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INFORMED

NEWSLETTER OF THE COLLEGE OF NATUROPATHS OF ONTARIO

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What about "the public interest"?

As a regulatory body, we talk a lot about serving and protecting the public interest. How do we learn what the public's needs are?

Just as naturopaths strive to build trust with their patients, the College aims to secure the trust of the public by considering their perspective and ensuring they are protected when they receive treatment from a registered naturopath. Engaging the public is an important aspect of our mandate to protect their right to safe, ethical and competent care.

PUBLIC ON COUNCIL

The public's perspective is embedded in our leadership, with seven public members appointed to our governing Council by the Lieutenant Governor of Ontario. Public members are part of every Council decision. There are public members on every College committee and they are a part of every hearing. As part of transparency, both Council meetings and Discipline hearings are also open to the public.

NEW CITIZEN ADVISORY GROUP

In addition to these public members, it is important for the College to hear directly from other patients and caregivers who have hands-on experience with our health care system. This is why we have partnered with nine other health regulatory Colleges (of the 26 in Ontario) to be part of a newly-expanded Citizen Advisory Group. The Group was originally created almost two years ago by the College of Physiotherapists of Ontario to provide a way to connect with the public.

The first meeting of the expanded Group took place in October with a focus on two items. The first item explored who constitutes a patient and what kinds of circumstances establish the provider-patient relationship. For instance, is someone a patient if a health professional provides a wellness presentation at a local community centre? Is the daughter of a man who is receiving health services a patient? Does it matter whether he is able to make decisions on his own?

Defining who is a patient will help Colleges determine whether the legally-required 12 months is an appropriate length of time to restrict sexual contact between a regulated health professional and a former patient so as not to constitute sexual abuse under the *Protecting Patients Act, 2017*. Some Colleges may choose to require more than a 12-month gap.

Continuing competence and quality assurance were the second items on the agenda. The Advisory Group shared their expectations about what regulated health professionals could do to remain current, expand their knowledge and skills, and ensure the public is receiving treatment that is safe, competent and ethical. Members also reinforced their desires to know about the efficacy of proposed treatments and to receive a treatment plan at the outset of any program.

Notes from previous Citizen Advisory Group meetings are posted online and provide valuable insights on many topics including fees and billing, conflict of interest, advertising and testimonials, and more.

IN CLOSING

Self-regulation is essentially based on a social contract between the profession and the public. This contract provides the profession with the privilege to regulate itself in the public's interest in return for having that authority and ability. In this contract, it is the College's job to make the rules and enforce them[1]. Input from Members of the profession and the public are integral to our ability to do that.

We continue to explore additional avenues for public engagement in the College. If you are interested in learning more, please let us know at info@collegeofnaturopaths.on.ca.

I also wish to thank the many volunteers working with us now to ensure the public interest is represented. Your contributions are both inspiring and invaluable.

[1] Based on commentary from College of Dental Surgeons of BC, Roles and Responsibilities in Professional Regulation (video), 2008; Steinecke, Richard, Counsel, SML Law.

Get ready for registration renewal

Registration renewal will launch on **February 14, 2018**. Here are some tips to help you prepare for a smooth renewal and meet the March 31, 2018 deadline.

IS YOUR E-MAIL ADDRESS CURRENT?

Make sure we have your current e-mail address. It must be one that you personally check on a regular basis. This will help ensure you receive important communications about the process and about key deadlines.

You can update your e-mail address by logging in to your account page on the College's website.

RENEW EARLY FOR PEACE OF MIND

Renewing as soon as you receive your notice in February lets you

- avoid unnecessary delays,
- receive your new certificate of registration on time, and
- resolve any potential issues that may arise as part of the renewal process.

ARE YOU PLANNING TO CHANGE CLASS DURING THE RENEWAL PERIOD?

If you are planning to change class this year (on or before April 1st) you need to submit a Change of Class Form before you can renew your registration.

We recommend you allow ample time as it may take up to 10 business days for the College to process the change. We can receive and process these applications and delay implementation until April 1st if that is helpful.

HAVE YOU CHANGED YOUR LEGAL NAME IN THE PAST YEAR?

It's easy to notify us. Just download and complete the Name Change Form and return it with the necessary documentation and fee.

NOT PLANNING ON RENEWING?

