



College of Physicians and Surgeons of British Columbia

Serving the public by regulating physicians and surgeons

College Connector

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The *College Connector* is sent to every current registrant of the College. Decisions of the College on matters of standards and guidelines are contained in this publication. Questions or comments about this publication should be directed to communications@cpsbc.ca.



College of Physicians and Surgeons of British Columbia

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Registrar's message: putting the College's commitment into action—making cultural safety and humility a top priority for 2021



Mary Ellen Turpel-Lafond's recent investigation has shown that BC's Indigenous patients continue to experience racism and discrimination when seeking care and treatment. The College has made a public commitment to facilitating a swift and meaningful response to the recommendations put forth from Ms. Turpel-Lafond's investigation and continues to look critically at its own operations and processes to ensure the safety and well-being of Indigenous patients.

The College's active journey towards truth and reconciliation began in 2017 with the signing of the [Declaration of Commitment – Cultural Safety and Humility in the Regulation of Health Professionals](#).

At its most recent retreat in October, the College Board spent two days discussing cultural safety and humility and made a steadfast commitment to include it as a core pillar of its 2021–2023 strategic plan.

The following will be priorities in the coming year:

- Develop a practice standard for registrants that explicitly addresses the requirement to provide culturally safe, humble, and responsive care. The new standard will be developed in consultation with Indigenous people and will clearly communicate the College's zero tolerance for racism and discrimination in medical practice.
- Critically examine each step in the complaints process to identify existing barriers to Indigenous people and seek opportunities to make it safer, accessible, and more supportive.
- Invest in resources to ensure that Indigenous people feel safe and supported when participating in the complaints process, including hiring a qualified social worker trained in trauma-informed care to serve as a complaints navigator.
- Launch a significant rebranding process, which includes replacing the College crest, a distinctively colonial symbol, with a contemporary visual identity that clarifies the College's role and reflects its current-day values of inclusivity and accessibility. The rebranding process will take between 12 to 18 months.
- Consistently apply the lens of cultural safety and humility to the College's governance and decision-making by broadening Indigenous membership on the Board and its committees.

- Continue to provide training and education to staff, board and committee members in cultural safety and humility, unconscious bias, and trauma-informed care. This includes requiring certain staff who engage with members of the public to complete the Indigenous Cultural Competency (San'yas) Training Program and facilitating all-staff workshops to hard-wire cultural safety and humility into daily operations and practices.

While improving the complaints process, developing a new practice standard, and applying the lens of cultural safety and humility to the College's operations and governance all represent important steps along the path towards truth and reconciliation, the structural reform necessary to protect Indigenous patients will be an ongoing journey. The College commits wholeheartedly to working with its partners to ensure that 2021 is a year of action towards dismantling racism in the province's health-care system.

There is no doubt that 2020 has been a challenging year on many fronts. Please accept my sincere gratitude for your ongoing commitment to care for BC patients during these turbulent times.

As we approach the winter holiday season, which will certainly be different for many of us, I wish all of you rest and renewal, and continued good health and happiness.

Heidi M. Oetter, MD
Registrar and CEO

Comments on this or any other article published in the College Connector can be submitted to the communications and public affairs department at communications@cpsbc.ca.

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2021 annual licence renewal begins January 1

2021
Annual
Licence
Renewal

Annual licence renewal begins January 1, 2021. Here is what registrants need to know in order to be prepared, including information on new questions related to telemedicine.

Important dates

January 1, 2021: start of annual licence renewal season

February 1, 2021: deadline to complete the Annual Licence Renewal Form and payment of fees

March 1, 2021: penalties applied for late licence renewal or late payment of fees

April 1, 2021: suspension for non-renewal of licensure or non-payment of fees

Retiring or resigning before February 28, 2021

Registrants planning on retiring or resigning can submit a [resignation form](#) before February 28, 2021 to be exempt from the 2021 annual renewal process. Further details about retirement/resignation options can be found [here](#).

New questions for 2021

Telemedicine and virtual care

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been a significant increase in the provision of medical care through telemedicine and virtual care. Telemedicine and virtual care are complementary to in-person care. To gain insight into telemedicine and virtual care and to determine whether updates may be needed to its standards, the College is asking registrants whether they have provided patient care via telemedicine and/or virtually since their last declaration. If yes, registrants will be asked:

- The approximate percentage of their practice time spent providing care in person, via telephone, and via video conference.
- Whether they provide follow-up care in person.
- Whether they provide telemedicine or virtual care for patients outside of BC.
 - If yes, whether they provide this care with a licence issued by a jurisdiction other than BC. Note: If yes, registrants must provide a certificate of professional conduct from the other jurisdiction(s).

