

British Columbia News

Province proposes new college of diagnostic and therapeutic health professions

<https://news.gov.bc.ca/13189>

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Victoria - The Province is proposing to establish a new college of diagnostic and therapeutic health professions to enhance patient safety and quality of care in British Columbia.

The new college would initially oversee four types of health-care professionals: respiratory therapists, radiation therapists, clinical perfusionists and medical laboratory technologists.

“Diagnostic and therapeutic health professionals are a key part of our health system,” Health Minister Terry Lake said. “They provide a number of functions to support diagnosis and treatment of patients. For example, running the bypass machine during cardiac surgery or providing support to make sure a patient’s airway is open while being treated for trauma in intensive care. Creating a new college for these professions will help further support high standards of care and provide greater oversight focused on patient safety.”

The ministry has proposed the new college following extensive consultation with stakeholders. Eleven different diagnostic and therapeutic health professions were examined, and self-regulation under the Health Professions Act has been recommended as a priority for respiratory therapists, radiation therapists, clinical perfusionists and medical laboratory technologists because they perform invasive procedures and/or provide care that poses a higher degree of potential risk to patients.

Once the new college has been substantially implemented, the ministry will continue its work on regulatory options for a number of other diagnostic and therapeutic health-care occupations, including nuclear medicine technologists, medical radiography technologists, magnetic resonance imaging technologists, medical laboratory assistants, cardiology technologists, diagnostic medical sonographers and medical physicists.

As required by the Health Professions Act, the proposed regulation outlining the four occupations that will form a new college are posted for feedback until March 9, 2017 and can be accessed at:

www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/health/practitioner-professional-resources/professional-regulation

Following this consultation, the new college is anticipated to be established in about 18-24 months.

A professional college serves and protects the public, and acts in the public interest at all times, making sure its members are qualified, competent and follow defined standards of practice and ethics. Professional colleges are responsible for responding to complaints from patients and the public. They can also take action if one of their registrants is practising in a manner that is incompetent, unethical, illegal or impaired by alcohol, drugs or illness.

B.C. currently has 26 regulated health professions, of which 25 are self-regulating professions governed by 22 regulatory colleges under the Health Professions Act. More information on regulated health professions can be found at the link above.

Access to high-quality diagnostic services is a key component of the ministry’s Setting Priorities for the B.C. Health System. The creation of a new college will provide better regulation and oversight of these professions. It will also develop a formal complaints process and strengthen professional development, contributing to a system of care that focuses on the needs and safety of patients.

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