If you are not planning to renew this year, the best approach is to resign your membership. The College does not charge a fee for resignation; however, proof of tail insurance is likely necessary. Access the Resignation Form.

Stay tuned for more information about annual registration renewal in the Spring issue of *iNformeD* and on our website.

Regulatory Guidance
Hosting a Student Extern

Hosting a naturopathic college student as part of a school's externship program is a valuable way to contribute to the education of future members of the profession. An externship will typically involve working directly with the naturopathic school to fulfill its expectations. It is important, as well, for Members of the College of Naturopaths of Ontario to be aware of the requirements when working with students during an externship.

This article highlights what Members need to consider and abide by.

COMPETENCY OF THE STUDENT AND SUPERVISION

The student needs to have opportunities to observe and actively participate in interactions with patients in order to acquire the knowledge, skill and judgment for future practice. In order to determine the extent to which the student observes or actively provides patient care, the Member is expected to assess the naturopathic student's competencies and thereby determine the level of responsibility given to the student and the extent of supervision required.

The *Professional Misconduct Regulation* (Section 12) states that "failing to appropriately supervise a person whom the member is professionally obligated to supervise" is professional misconduct.

PERFORMING CONTROLLED ACTS

When determining the level of supervision that is appropriate, the Member should also consider the risks associated with the aspects of care the student may provide. The procedures that carry the most risk are the controlled acts authorized to the profession in Ontario through the *Naturopathy Act, 2007*.

The *Regulated Health Professions Act, 1991* (RHPA) allows for students to perform a controlled act in the course of their education without requiring a delegation. Section 29(1) of the RHPA provides this exemption to performing a controlled act "if it is done in the course of fulfilling the requirements to become a member of a health profession and the act is within the scope of practice of the profession and is done under the supervision or direction of a member of the profession."

It is important to note that this provision only applies if the student is working through an approved externship through the school. Graduates awaiting registration from the College do not benefit from this provision.

While a delegation is not required, the Member may want to consider the criteria outlined in the *Standard of Practice for Delegation* and Part III of the *General Regulation* that are to be in place when making a delegation. These criteria may assist in guiding the Member, and the student, in providing safe and competent care to patients.

INSURANCE

The Member is expected to ensure that they and the student have the appropriate level of professional liability protection in place. The Member is advised to check with their insurance provider prior to hosting a student extern.

A Member may not bill for assessments or treatments they did not personally provide.

CONSENT

In the process of obtaining informed consent from a patient or their representative, the Member is responsible for ensuring that the educational status of the naturopathic student and the nature of their role are made clear. Patients have the right to consent to who provides their naturopathic care.

Consent is also required regarding fees and who will be providing which services. Keep in mind that if a patient has health care benefits, their ability to claim the fees paid may be affected by who provides their care, i.e., regulated health care professional or a student.

BILLING

The *Standard of Practice for Fees and Billing* requires that the receipt provided to the patient contains the name of the treating Member. If a student provides aspects of patient care without the Member being present during the assessment or treatment delivered by the student, the Member is to reflect this on the patient's receipt. A Member may not bill for assessments or treatments they did not personally provide.

If the Member is present during the entire patient visit, along with the student who is observing, and actively contributes to the assessment and/or treatment, the Member may bill for that time spent providing naturopathic care to the patient.

When providing patient care in any clinical setting, the Member is always expected to abide by the College's regulations and standards of practice and act in ways that are in the best interest of the patient. Hosting a student extern can be achieved within these requirements of the College while adding to the experience of the Member, the student and the patient.

For additional guidance, contact our Regulatory Education Specialist Dr. Mary-Ellen McKenna, ND (Inactive) maryellen.mckenna@collegeofnaturopaths.on.ca or 416-583-6020.

Patient Care

Patient safety is an essential and vital component of quality naturopathic care. In this edition of iNformeD, we present and analyze a scenario based on a patient's complaint about the care provided by a Member. This article illustrates the importance of providing safe and competent patient care and will help members understand one of the roles of the Health Professions Appeal and Review Board.

COMPLAINT SUMMARY

The College received a complaint from a patient who stated she suffered second degree burns to her thigh as a result of an infrared lamp treatment provided by the Member.

