
INFORMATION BULLETIN

For Immediate Release
2026HLTH0033-000347
March 31, 2026

Ministry of Health

New health regulation puts patients' safety first

Health professions and occupations act prioritizes public protection, facilitates good governance

VICTORIA –

Summary

- *The health professions and occupations act comes into effect Wednesday, April 1, 2026*
- *The act improves patient safety by increasing transparency and accountability, and helps to end harm and discrimination in health-care settings*
- *This regulation will not cause any disruption to the day-to-day operations of health-care professionals*
- *Some professions will see minor changes come into effect, and a broader review will begin in late spring 2026 to better assess the new act for further improvements*

Beginning Wednesday, April 1, 2026, the health professions and occupations act comes into effect, which will improve patient safety by increasing transparency and ensuring good and consistent governance for regulators.

For health-care professionals, it means more support and structure from regulators, so they can focus on patient care. This regulation will not cause any disruption to their day-to-day work.

Changes, improvements to scopes of practice

As part of the work to modernize health profession regulation in B.C., the Province is continuing to ensure that professionals are able to practise to the full extent of their skills and education. Some changes are taking effect as of Wednesday, April 1, 2026, for hearing-instrument practitioners, midwives, naturopathic physicians, physical therapists, speech-language pathologists and traditional Chinese medicine practitioners.

In late spring 2026, the Ministry of Health will begin a broader review of current scopes of practice of regulated health professions to assess future potential scopes of practice expansion.

Improving patient safety

Through the act, people in B.C. will be better protected from harm and discrimination through improvements that include:

- increasing transparency of licensees' past disciplinary actions on the regulatory colleges'

public registries, as well as increasing communication between employers and the regulatory colleges when misconduct has occurred

- explicitly addressing discrimination as grounds for professional misconduct of a health professional and actionable conduct of a health occupation
- enhancing safeguards to protect patients from sexual misconduct and sexual-abuse-related misconduct committed by a regulated health professional
- requiring regulatory colleges, health professionals and occupations, and the Health Professions Review Board to act in accordance with anti-discrimination measures found in the act
- including all instances of disciplinary actions and summary protection orders against a health professional on the regulatory college's public registry following the disciplinary hearing process
- moving to fully appointed regulatory college boards, whose board members are selected based on merit and who bring diverse perspectives

Establishing a new oversight office

In 2024, the Province established a new Health Professions and Occupations Regulatory Oversight Office, with Sherri Young leading. The work of the office will officially begin on Wednesday, April 1, 2026. The new office is funded by government but will work independently of government. It will audit and oversee the colleges to ensure they are acting in the public interest, make recommendations for board appointments using a merit-based process and assess unregulated health practitioners to determine if they should be recommended for regulation. The office also houses a new independent and impartial discipline tribunal that conducts hearings into serious misconduct allegations and provides oversight on some decisions made by the colleges.

This builds on the work that the Ministry of Health is already doing to reduce the number of regulatory colleges and amalgamate more colleges:

- In September 2022, B.C.'s four oral-health colleges, which included dentists, dental assistants, dental therapists, denturists, dental hygienists and dental technicians, were amalgamated into one regulatory college.
- In 2020, the nursing college was amalgamated with the College of Midwives, and the College of Physician and Surgeons was amalgamated with the College of Podiatrists.
- In 2018, B.C.'s three nursing colleges were amalgamated into one.

Learn More:

- To learn more about the Office of the Superintendent of Health Professions and Occupations Oversight, visit: <https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2024HLTH0079-000883>
- To learn more about the Health Professions and Occupations Act, visit: <https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2022HLTH0202-001566>
- For more information about B.C. legislation, visit: <https://strongerbc.gov.bc.ca/legislation>

A backgrounder follows.

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BACKGROUND

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Ministry of Health

What changes on Wednesday, April 1, 2026

The Province is undergoing work to ensure that professionals are able to practise to the full scope of their skills and education.

The following changes, organized by regulated health profession and scope of practice change (s) in the health professions and occupations act profession regulation, take effect as of Wednesday, April 1, 2026:

Hearing-instrument practitioners

- Raises the patient age requirement to 19 for a hearing-instrument practitioner to prescribe, fit and dispense a wearable hearing instrument (to align with entry-to-practice training). A certified hearing-instrument practitioner may prescribe, fit or dispense a wearable hearing instrument for patients under 19.

Midwives

- Removes the three-month restriction for the provision of postpartum contraception services.
- Includes the application of ultrasound for the purpose of determining fetal position and presentation.
- For certified midwives, includes the insertion of "devices" beyond the labia majora for the purposes of inducing labour (e.g., balloon catheters) and administering contraception (i.e., copper IUDs and hormonal IUDs).

Naturopathic physicians

- Removes the ability to administer a substance by using a hyperbaric chamber (in alignment with the regulatory college's position).

Physical therapists

- Includes the following restricted activities that are within entry-to-practice education:
 - administer oxygen by inhalation
 - diagnose a disease, disorder or condition of the cardiorespiratory or neuromusculoskeletal system that they are capable of treating, managing or preventing by physical and mechanical means
 - insert an instrument beyond the nasal passages, beyond the pharynx, or into an artificial opening in the body for the purpose of airway suctioning
 - move a joint of the spine beyond limits body can voluntarily achieve using a high-velocity, low-amplitude thrust

- For certified physical therapists, includes the following restricted activities that require additional education:
 - put an instrument, device, hand or finger beyond the labia majora or beyond the anal verge for the purpose of assessing and treating the pelvic floor
 - perform a procedure on tissue below the dermis by inserting solid filament needles for the purpose of reducing inflammation or managing pain
 - reduce a dislocation of a joint

Speech-language pathologists

- Includes the ability to provide broader treatment for feeding and swallowing disorders (compared to previous treatment for vocal tract dysfunction only)
- For certified speech-language pathologists, includes the ability to put an instrument, device or finger beyond the pharynx to assess and manage swallowing disorders
- For certified speech-language pathologists, includes the ability to put an instrument or device into an artificial opening in the body to assess and manage swallowing disorders

Traditional Chinese medicine practitioners

- Removes several limits and conditions on practice, to align with other health professions' regulations (e.g., removes the requirement for consultation or oversight by another type of practitioner)

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