

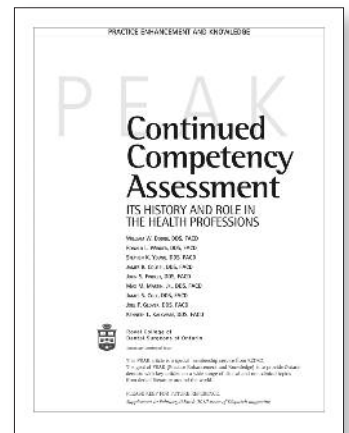
Continued Competency Assessment in Dentistry

PEAK (Practice Enhancement and Knowledge) is a College service for members. The goal is to regularly provide Ontario dentists with copies of key articles on a wide range of clinical and non-clinical topics from the dental literature around the world.

It is important to note that PEAK articles may contain opinions, views or statements that are not necessarily endorsed by the College. However, PEAK is committed to providing quality material to enhance the knowledge and skills of member dentists.

Continued competency is a large part of the responsibility owed by a health care profession to the public. In exchange for exclusivity in its activities, the public expects a health care profession to maintain the knowledge and skill base of the profession, apply them in a fiduciary manner with each patient and self-regulate each of its members.

With the proclamation of the Regulated Health Professions Act (RHPA) in January 1994, all colleges of the regulated health care professions in Ontario were required to formally develop, establish and maintain standards of knowledge and skill, along with programs to promote continuing education, competence and improvement among their members.



The Health Professions Procedural Code made under the RHPA further prescribes the expected components of each College's quality assurance program, such that it shall include:

- continuing education or professional development;
- self, peer and practice assessments;
- a mechanism for the College to monitor members' participation in and compliance with the quality assurance program.

“ULTIMATELY, THE ISSUE MUST BE: THE INDIVIDUAL HEALTH CARE PROVIDER HAS A PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY FOR MAINTAINING HIS OR HER COMPETENCE.”

Continued competency assessments are not new to the health care professions. With the current issue of Dispatch, PEAK is pleased to offer members the following article that provides a broad perspective on this important subject:

“Continued Competency Assessment – Its History and Role in the Health

Professions”, from the Fall 2012 issue of the Journal of the American College of Dentists.

The article emphasizes the implicit contract between a health care profession and the public, such that the profession will develop continued competency assessment and enforcement mechanisms to ensure that patients can expect to receive safe and competent care.

The article reviews the available literature from several health care professions and jurisdictions. It presents the concern that continued practice alone does not necessarily ensure continued competency in a changing profession and that mandatory continuing education attendance is insufficient. In addition, the article examines this subject from the public's perspective, which assumes that incompetent providers will be identified.

The article concludes: “Ultimately, the issue must be: the individual health care provider has a primary responsibility for maintaining his or her competence.”

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