The Complainant was left in a room alone during the treatment, and when she called out to the Member that the heat was excessive, the Member allegedly joked there "was no smoke seeping out from under the door", which made the Complainant feel like she could not call out a second time. Following the incident, the Complainant sent the Member several follow-up e-mails when she discovered blisters on her thigh. The Member responded to the Complainant's e-mails confirming that her reaction to the infrared treatment would be documented in the patient file. The Member, however, offered no post-care instructions to the patient.

Consequently, the Complainant felt the Member showed no concern for her injury, and stated she had suffered physical and emotional harm due to the situation. The issue of informed consent was also identified as a possible concern.

The Member's response to the Complaint outlined that it was common for the Member to leave the room during such treatments, and patients were always instructed to call out if there were any issues. The Member stated that burns were not seen as a risk of heat lamp therapy, thus the possibility of a burn was not discussed with the Complainant. Additionally, the Member claimed that as part of the discharge process the Complainant was invited to contact the clinic if there were any questions. The Member stated that informed consent had been obtained but conceded it had not been documented in the Complainant's chart.

Based on the information reviewed, the ICRC initially determined that the Member should:

- complete a Specified Continuing Education and Remediation Program (SCERP) "ProBE: Ethics and Boundaries Program-Canada";
- attend six meetings with an expert in the practice of naturopathy; and
- appear before a panel of the ICRC for an Oral Caution.

REVIEW BY THE HEALTH PROFESSIONS APPEAL AND REVIEW BOARD (HPARB)

The Member requested a review of the ICRC decision before the HPARB, submitting that the investigation was inadequate and the decision was unreasonable. The College provided the HPARB with the record of the complaint investigation and all the documents and other materials on which the ICRC decision was based. In addition, both the Member and the Complainant made submissions to HPARB in support of their positions.

Based on the information before them, HPARB determined that the Member was not provided with an opportunity to respond to the additional concerns raised by the Complainant in her follow up correspondence to the College. In particular, the Complainant questioned the actions of the Member when she voiced her discomfort, as well as alleged human error or mechanical error of the device. For that reason, HPARB required that the ICRC conduct a further investigation into the matter.

The full HPARB decision can be found on the Canadian Legal Information Institute website.

OUTCOME

Having conducted an additional investigation following the HPARB decision, the ICRC noted that the Member put certain practices in place as a result of this experience, including adding an informed consent form in patient charts, implementing a client concern reporting form in order to better address patient concerns following treatment and ensure proper follow-up and resolution, and making a call bell available to patients who are left unattended during treatment. As such, the ICRC determined that meetings with an expert in the practice of naturopathy were not required.

The ICRC, however, remained concerned about the Member's treatment and management of the Complainant with respect to failing to provide due care during and after treatment, providing a treatment that caused physical harm to the Complainant, and apparent lack of acknowledgement of the distress caused to the Complainant as a result of his treatment. Therefore, the Member was directed to complete the ProBE program and attend before the ICRC for an Oral Caution.

ANALYSIS

The Panel found the concerns raised by the Complainant to be very serious and strongly considered making a referral of the following allegations for a disciplinary hearing:

- The Complainant was harmed during a treatment. The Panel felt that the incident raised a significant concern about the Member's practice and that it could have a direct impact on patient care, safety, or the public interest.
- File documentation provided by the Member lacked evidence that the Complainant provided informed consent either verbally or written before treatment.

  The College's *Standard of Practice for Consent* states that consent is an ongoing process and not a singular event. To be valid, consent must be informed. The Member has a duty to ensure the patient has sufficient information to make valid decisions about their care. Members are required to document in the patient file:

  – that a discussion regarding consent took place and the patient understands the proposed assessment or treatments and their risks, limitations and benefits;
  – any modifications to the consent; and
  – that the patient withdrew consent, why they did so, and what specifically was withdrawn.

- E-mails and file documentation reviewed by the ICRC indicated that the Member did not offer post-care instructions, leaving the Complainant feeling vulnerable and uncertain as to how to address her burned thigh, and did not follow up with the Complainant regarding her concerns.

  In accordance with the *Code of Ethics for Naturopathic Doctors*, every member of the College is required to:

  – provide the patient with the information they need to make informed decisions about their care, and answer questions appropriately; and
  – continue to provide services to the patient until they are no longer required or wanted, until another suitable practitioner has assumed responsibility, or until reasonable notice of termination of care has been provided to the patient.

- The Member did not appear to recognize the power imbalance that occurs between the patient and the practitioner or the degree of distress and discomfort suffered by the Complainant.

