

Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care

Health Human Resources Strategy Division

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Ministère de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée

Division de la stratégie des ressources humaines dans le domaine de la santé

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Dear College Presidents and Registrars/Executive Directors,

I am writing to follow up on the letter sent to you from the Honourable Dr. Eric Hoskins, Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, on October 4, 2014.

As you know, transparency and accountability are pillars of good governance, relevant in any organization. The public expects Ontario's health professions regulatory system to be accountable and open, transparent and fair. In publicly disclosed mandate letters relating to each ministry, the Premier has stated that the government wants "to be the most open and transparent government in the country".

We have worked successfully in the past to increase transparency in the health professions regulatory system. We have focused on transparency and fairness in registration processes, ensuring that in the assessment of an applicant's qualifications, each College makes its assessment in a way that is transparent, objective, impartial and fair. Together, in keeping with the ministry's mandate, we will work on new transparency initiatives to strengthen Ontario's regulated health professions scheme.

In his letter, the Minister asked each Council and transitional Council to report back on specific measures that you have undertaken and are planning to take, to make transparency a priority objective. Your reports should detail dates regarding work already completed as well as set out timelines for planned or new initiatives and should be provided to me no later than **Monday, December 1, 2014**.

The Minister requested that the transparency initiatives that you describe in your reports should include:

1. How you will strengthen existing measures that the College or transitional Council has in place to enhance transparency; and,

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2. New measures that the Council or transitional Council will develop and implement to increase transparency in College processes, decision-making and information disclosure.

The ministry commends the work on transparency that has already been done by the Advisory Group on Regulatory Excellence (AGRE) and encourages all Colleges and transitional Councils, whether or not directly involved with AGRE, to build on AGRE's work and consider this decision framework when applying transparency principles to your work ahead.

While we believe it is important that a consistent approach be taken regarding the information provided by Colleges and transitional councils, the ministry appreciates that not all Colleges or transitional Councils are the same and may have unique perspectives and approaches on how best to provide this information to the public. We encourage all Colleges and transitional Councils to work collaboratively to ensuring that the public is better informed.

As you move forward, the impact of enhanced transparency on patients, members, applicants and the public should be considered in the development of all College initiatives. A key consideration guiding the work on your transparency initiatives is how patients, using your website, will better understand the role of a health regulatory College, will make better choices about their care, will have more information about the type and quality of care they might expect and who will provide it.

Although there are privacy and legal considerations as to why certain kinds of information should not be provided to the public, colleges are expected to make every effort in providing the public with greater access to information. It is important for the public to understand the context or principles that contributed to decisions to not disclose or the reasons why public disclosure is not within the public interest mandate of the College or transitional Council. There is also an expectation that Colleges be more proactive in helping the public understand their rights under the *Regulated Health Professions Act, 1991* and the 26 health profession Acts.

As you work on proposals for new transparency initiatives, areas considered for this purpose, should include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Expanding member information on the public register through by-law making authorities;
- Increasing the clarity and ease of readily accessible to information provided by the College and that is posted on the College's website, including:
 - the role of Council and statutory committees, including their constitution, functions and decision-making processes, especially in relation to the statutory mandate of Council and the committees;

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- the College's processes relating to registration assessments for applicants and related fees for these assessments;
- the College's processes relating to making new, amending or revoking policies, by-laws and regulations, including, but not limited to, conflict of interest;
- notices of Council meetings and Council meeting materials;
- key services of the College, such as the process to submit complaints.

For those Colleges or transitional Councils that have an inspection program in place, or plan to have one in place in the near future, the Minister, in his letter, set out specific, minimum disclosure requirements relating to the posting of inspection reports, as follows:

- The purpose of the inspection (e.g. routine or non-routine/complaints);
- The results of the inspection;
- The reasons for those results;
- Any deficiencies identified by the inspectors;
- Any conditions that apply.

A College or transitional Council impacted by these requirements should report to the ministry in detail about how your program currently meets, or will meet, these minimum disclosure requirements relating to inspection reports. The ministry also expects a College or transitional Council to consider whether information beyond the Minister's expectations should be made publicly available.

The ministry looks forward to receiving your reports and asks that you post them on your website, if not on the day you provide them to the ministry, then shortly thereafter. The ministry may also post your responses publicly on its website or provide links from its website to your response to enhance transparency on the work being undertaken.

Receiving your reports is the first step to ensuring that the public has the information it needs to make informed choices regarding care. Ministry staff look forward to working with you on these important issues of public significance and would be willing to meet with your respective Executive Committees to discuss these issues further by providing further background and context as required.

If you have any questions about this letter, or if you wish to have staff attend a future meeting of your Executive Committee, do not hesitate to contact John Amodeo, Director,

College Presidents and Registrars/Executive Directors

Health System Labour Relations and Regulatory Policy Branch. John may be reached at 416-212-0873 or john.amodeo@ontario.ca.

Sincerely,



Suzanne McGurn
Assistant Deputy Minister
Health Human Resources Strategy Division

- c: Honourable Dr. Eric Hoskins, Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, MOHLTC
Dr. Bob Bell, Deputy Minister, MOHLTC
Helen Angus, Associate Deputy Minister, Policy and Transformation, MOHLTC
John Amodeo, Director, Health Systems Labour Relations and Regulatory Policy Branch,
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