



Members of the public everywhere expect openness and transparency from organizations. It is now a basic tenet of gaining respect and trust.

Patients, customers, consumers, members – they all expect more openness, more direct contact and better service. Here at the College, we understand this shift and are

completely committed to the principle of listening to a wide range of views.

Transparency is now seen as one of the cornerstone initiatives of modern governance. As a health care regulator, there are many legal restrictions on the breadth and depth of information that we can share with our members and with the public. However, we believe in an open and effective dialogue that focuses on a collaborative exchange of ideas and fair consideration of alternative points of view.

FAQs on transparency initiatives at the College

What does the College mean by “transparency”?

The College’s role is to support the delivery of safe and ethical dental care to the people of Ontario. Being transparent about our processes and decision-making is one way we do this. Transparency also means ensuring that our processes and information can be accessed easily by members, applicants and the public.

TRANSPARENCY PRINCIPLES

PRINCIPLE 1:

The mandate of regulators is public protection and safety. The public needs access to appropriate information in order to trust that this system of self-regulation works effectively.

PRINCIPLE 2:

Providing more information to the public has benefits, including improved patient choice and increased accountability for regulators.

PRINCIPLE 3:

Any information provided should enhance the public’s ability to make decisions or hold the regulator accountable. This information needs to be relevant, credible and accurate.

PRINCIPLE 4:

In order for information to be helpful to the public, it must:

- be timely, easy to find and understand.
- include context and explanation.



What work has the College been doing around transparency?

Over the past few years, the College has pursued several projects to increase access to information and processes. These include:

- Responding to issues and sharing relevant and timely information through our website and Dispatch.
- Allowing any member of the public to get involved in our public consultations for proposed regulations, by-laws, standards, guidelines, etc. Anyone who provides their e-mail address to us will automatically receive an e-mail at the same time as members when a new consultation is posted on our website.
- Creating a community consultation group to enhance our engagement with the public of Ontario and expand the opportunities to hear the public's voice in our discussions.

Part of the College's work around transparency includes making more information publicly available about Ontario's dentists. Why is the College doing this?

In the last few years, the public, the media and government have been demanding access to more information about the province's health care professionals, especially when it comes to conduct and practice issues.

In October 2014, every health care regulator in the province received a letter from the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. He formally requested

that each college develop and establish measures to continuously increase transparency in their processes and decision-making, and to make more information available to the public. Colleges were required to report back to the Ministry with their plan to increase transparency.

True to our values, transparency is at the forefront of initiatives here at the College. We sent a detailed report to the Minister summarizing our work in this area. This report can be found on the College's website.

Additionally, the College, along with several other health care regulators, have been looking at ways to make more information about health care providers available to the public.

Together with regulatory colleagues on the Advisory Group for Regulatory Excellence (AGRE), our College developed transparency principles to help shape recommendations for what additional public information about Ontario's dentists, nurses, doctors and pharmacists and other health care providers may be appropriate.

What information is currently available to the public about dentists?

The public can search for a dentist on the College's online register. The register contains information including dentists' registration history, allegations related to upcoming discipline hearings, outcomes resulting from disciplinary proceedings, terms, conditions and limitations on

ability to practise, as well as sedation and anesthesia, and dental CT scanner facility permits.

What additional information will become publicly available about dentists?

Based on AGRE's recommendations, the RCDSO Council supported making the following information publicly available:

- Criminal findings of guilt (made after January 1, 2015 and if relevant to practice)
- Caution decisions of the Inquiries, Complaints and Reports (ICR Committee (made on or after October 1, 2015)
- Specified Continuing Education or Remediation Program (SCERP) decisions of the ICR Committee (made on or after October 1, 2015)
- Additional information regarding upcoming Discipline hearings

Is there information that will not be made public?

Matters determined to be "low risk" will not be made public. These include complaints and reports on which the College takes no action, as well as matters that are addressed through a remedial agreement or advice from a College committee. All quality assurance information remains confidential.

Will dentists' personal information, like home addresses or e-mails, become public?

No. Your personal information, such as home and e-mail addresses, will remain confidential.

PRINCIPLE 5:

Certain regulatory processes intended to improve competence may lead to better outcomes for the public if they happen confidentially.

PRINCIPLE 6:

Transparency discussions should balance the principles of public protection and accountability, with fairness and privacy.

PRINCIPLE 7:

The greater the potential risk to the public, the more important transparency becomes.

PRINCIPLE 8:

Information available from Colleges about members and processes should be similar.



How did regulators decide what additional information would and would not be made public?

A set of transparency principles developed by the members of AGRE helped guide decision-making about what information would and would not be made public. Discussions were conducted with a focus on providing information that is relevant, credible and accurate, and balances the principles of public protection with fairness and privacy for dentists and complainants. By-laws, which were circulated in advance to all members and stakeholders for comment, were passed by Council.

What is the benefit of making this information public?

Making more information available allows members of the public to make informed decisions about who provides their care, and gives employers more information about who they are hiring. It allows care providers to demonstrate that they actively participate in addressing issues

about their practice and understand their accountabilities as health care professionals. It also helps regulators serve and protect public interest, increase accountability, and continue to earn and maintain the trust and confidence of the public.

How are dentists affected by this change?

The College anticipates that a small number of dentists will be affected by the release of additional information. In addition to the outcomes that are already made public, such as a referral of specified allegations of professional misconduct for a hearing before the Discipline Committee, the only decisions resulting from complaints and reports investigations that will be made public are:

- those where the panel requires the dentist to attend for a caution;
- those that require the dentist to complete a Specified Continuing Education or Remediation Program

(SCERP) or enter into an undertaking. As described below, this information is ultimately removed from the register.