  The College's *Standard of Practice for Therapeutic Relationship and Professional Boundaries* states that naturopaths are expected to foster appropriate therapeutic relationships with their patients in a transparent, ethical, patient-centred manner. The power imbalance in naturopathic doctor-patient relationships is unavoidable due to the patient's trust that the naturopath has the expertise to help with their problems and because personal information is disclosed that would not normally be revealed. The Member, therefore, has a duty to act in the best interest of the patient and is accountable should any boundary issues arise.

BOTTOM LINE

A naturopathic doctor has a duty to act in the best interest of the patient, and is ultimately responsible for providing safe and competent patient care and maintaining an appropriate doctor-patient relationship. Providing or recommending a treatment which causes physical harm to a patient and failing to address the patient's concerns have direct impact on the Member's practice and jeopardize public confidence in the naturopathic profession.

As a self-regulating health College operating under the *Regulated Health Professions Act*, the College is required to represent and protect public interest through establishing professional standards and holding members accountable to follow the laws, regulations, standards and ethics of the profession. This includes meeting educational requirements, maintaining competence in practice, and refraining from engaging in any acts of professional misconduct.

The College's complaints process is designed to not only resolve particular concerns related to an individual matter but also to educate Members and ensure they recognize their responsibility before patients, the profession and the regulator. As regulated health professionals, naturopaths are expected to:

- recognize the power imbalance that occurs between the patient and the practitioner;
- identify professional and ethical obligations and what the lapse in professional virtues means to the patient, public, profession; and
- commit to and maintain improved patient care.

COLLEGE'S COSTS

The investigation costs incurred by the College in regard to this matter were $3,231.

Discipline outcome

Member: Dr. Karen Barnes, ND,
Registration: #0880

At an uncontested hearing on June 21, 2017, a Panel of the Discipline Committee of the College of Naturopaths of Ontario (the College) made findings of professional misconduct against Dr. Karen Barnes, ND (the Member) and, among others[1], imposed an order directing the Member to write a letter of apology to the public and the profession and an essay on the following issues:

- the lessons the Member learned at the Specified Continuing Education and Remediation Program (SCERP) ordered by the Inquiries, Complaints and Reports Committee; and
- the importance of naturopaths co-operating with College investigators and to provide the essay to the Registrar.

The Panel determined that both documents shall be published by the College at a time and in a format determined by the Registrar. Following are the letter of apology from the Member and a summary of her essay about the ProBE program.

[1] Copies of the full discipline decisions are available on the public register in the Members' profiles. You can also review all decisions in the Resources section of the College's website.

Letter of apology to the public and the profession

I wish to apologize to the public and the profession for my actions in not taking a SCERP course ordered by the ICRC [Inquiries, Complaints and Reports Committee] on time.

I now understand that not taking the course in time was highly detrimental, in that the foundation of the profession is built on being able to follow the orders of the ICRC in order to respect self-governance. I am sorry that I responded by not taking the course in time, as this was not the right thing to do for the profession, or the public, as it is viewed as lacking governability.

I also want to apologize for not fully co-operating with the investigator who was following up on why I did not take the course. I now understand that the investigator plays an important role in the self-governing process and ultimately serves to uphold a social contract with society and the profession.

I realize now that it is imperative for me to abide by the College's inquiries and directions, as it is in the best interests of the public and the profession. I have learned that it is important to co-operate fully with an investigator, as the potential negative impact is that I am seen as lacking co-operation, and this reflects poorly on the profession. I realize that my actions represent those of the profession to the public.

I have gained insight and have learned a lot about myself and how I can improve my practice from this experience. I would like to again, express my deepest felt apology for not taking the course on time and for not fully co-operating with the investigator and I will strive to abide by all future College inquiries and directions.

Yours Truly,
Karen Barnes, ND

What I have learned from the PROBE: Ethics & Boundaries Program

By Karen Barnes, ND

I took an ethics and boundaries course and I gained knowledge about the role of the College, virtue theory, and different models of practice and how society views these different practice methods, and information about maintaining boundaries with patients.

The role of the College is to protect the public interest and hold members accountable for their conduct. The College ensures safe, ethical and competent care in making sure members do no harm, put patients' interests above self-interests and build on skills over time. The role of the College is to govern a social contract, to maintain a set of values common to the profession, to maintain standards of practice, to allow professionals with a body of knowledge to practice with common principles, competencies and codes of ethics. The College places limits on professional autonomy. The College governs and holds professionals accountable to the public.