Registrant of other regulated profession

Registrants will be asked if they are currently registrants of another regulated profession in the province of BC or in any other jurisdiction. If yes, registrants must provide a certificate of professional conduct from all other regulatory bodies they are registered with. This is to ensure that the College is aware of and can follow up on any relevant regulatory matters.

Prepare documents

- BC driver's licence (for verifying a registrant's identity for the criminal record check)
- Method of payment (credit or debit card)
- Continuing professional development (CPD) cycle date
 - Note: This does not apply to podiatric surgeons
- Health authority letter of reappointment (for verifying hospital privileges)
- Certificate(s) of professional conduct
 - If a registrant has worked in another jurisdiction in the past 12 months and does not have out of province status, or if a registrant has signed undertakings to waive the requirements in accordance with section 25.3 of the [Health Professions Act](#), certificate(s) of professional conduct must be sent directly from the appropriate regulatory body(ies) to the College.

Review contact information

Review and update contact information before January—this will help save time during the renewal process. If there is a change in a registrant's address information throughout the year, they must make the update within 14 days of the effective date of the change.

Schedule time to complete the form

It takes approximately 30 minutes to answer the entire form. As the information collected on the Annual Licence Renewal Form is personal and provides details of a registrant's practice, registrants will be asked to attest that they have completed the form themselves. Medical office assistants or other staff, partners or colleagues are not permitted to complete the form on a registrant's behalf.

Use a computer—the form cannot be completed on a tablet or mobile device

The licence renewal process is best experienced using a PC or Mac. Mobile devices, smart phones, tablets and iPads are not supported. See the [College website](#) for the full technical requirements.

Renewal fee

The 2021 renewal fee of C\$1,715 can be paid in one of three ways online:

- by credit card
- by debit credit card
- by Interac® Online

More details on annual licence renewal can be found [here](#).

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Extensive consultation leads to two new practice standards on boundaries

Practice Standards & Professional Guidelines

The worldwide #MeToo movement brought to light a much-needed conversation about the intersection of sexual misconduct and power, and with it, an indisputable need for change. In addition, recent high-profile cases have demonstrated clearly that sexual misconduct by physicians is occurring, representing the most egregious abuse of power and violation of public trust.

These events motivated the College to look critically at its complaints processes and practice standards to ensure both are supportive of patients, and that requirements set out for registrants are clear and effective.

The review process for developing the new practice standards included multiple steps and spanned over a ten-month period. After initial research (including a literature review and environmental scan) conducted in January 2020, a preliminary consultation was held with key patient advocacy groups to identify appropriate tone and language. The draft standards were reviewed and revised by the Patient Relations, Professional Standards and Ethics Committee, then shared for broader consultation with registrants, the public and health partners including the Ministry of Health, the Canadian Medical Protective Association, the University of British Columbia Faculty of Medicine, Vancouver Coastal Health, the Rural and Remote Division of Family Practice, and external legal counsel.

Feedback from the consultation process led to the development of two new practice standards: [Sexual Misconduct](#) and [Non-sexual Boundary Violations](#). The two new standards have replaced the College's previous *Boundary Violations* practice standard. By identifying requirements in two distinct contexts, the College can clarify expectations and emphasize its zero tolerance for sexual misconduct in the patient-registrant relationship.

Learn more about the consultation process and the new practice standards in [this video](#) (three minutes).

An accompanying [patient education resource](#) has also been published.

The College thanks all those who provided their feedback and is confident that the new practice standards and patient resource reflect a wide range of stakeholder views, are inclusive of the patient voice, and will effectively protect patients.

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Pharmacists are not able to process prescriptions that have been emailed to a patient

DRUG PROGRAMS Update

The College continues to receive expressions of concern from community pharmacists who have received a prescription from a patient, which has been emailed to them from their prescribing physician or surgeon.

Under existing legislation, which sets out expectations for pharmacy practice in BC, the only acceptable prescriptions that a pharmacist can process include:

- a paper prescription with a wet signature from the licensed prescriber;
- a verbal prescription order provided by the licensed prescriber to the patient's pharmacist of choice; or
- a prescription that has been faxed to the pharmacy of the patient's choice by the licensed prescriber.

The College appreciates during these extraordinary times that it is tempting to email a prescription to a patient out of convenience. This is not acceptable. Registrants are reminded that pharmacists have an obligation to comply with their prevailing laws, regulations, and professional standards just as they do. Hoping that the pharmacist might "bend the rules" places the pharmacist in an untenable situation.