In addition, dentists who have been convicted of criminal charges on or after January 1, 2015 and which the College determines is relevant to the ability to practise dentistry will be affected. In our experience, a very small number of dentists in Ontario are ever convicted of criminal charges by a court.

Are other regulatory colleges making more information about their members available?

Yes, the colleges for physicians, pharmacists, nurses, optometrists and physiotherapists are among the other regulators who are making similar information available about their members. It is anticipated that all of Ontario's 25 other health profession regulators will also make these changes. 🇺🇸

WHAT WILL APPEAR ON THE PUBLIC REGISTER

Caution decisions of the ICR Committee

- Includes the date of the decision, a summary of the caution, and a notation of whether the decision is under appeal.
- Only applies to decisions made on or after October 1, 2015.
- Is removed from the public register 24 months after the caution is delivered.

Specified Continuing Education or Remediation Program (SCERP) decisions of the ICR Committee

- Includes a summary of the SCERP and a notation of whether the decision is under appeal.
- Only applies to decisions made on or after October 1, 2015.
- Is removed after all components of the SCERP have been completed.

Criminal findings

A summary of criminal findings of guilt made against the member on or after January 1, 2015 in any jurisdiction is only included if it is determined that the finding is relevant to the practice of dentistry.

Additional information regarding pending discipline hearings

In addition to information that currently appears on register in relation to pending discipline hearings, the full notice of hearing and date of referral will be available. 🇺🇸

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RISK ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK

The risk assessment framework will guide Inquiries, Complaints and Reports Committee panels when they decide the outcomes of complaints and reports investigations.

The purpose of the framework is to ensure consistent, fair and transparent decision-making that is ultimately guided by the panel's analysis and assessment of risk.

The panel will use the following definitions of risk categories:

No or Minimal Risk

- Information does not support taking regulatory action

Low Risk

- Unlikely to have a direct impact on patient care, safety or the public interest

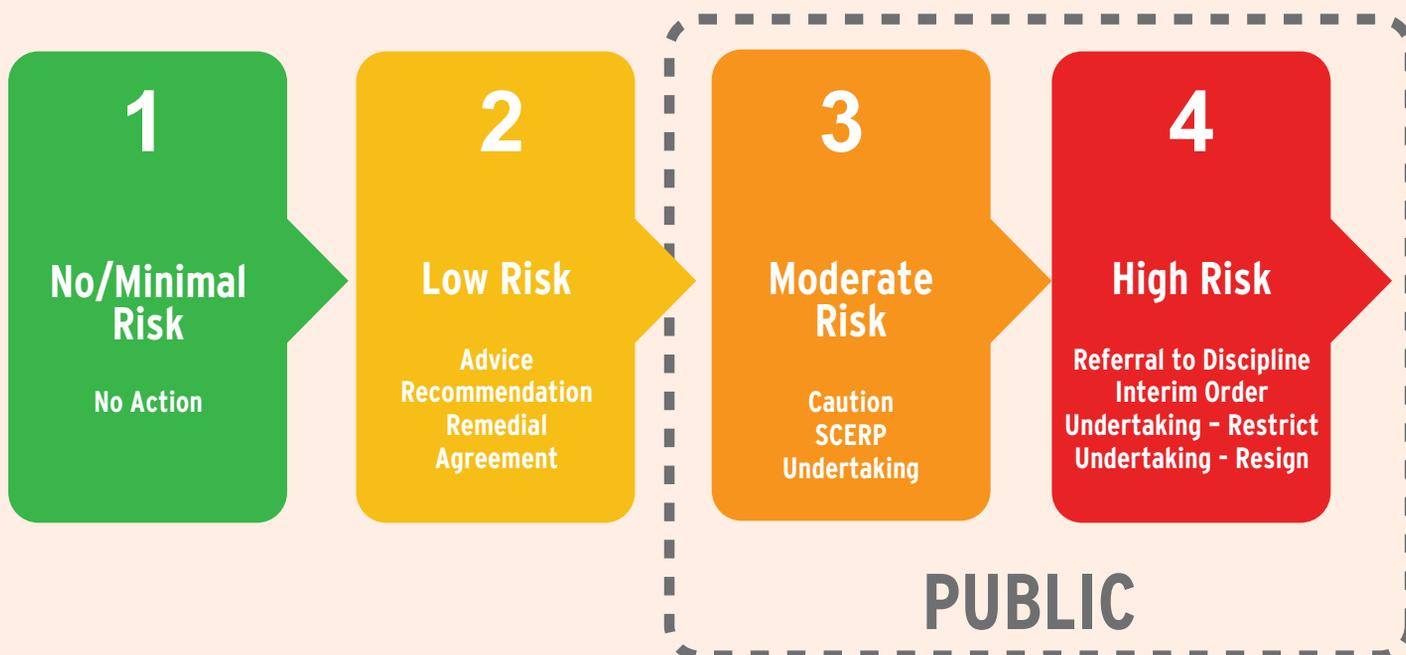
Moderate Risk

- Clinical issues requiring remediation or significant improvement through didactic or hands-on courses, mentoring, assessments and/or evaluations
- Concerns related to an aspect of the member's conduct or practice that may have a direct impact on patient care, safety or the public interest if not addressed

High Risk

- Serious concerns regarding the member's conduct or practice that are likely to have a direct impact on patient care, safety or the public interest
- Concerns cannot be addressed through other remedial actions, or previous remedial actions have been attempted unsuccessfully
- Clinical issues requiring restrictions or conditions on practice, or a withdrawal or resignation from practice

AGRE Risk Assessment Framework



Note: This framework will be consistently used by all regulatory colleges within AGRE.