In my case, the ICRC had concerns about professional boundaries with respect to expression of personal views and opinions especially when the opinions may be contrary or offensive to the patient's values or beliefs. The ICRC members were concerned that I did not appear to recognize or acknowledge that the statements that I made were problematic to the patient and his family and were viewed as judgmental, disrespectful and unprofessional. I now see that the language that I was using was judgmental, disrespectful and unprofessional. In this respect I have been insensitive to the values of the family.

I now see that I have a position of power over the patient and that it is a boundary violation to make value judgements about a client's lifestyle. I have a better understanding of how to identify and rectify a boundary crossing/violation and how to rectify and accept responsibility.

During the course, I recognized that I had not seen things from other people's perspective and upheld the virtue of beneficence towards the patient. I realize now that judging a patient and not apologizing to the patient or his family meant that the profession could be looked badly upon and did not respect professionalism and commitment to service.

I realize that the patient didn't come to me for a discussion about morals. I understand from the course that I am in a position of power and that I must at all times be respectful of others. I have a better understanding now of the role of the naturopath when it comes to respecting patient autonomy and a greater respect for the way the College protects the public, in particular, of the importance of co-operating

with the College. I understand that the nature of the discussions that I have with patients should be respectful of their values and beliefs and that I should not judge them as this is a boundary violation.

I look at things differently now as I understand that the way a professional is perceived is important. It is important as a clinician to step out of my own framework and see how others might view me. I understand that by my words and inability to apologize right away that I have influenced in a negative way the doctor-patient relationship and the trust that the family had in a health care professional to uphold the virtues of respect, principle of beneficence and virtue of patient centred care. In the future, I will act in a manner that is respectful of patients' values and beliefs, respect the role of the College and co-operate fully with the College or its investigator, and practice in a way that upholds the standards and ethics of the profession for the benefit of the patient and his family, of the profession and of society.

I have also learned the importance of co-operating fully with an investigator. The duty of the investigator is to provide an unbiased assessment to the College and it is necessary in the process of keeping the public safe. The foundation of any self-regulating profession is to have a social contract with society where common values are held within the profession. The College, in part through the investigators, plays and integral role in upholding this contract between the profession and the public.

Special Feature:

ND insights on the Ontario Therapeutics and Prescribing Exam

More than 540 Ontario naturopaths have successfully completed the voluntary Prescribing and Therapeutics Exam offered by the College. This post-registration exam is essential for naturopaths who want to meet the *Standard of Practice for Prescribing*, which allows them to safely prescribe and understand drugs and substances prescribed by other health care practitioners. For naturopaths, this includes the specific drugs and substances outlined in the *General Regulation of the Naturopathy Act, 2007*, such as therapeutic doses of vitamins A and D, folic acid and more. Successful completion of the course and exam is also one of the pre-requisites for naturopaths wanting to offer Intravenous Infusion Therapy (IVIT).

We recently conducted a series of confidential, one-on-one telephone interviews with Members to learn more about their perceptions of the exam and whether they have plans to take it in the future. Participants shared their impressions of the exam, including comments about cost, relevance, the amount of study and prep time, and the likelihood of passing the exam.

To shed light on some of these topics, we reached out to three naturopaths who have passed the exam. They work in different practice settings with varying years in practice. We asked them to share their thoughts about how the exam helps them in practice and benefits their patients. We also asked them what they liked – and found most challenging – about the process.

We realize not everyone has an interest in taking the exam or meeting the Standard of Practice and that a variety of factors influence their choice; however, the Council of the College asks that every Member of the profession give consideration to taking the exam for the benefit of the public and the profession. For those who are considering or preparing for the exam, page 21 also features an article with 5 tips on preparing for the exam.

ND insights on the Ontario Therapeutics and Prescribing Exam

How has taking the course and exam helped you in practice?

Dr. Holly Fennell, ND: I am able to confidently prescribe vitamins, desiccated thyroid and bioidentical hormones where appropriate. I reference my exam notes frequently and now in each patient chart add a few key points about the drugs my patients are on. This allows me to not only better understand my patients but to ensure I am using the material I learned. I spent a lot of time preparing for the exam and it is important to me that I use the material in a practical way every day to better my skills.

