
NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Health Services

REGULATION OF TWO MORE HEALTH PROFESSIONS STREAMLINED

VICTORIA – B.C. is set to increase accountability for two more health professions with the inclusion of pharmacists and dentists under the Health Professions Act, Health Services Minister George Abbott announced today.

“Previously, many health professions were governed by individual pieces of legislation, and B.C. has worked hard over the past several years to streamline our regulatory process to ensure more consistency and transparency in the health professions in order to best protect patients,” said Abbott. “We have been pleased to work closely throughout this process with the regulatory colleges, including the College of Pharmacists and the College of Dental Surgeons.”

The Pharmacists, Pharmacy Operations and Drug Scheduling Act has been repealed and replaced with two separate acts. As of April 1, the pharmacy profession is regulated under the Health Professions Act while the operation of pharmacy businesses is regulated under the Pharmacy Operations and Drug Scheduling Act. The College of Pharmacists of British Columbia will continue to have responsibility for governing both the profession of pharmacy and the operation of pharmacy businesses.

“We have worked with relevant stakeholders, including registrants, over the last several months to ensure a smooth transition and we continue our focus on ensuring that B.C.’s pharmacists provide safe and effective pharmacy care to help people achieve better health,” said Marshall Moleschi, registrar of the College of Pharmacists of British Columbia.

The College of Pharmacists of BC is responsible for regulating the more than 4,000 pharmacists and 1,000 pharmacies across B.C.

“We are pleased to join other B.C. health professions under the umbrella of the Health Professions Act,” said Dr. Ash Varma, president of the College of Dental Surgeons of BC. “This supports our mandate to ensure British Columbians of professional standards of oral health care, ethics and competence by regulating dentists and certified dental assistants under a modern framework that is common to all regulated health professionals in the province.”

The College of Dental Surgeons of BC, which will transition under the Health Professions Act on April 3, is the regulatory body for the more than 3,000 dentists and over 6,000 certified dental assistants working in the province.

The Health Professions Act now covers 20 health professions, regulated by 19 professional colleges, including: chiropractors; dental hygienists; dental technicians; dentists; denturists; dietitians; licensed practical nurses; massage therapists; midwives; naturopathic physicians; occupational therapists; opticians; optometrists; pharmacists; physical therapists; psychologists; registered nurses (including nurse practitioners); registered psychiatric nurses; and traditional Chinese medicine practitioners and acupuncturists.

Since May of 2008, B.C. has made a number of changes to increase the openness, transparency and accountability of B.C.'s health profession regulatory process. These changes include:

- Effective Oct. 17, 2008, every new member of a board of a health profession college is required to sign an oath to ensure that they are guided by the public interest in the performance of their duties;
- As of Nov. 1, 2008, all health profession colleges governed under the act are required to provide the public with information about disciplinary actions taken against their members;
- The Health Professions Review Board, which has the power to review the timeliness and outcome of health regulatory college decisions, began receiving applications for review in Mar. 2009; and
- Effective April 1, 2010, the professions of audiology, speech-language pathology and hearing instrument dispensing will be brought under the Health Professions Act through the new College of Speech and Hearing Health Professionals, established in December 2008.

For more information on the regulation on health professions on B.C., please visit www.health.gov.bc.ca/leg/.

Media contact: Bernadette Murphy
Media Relations Manager
Ministry of Health Services
250 952-1887 (media line)
250 213-9590 (cell)

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