There are many patient safety concerns too. Emailing a prescription to a patient is, of course, dangerous as the information contained in that prescription is not always secure on an email server. Additionally, an emailed prescription can be printed out numerous times and may be filled more than once. And, while the pharmacist is taking time to obtain prescriptions by legitimate means, a patient may suffer while having to wait longer to get his or her prescription filled.

Registrants should consider their pharmacist colleagues and their patients first over convenience, and use fax, phone, or mail to convey prescriptions as is required.

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Have your say on a newly published professional guideline: *Custom Orthotics*

Practice Standards & Professional Guidelines

The College has published a new [Custom Orthotics](#) professional guideline outlining its expectations of registrants who wish to sell custom orthotics to patients. The guideline is based on the College of Podiatric Surgeons of BC's recently archived Orthotics Prescribing Guidelines.

In addition to the new *Custom Orthotics* guideline, the current [Promotion and Sale of Medical Supplies and Devices](#) practice standard has been revised to clarify the College's expectations of registrants who choose to sell prefabricated (non-custom) orthotics. Distinguishing requirements for custom and non-custom orthotics will help protect patients from being exploited while preserving a key component of podiatric care.

The draft *Custom Orthotics* guideline was reviewed by the College Standards and Guidelines Working Group (inclusive of two practising podiatric surgeons) then endorsed by the College Board for publication on November 27, 2020.

To assess the guideline's clarity, comprehensiveness, and operability in practice, the College is now inviting feedback from registrants. Registrants can share their feedback through a [short survey](#). The deadline to complete the survey is **December 31, 2020**.

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Seeking feedback on the soon-to-be-launched new and improved College website



The College is enhancing and redesigning its website with an anticipated launch in spring 2021. The goal of the redesign is to create a website that is more user friendly for the public, and easier for registrants, facilities, and applicants to fulfill their regulatory obligations. A key to achieving that goal is ensuring design decisions are based on user research and feedback from key audiences.

Registrant user testing opportunities

To gather feedback from registrants, a user experience testing participant pool has been set up to inform interested registrants of testing opportunities over the next few months.

The participant pool will be the first to be notified of both paid and unpaid testing opportunities. To join the participant pool, sign up [here](#).

Medical office assistants and transcriptionists

There will also be paid and unpaid user testing opportunities specifically geared towards medical office assistants (MOAs) and transcriptionists, as many are frequent users of the College website.

Interested MOAs or transcriptionists can sign up [here](#) to express their interest.

Updating web browsers

The new College website will be hosted on an upgraded platform. As such, some internet browsers will be unsupported on the new website.

Users will need to upgrade or switch browsers if they are currently using Internet Explorer 10 or older. They may also suffer a degraded user experience if they are using an older version of any other browser.

Supported browsers will include Internet Explorer 11, and the most up-to-date versions of Chrome, Firefox, Microsoft Edge and Safari.

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Medical complaint reviewer contract



The College is inviting applications from physicians with broad clinical experience to provide part-time review of medical complaint files (up to 20 hours per week).

Under the direction of the deputy registrar, medical complaint reviewers carry out the mandate of the complaints and practice investigations department to deliver transparent and impartial case review in compliance with College policies and procedures, and in accordance with the *Health Professions Act (HPA)* and College Bylaws.

Working in a collaborative team environment, medical complaint reviewers function as experts in the review and assessment of both clinical and conduct complaint files.

Candidates must:

- possess exceptional writing skills, including the ability to present technical concepts in lay terms and formulate clear and logical reasons in a style that expresses both empathy and a commitment to fairness
- thrive in a high volume, fast-paced environment while maintaining quality and timeliness standards
- work collegially and interact effectively with College staff
- complete complaint reviews and attend meetings with College staff

Interested candidates should send a letter of application and their CV to the director, complaints and practice investigations by February 28, 2021.

Confidential facsimile: 604-733-3503

Email: complaints@cpsbc.ca

All correspondence will be held in strict confidence.

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BLS/ACLS courses for non-hospital facilities privileging applications and medical staff renewal

NHMSFAP Update

Current BLS and ACLS are a requirement for medical staff working in non-hospital facilities. Current is defined as two years from the date of the course.

The policy on [Emergency Training Requirements](#) outlines exemptions and requirements.

Due to the current pandemic situation and to minimize in person group activities, the NHMSFAP will accept online BLS and ACLS courses for the next 12 months. This applies to initial applications as well as renewal for current medical staff.