Dr. Rick Olazabal, ND: It helps me to assess medical information in an unbiased manner, whether it's natural or not. We need to be critical of both sides in order to provide patients with effective, quality care. Studying for the exam allowed me to speak to patients about their treatments with more confidence in terms of benefits, interactions, testing, and more.

What motivated you to take the exam?

Holly: Initially I was motivated only because IVIT is a big part of my practice and the notion of not being able to not provide it was terrifying! As I began to study and prepare for the exam this quickly changed. I realized it was helping me better understand Naturopathic Medicine by giving me deeper knowledge and understanding of my patients as a result of understanding the drugs they are prescribed.

Rick: I felt that in order to provide patients with the level of care I wanted to, it was important to access as much of our scope as possible. It became a matter of safety and effectiveness. While it has been frustrating for patients because we don't have access to many scheduled natural substances and/or hormones, taking the exam was the first step as we hope more substances will be eventually added to our schedules in the future.

Dr. Patricia Rennie, ND: The only reason for me to have this ability in my practice is to prescribe vitamin D above 1,000 IU and vitamin A above 10,000 IU. Though it seemed like a big price to pay for so little benefit, it put me on par with younger colleagues and I do think it is important that the government see that we have all met a standard of practice like this when we ask them to consider expanding our scope in this area.

What have you found to be the greatest benefit?

Holly: I am much more confident when talking to MDs and other members of my patients' medical team. I am also more confident in understanding contraindications. I now commonly call patients' pharmacists and use them as a resource for questions. Before the exam this was not something I did.

Rick: The greatest benefit is really the end result: access to slightly wider scope. When patients learn that NDs can prescribe certain scheduled substances they feel more secure

ND insights on the Ontario Therapeutics and Prescribing Exam

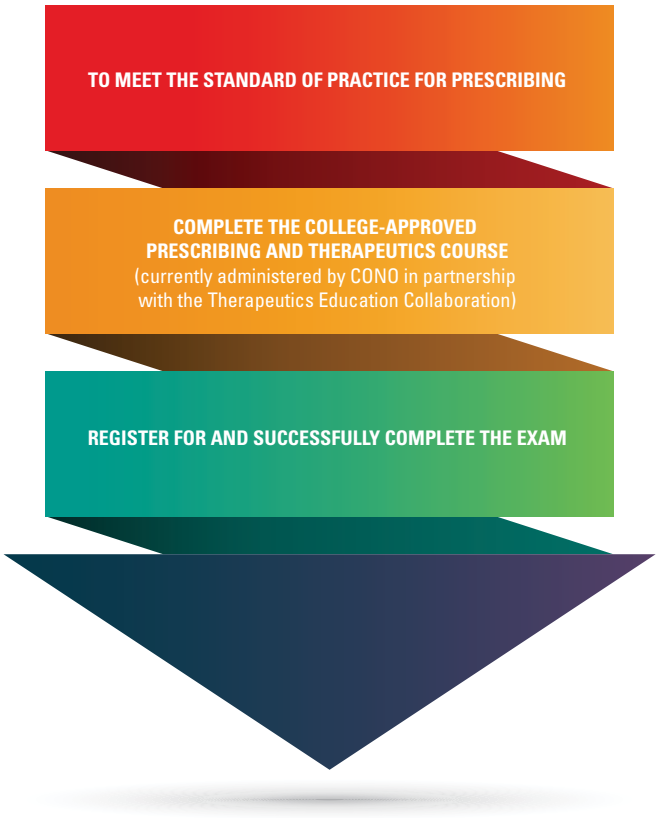
and their trust increases. This is a good thing because patients can benefit tremendously from having a health care provider who can spend more time educating them on their medications, their health, and their other options (i.e., part of proper informed consent).

What did you like – and find most challenging – about the exam?

Holly: I liked being able to study on my own time, however this was also my biggest challenge as a mother and a busy clinician. I found the enormity of the material a challenge but felt a huge sense of accomplishment when I passed the exam. I enjoyed listening to the podcasts while driving.

Rick: The exam is challenging. It has to be in order to ensure quality and validity. Studying took a lot of time, especially when working full time. It was a sacrifice that had to be made. What I enjoyed most is that it boosted my confidence in practice when speaking to patients about guidelines. I also preferred that it was administered by clinical pharmacists because it reduces any perceived conflict of interest.

