety and humility, and improving public trust in the regulation of health professionals in this province.



Operating Budget

The 2024-2025 annual operating budget ending March 31, 2025, for the Office is \$1,187,267.

Expense Type	Actuals
Salaries and Benefits	\$1,158,392
General Office Operating Costs	\$27,875
Total	\$1,187,267



Appendix



**Health Professions
Discipline Tribunal**

2024-2025 ANNUAL REPORT



Health Professions Discipline Tribunal

September 23, 2025

Superintendent Sherri Young
Health Professions and Occupations Regulatory Oversight Office
PO Box 9639 STN PROV GOVT
Victoria BC
V8W 9P1

Dear Superintendent Young,

I am pleased to present the first annual report of the Health Professions Discipline Tribunal in accordance with section 485 of the *Health Professions and Occupations Act* (HPOA).

This report covers the period of Sept 23, 2024, to March 31, 2025.

Sincerely,

Benson Cowan
Director of Discipline
Health Professions Discipline Tribunal
Province of British Columbia
tribunal@hporoo.ca
www.hporoo.ca

Message from Benson Cowan, DIRECTOR OF DISCIPLINE



This annual report covers the early stages of the work to set up the Health Professions Discipline Tribunal.

In trying to understand how best to ensure the Discipline Tribunal will meet its obligations and serve the people of British Columbia effectively and efficiently, I have had many conversations with various interested people and groups. This includes meetings within the Ministry of Health, such as engagements with members of the Health Professions and Occupations Regulatory Oversight Office. I have also consulted with leadership and staff from the six health profession regulatory colleges.

Additionally, I have spoken with health professionals, policy experts, lawyers practicing in the area, and the people who use health-care services; these conversations have been especially helpful, often challenging, and continue to shape our work in establishing a Discipline Tribunal. I am thankful for the interest, enthusiasm, honesty, and the spirit of collaboration that have been consistently present in this work.

The *Health Professions and Occupations Act* (HPOA), in Sections 14 and 15, sets out key principles that guide the Discipline Tribunal's work. I am committed to ensuring the Discipline Tribunal's processes and policies reflect these principles and the underlying goals of our health-care system.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of stylized letters that appear to be 'ABC'.

Benson Cowan,
Director of Discipline
Health Professions Discipline Tribunal
Province of British Columbia

About the Health Professions Discipline Tribunal

The Discipline Tribunal was created under Sections 443 to 451 of the *Health Professions and Occupations Act* (HPOA), which came into effect on October 23, 2023, and provide for the appointment of the Director of Discipline, the Deputy Director of Discipline, Tribunal members, and Tribunal staff.

When the HPOA takes full effect on April 1, 2026, the Discipline Tribunal will become operational. The Discipline Tribunal is responsible for the following:

- Approving some resolutions of disciplinary matters, including resolutions for all sexual abuse cases;
- Reviewing and deciding on requests by a regulatory college to issue a citation which is the formal start of the Tribunal's discipline process;
- Managing all cases where a citation has been issued;
- Conducting hearings in cases that have not been resolved;
- Handling requests for reviews of orders made after a hearing; and,
- Overseeing the regulatory colleges in their publication of disciplinary orders and citations.



Appointment of Tribunal members and Tribunal staff

The Minister of Health appointed Benson Cowan as the Director of Discipline on September 23, 2024.

The Director of Discipline must appoint a full-time Deputy Director of Discipline and part-time Tribunal members, including at least one licenced health professional from each currently regulated health profession. These appointments follow the HPOA and the “Treasury Board Directive 1-24, Remuneration Guidelines for Appointees to Administrative Tribunals and Regulatory Boards” (TB 1/24). TB 1/24 requires each tribunal to develop a remuneration plan that is approved by the appropriate minister. The Minister of Health approved the Discipline Tribunal’s

remuneration plan on March 23, 2025, and it is posted on the Tribunal’s [website](#).

The Tribunal is currently recruiting a Deputy Director of Discipline and part-time Tribunal members.

The Discipline Tribunal will also have a small number of support staff, including a Tribunal manager, two senior case analysts, a Tribunal navigator, and an executive assistant. Recruitment for these positions is underway.

The Health Professions and Occupations Regulatory Oversight Office supports the Discipline Tribunal in human resources, facility management, general administration, and financial systems.

Consultation and engagement

When the HPOA takes full effect, there will be a significant change to the disciplinary process for regulatory colleges, regulated health professionals, and the public. Some of these changes are technical in nature and will require different processes for participants to follow, while others create entirely new powers and requirements for participants. These changes require close collaboration between the Discipline Tribunal and the health regulatory colleges to ensure clear communication on cases. Further engagement with key

partners and interested parties will also be required.

As part of this continuous work, the Discipline Tribunal has met with the staff and leadership of all six health regulatory colleges. On March 18, 2025, the Discipline Tribunal provided the colleges with a consultation memorandum and some draft practice directives which outline the intake process and initial case management phase of the Discipline Tribunal. Further discussions on this and subsequent phases of the Tribunal's processes are ongoing.



Planned Work

The Discipline Tribunal continues to work towards being ready for April 1, 2026.

The Tribunal is focused on the following planned work:

- Completing member recruitment, staffing, and training programs for members;
- Completing internal policies and processes;
- Implementing a case management system and member resource platform;
- Completing procurement for hearing support services;
- Completing practice directives, rules, and a user guide; and,
- Completing the Discipline Tribunal website.

Conclusion

The Discipline Tribunal has worked closely with many key partners and interested parties to prepare for the full implementation of the HPOA. Their support has helped shape efficient, effective, and innovative processes and policies that will guide the work of the Discipline Tribunal. As the Discipline Tribunal begins its work, the commitment to continuous improvement and the principles established in the HPOA will not waver.



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