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Loss or theft of a controlled drug or substance is a reportable incident

NHMSFAP Update

The Non-Hospital Medical and Surgical Facilities Accreditation Program (NHMSFAP) has received reports of loss or theft of a controlled drug or substances (CDS). Facilities are reminded of the College's [Medication Management](#) accreditation standard and the requirement to secure CDS.

Non-hospital facilities should review their medication management policy and procedures to decrease the risk of loss or theft and to ensure CDS are appropriately stored and managed (see MEDS1.4 of the standard).

Loss or theft of a controlled drug or substance is reportable to the NHMSFAP Panel on the [Reportable Incident Form](#). Clinical information may be left blank; however, a summary of events and actions taken must accompany the form. Local law enforcement should also be contacted to determine if a police report needs to be filed.

Any loss or theft must be reported to Health Canada within 10 days. Guidelines to reporting and the required form are available on the Health Canada [website](#).

Information regarding notification (Health Canada, police) must also be included in the summary of events submitted with the patient safety incident form.

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Community spirometry facilities require DAP accreditation

DAP Update

Although spirometry is a simple test and commonly performed in a variety of settings, accurate results depend on careful technique, proper equipment calibration and maintenance. The American Thoracic Society (ATS) and European Respiratory Society (ERS) have recommended several procedures to reduce variability in spirometry test results, including the weekly testing of flow volume measurements and biologic normal subjects.

Under the DAP spirometry quality control (QC) program, the results of these QC procedures, submitted to the DAP twice per year, give an indication of any areas of concern with the spirometer or performance of the tests. This is the avenue for which facilities and physicians performing spirometry and flow volume loops are accredited.

All facilities and physicians performing spirometry and flow volume loops must be accredited by the DAP to perform the service in British Columbia, regardless of their revenue stream or whether they charge for the service or not.

Physicians who are currently performing spirometry or spirometry and flow volume loop testing and are not accredited must contact the DAP at dap@cpsbc.ca for more information about applying for accreditation.

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New and updated PPEP assessment standards



The Physician Practice Enhancement Program (PPEP) has published the following new assessment standards to the College website:

- [*Emergency Preparedness for Staff and Patients in a Pediatric Clinical Office*](#)
- [*Emergency Preparedness for Staff and Patients in an Internal Medicine Clinical Office*](#)

The standards were developed after broad consultation, which included input from program assessors, external stakeholders and health partners.

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Getting to know “doc del”

College LIBRARY

A core activity of the College library is delivery of copies of articles and other documents such as white papers and book chapters to registrants, a service affectionately known as “doc del.”

Occasionally, registrants enquire about “doc del” and library staff are pleased to provide answers to some of those questions:

1. Will the library locate copies of articles for registrants?

The library locates and delivers copies of articles upon request. Almost 20,000 articles were located by library staff in 2019 (more than 63,000 articles were downloaded by staff and registrants using the library website).

2. Is there a limit to the number of articles a registrant can request?

No, registrants can request as many single copies of articles as they like. The first 200 documents per year are free and beyond that are \$3 each. The library has handled requests from one article up to 250 articles at a time. Registrants may download an unlimited number of articles directly from the library website.

3. How quickly are documents delivered?

Turnaround time is routinely within 24 hours, Monday to Friday. With COVID-19, some sourcing is more complicated and can take a little longer. Obscure articles may also take longer, such as articles from nineteenth and early- to mid-twentieth centuries or very highly specialized journals. Requests for numerous documents may also take several days to deliver.

4. What if all the details of an article are not known?

If all the information known is that an article by Smith was published five years ago in a journal with a red cover, library staff can work with that. Registrants should supply whatever details are available and staff will do their best to track documents down. Of course, more accurate details can lead to faster response times.

5. What happens if there is no copy in the library’s collections?

Library staff borrow and lend with Canadian and US medical and academic libraries. Among these libraries are those at NASA, Johns Hopkins University, and the US National Library of Medicine. Their various geographic locations can impact the turnaround time because of time zones. Typically, the library absorbs the cost of locating copies from other libraries.

6. Can registrants request articles on non-medical topics?

Yes, articles on practically any topic can be located. Non-academic formats can be sourced too, such as newspaper and magazine articles.

For assistance with acquiring copies of articles and other documents and for other library support, email the library (medlib@cpsbc.ca) or use these [web forms](#).

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CPD events postponed



All College-sponsored continuing professional development events are postponed until further notice.

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Regulatory actions

- [Yoneda, Bruce Taro – November 19, 2020](#)

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