Patricia: I had been out of school for 24 years when I wrote the exam - not an easy feat - but I did learn a great deal in the process. I enjoyed the lectures/videos and have found the reference book to be invaluable when talking to patients about the meds they are taking. Since I had been out of school for so long and pharmacology is not my forte I needed to study for many hours and missed out on social events that spring in order to make sure I got through the material. The actual exam writing process was certainly stressful but I felt I had achieved an accomplishment when I passed.



SPECIAL THANKS

In closing, the College thanks the naturopaths who contributed to this article as well as those who took time to participate in our confidential telephone survey about the exam. Deciding to take the course and sit the exam is a significant commitment yet one that provides many benefits for NDs who want to meet the *Standard of Practice for Prescribing*.

ND insights on the Ontario Therapeutics and Prescribing Exam

ABOUT THE COURSE AND THE EXAM

The course and exam address the competencies that naturopaths need to develop, implement and monitor evidence-based therapeutic plans. They also cover interactions between pharmaceuticals and natural substances, and how to appropriately prescribe specific natural substances restricted under general legislation to treat a variety of common conditions.

The course

Cost:	$599 including HST
Timing:	About 3 – 4 months to complete the course. It is self-paced and can be completed on your own time. The College strongly urges Members to allow a minimum of 3 months to be successful.
Components:	Online modules (30 hours) + interactive webinars (up to 15 hours) + self-study (about 3-5 hours/week)
CE eligibility:	15 Category A CE credits
Learn more:	FAQs About the course Register for the course

The exam

Cost:	$599 including HST
Timing:	Offered twice annually, usually in June and November in Toronto
Components:	Includes a written open-book component and an oral component
CE eligibility:	None
Learn more:	See the 2018 Examination Timetable below

Exam Date 2018	Registration Opens	Registration Closes*	Timetable Notices Released	Exam Results Released
June 10	April 30	May 22	June 4	July 13
October 28	September 17	October 9	October 22	November 30

** this is also the deadline for exam withdrawals and exam accommodation requests*

On average

75% of Members pass the exam on their first attempt, which is on par with a similar exam in BC.

5 tips to prepare for the Therapeutics & Prescribing Exam

Here are tips from the naturopaths we interviewed who have taken the exam, as well as some pointers from the College.

1 BE ORGANIZED.

Being efficient with your time is important because the volume of work and information is extensive. It can also be helpful to organize yourself so you can access information quickly – especially during the open-book written exam.

Naturopaths who have sat the exam recommend viewing the video lectures at least once and said that listening to the podcasts is helpful too. They also strongly suggest doing all the practice questions, including timing yourself to stay on track. Some found it helpful to print all the presentations and make notes as they went. It can also be useful to create a folder with alphabetical lists of all the drugs.

2 TAKE YOUR TIME.

Allow yourself the recommended three to six months to complete the self-study course. Rushing it simply doesn't work. If you can, take the week off before the exam to prepare. Our ND interviewees also suggest giving yourself time to recover from the intense months leading up to the exam – particularly if you have been busy practising and out of school for a while.

3 ASK FOR HELP.

Use social media to connect with other candidates and NDs who have already taken the exam. Many are willing to share their prep work and experiences. The course instructors can also be helpful answering emailed questions.

4 TAKE ADVANTAGE OF TEAMWORK.

Form a virtual study group and ask team members to create different cases and questions. Creating a strong network helps candidates practice more and creates accountability when a group is depending on you for well thought out material. Create or join a Facebook group and share Q&As, issues and information.

5 PRACTISE PRESENCE.

Make sure you thoroughly read each case presented during the oral exam. Missing a vital aspect can make the difference between a pass and a fail. For example, a case discusses bacterial bronchitis but because the candidate fails to note the infection is bacterial, they recommend treatment for a viral infection instead. In the written exam, some candidates lose precious time by not filling out the electronic scantron card as they go along, thinking they will have time to go back and do that later.

Who's who?

10 differences between a regulator and an association

Regulators and professional associations have very distinct roles and mandates, both of which are required for the development of a profession. These differences are not always clearly understood, and for naturopathy, where regulation is still relatively new, they can lead to misplaced expectations. This chart points out the main differences between the two.

	REGULATOR	PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATION
1	Acts in the interest of the public	Acts in the interest of the profession
2	Governed by a Council of professional Members and government-appointed public members	Governed by a Board of Directors consisting of members of the profession
3	Mandatory membership in order to use protected titles and/or perform controlled acts Registers Members based on legislated criteria	Voluntary membership Accepts members based on association-determined criteria
4	Requires Members to participate in legislated quality assurance programs	Provides members with opportunities for continuing education
5	Ensures minimum standards of practice are met for safe and competent service to the public	Provides competency enhancing opportunities for members seeking to work to an advanced standard
6	Engages the public to inform them of the value of regulated professionals	Engages members in order to serve their professional needs
7	Required to have a complaints process to respond to Members who do not practice to the set standards	Not required to have a complaints process in place
8	Protects the public by ensuring Members provide safe, ethical and competent care	Supports the public by advocating for increased services and funding
9	Provides accessible information to the public regarding the profession, the registry of Members, expected practice standards, and the complaints process	Provides accessible information to its members regarding professional development opportunities, changes in the professional field, and political developments that affect the profession
10	Accountable to the public, the government, and Members	Accountable to the members

* Although they are elected by College Members, professional Members of Council do not represent any Member or constituency. All Council Members have a fiduciary duty to the College. They are required to make careful, good-faith decisions in the best interest of the organization, consistent with the College's goal to protect the public.

Source: Adapted from the Federation of Health Regulatory Colleges of Ontario (FHRCO)

Give back. Get involved!

This is a great opportunity if you have been thinking of joining more than 85 other Members of the profession who volunteer with the College.

PRIOR LEARNING ASSESSMENT AND RECOGNITION (PLAR) ASSESSORS:

Applicants wishing to practise naturopathy in Ontario who do not have formal education from a Council on Naturopathic Medical Education (CNME) accredited program are required to participate in a PLAR program. This program enables the College to conduct a competency-based assessment process to evaluate an applicant's knowledge, skills, training and professional competency to determine their substantial equivalency to a CNME-accredit grad, along with their readiness-to-practise. PLAR Assessors are trained to carry out scheduled paper-based assessments (i.e., of an individual's declared education and experience) and demonstration-based assessments (i.e., of an applicant's clinical evaluative skills) of eligible PLAR applicants.

TIME COMMITMENT

- Being a paper-based assessor requires about 14 - 24 hours/year, scheduled on an as needed basis. The assessments are conducted remotely.
- Demonstration-based assessments are held in-person two days/year with an additional day of assessor training. These assessments are also scheduled as needed.

HOW TO APPLY

Send a letter/e-mail expressing your interest, along with your resume and any other information you believe will be helpful to info@collegeofnaturopaths.on.ca by February 1, 2018.

Council elections 2018

If you are interested in becoming involved in the leadership of the College, this is an ideal opportunity. Elections will be held in Districts 2, 4, and 6 because the three-year terms of naturopaths who were elected to Council from those districts in 2015 are expiring. More details coming soon.

Scheduled substances review and labs update

Read about the report and recommendations provided to Council in October by the Scheduled Substances Review Committee (SSRC).

Welcome new Council members.

Please join us in welcoming new public members Sam Laldin and Scott Sawler. Both are accomplished professionals with extensive volunteer experience in healthcare and regulatory environments. Learn more.

Council meetings

The next meeting is scheduled for January 24 and is open to Members and the public. Please contact us by phone at 416-583-6010 or by email to register as an observer.

REMINDER: Mandatory reporting of patient privacy breaches

Ontario naturopaths need to be aware of new mandatory reporting obligations under the *Personal Health Information Protection Act, 2004* (PHIPA) for all regulated health professionals in the province.

2018 exam schedules now online

Winter Exam Dates:

Ontario Clinical Exams for Entry-to-Practise
Exam Date: February 11, 2018
Registration Opens: December 4, 2017
Registration Deadline: January 8, 2018

All 2018 Ontario Clinical Exam dates.

Dates for IVIT and Prescribing exams to be offered starting in Spring 2018.

Out & about

Hosting a booth at this year's OAND Convention gave us a great opportunity to connect with College Members. We welcome your questions and comments anytime at 416-583-6010 or info@collegeofnaturopaths.on.ca. Inquiries are not noted on Member files, so you can ask us pretty much anything!

L to R: Jessica Maleganeas, QA Administrator, helped staff our booth, along with College President, Tara Gignac, ND and Director of Communications, Margot White.