



## College of Homeopaths of Ontario

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### News Release

## Patient Protection at the Forefront with Proclamation of the *Homeopathy Act, 2007*

College of Homeopaths of Ontario established to ensure safe and competent practice, recognize diversity in patient choice

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April 1, 2015 marks the proclamation date of the *Homeopathy Act, 2007*, which sets out the terms for establishing homeopathy as one of 28 self-regulated health professions in Ontario. This date also ushers in a new era of protection for homeopathy patients.

“We have a rich and diverse population in Ontario,” says Bhupinder Sharma, the College’s President. “Many patients choose homeopathy because it works for them.” Sharma added that “Ontario’s health-care system includes many options, and we are pleased to see patient choice and public safety coming together.”

Regulation will ensure that homeopaths practise to a standard that is defined and maintained. In order to register, applicants must have proven their competence through an assessment of their knowledge, skill and judgement. Registrants will take part in ongoing quality assurance initiatives, focusing on education and standards of practice.

“We are pleased to post the Public Register of qualified and competent homeopaths,” says College Registrar Basil Ziv. “Getting to this point has taken many years and a lot of hard work. Proclamation allows the College to use the full powers of the *Homeopathy Act, 2007*.”

As of April 1, only those who are registered with the College can use the title “Homeopath.” What sets registered homeopaths apart is that, under the *Regulated Health Professions Act, 1991*, they are accountable to the College of Homeopaths of Ontario to provide safe, competent and ethical practice. An exhaustive set of professional practice standards and guidelines has been developed to form the backdrop against which practice will be maintained. The public register of homeopaths will be available to allow patients and others to determine the registration status of a practitioner. Additionally, a discipline process will be in place to ensure that complaints can be dealt with fairly and effectively.

The College of Homeopaths of Ontario is governed by the *Regulated Health Professions Act, 1991* and the *Homeopathy Act, 2007*. These acts ensure consistent implementation of public protection mechanisms and allow patients, employers and other health care professions to make complaints against practitioners who fall below the health care standards set by the College and the Government of Ontario.

For more information on the Public Register, complaints process, registration requirements, professional practice standards, and ongoing regulatory programs, please see the College’s website: [www.collegeofhomeopaths.on.ca](http://www.collegeofhomeopaths.on.ca) .

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# Background: College of Homeopaths of Ontario



## What is homeopathy?

Homeopathy is a system of medicine used around the world and based on the principle of “let likes be cured by likes.” Patients who exhibit symptoms of disease are treated with administration of minute doses of substances to stimulate the individual’s natural healing process in order to restore and maintain health.

Homeopaths are trained health-care practitioners who observe and assess the totality of signs and symptoms that the patient exhibits. This totality refers to taking all the symptoms a patient exhibits on a physical, mental, emotional and general level, and prescribing a remedy that best matches this symptom profile. Treatment involves choosing the appropriate remedy, which is administered in minute doses with the aim of stimulating the individual’s healing response.

## What is the homeopathic scope of practice?

Under the *Homeopathy Act, 2007*, the scope of practice is defined as “the assessment of body system disorders and treatment using homeopathic techniques to promote, maintain or restore health.” The College of Homeopaths of Ontario has created a series of professional practice standards and guidelines to define the safe and effective practice and scope of practice for homeopathy.

## Where do homeopaths work?

Homeopaths work in a variety of settings including private practice, multi-practitioner health-care centres, pharmacies, and other health-care settings.

## Do patients need a referral from a family doctor?

Homeopathy may be used independently to treat acute or chronic illness or disorders or as an adjunct to other forms of health care. In many cases homeopaths are part of the patient’s multi-disciplinary health care team. A referral is not required to see a homeopath.

## What should a patient expect upon visiting a homeopath?

At the first consultation the homeopath will spend at least one to two hours, sometimes longer, asking detailed questions about one’s health, medical history, and lifestyle. The homeopath is seeking to understand how the patient experiences symptoms and how they affect daily life, so that s/he can assess and prescribe the most appropriate remedy to match the totality of symptoms. The homeopath will obtain informed consent prior to completing their visit with the patient and prior to providing remedy options.

Subsequent consultations are often shorter in duration and will involve discussing the changes that have occurred, so that the homeopath can understand how the patient has responded to the remedy and what the next treatment step will be.

## Will patients have to pay for treatment?

Homeopathic care may be covered by individual health-care benefits plans. Patients should check with their employers or insurance providers for more details.

## How can a patient find a homeopath?

As of April 1, 2015, homeopathy is a regulated health profession in Ontario. Regulation will ensure all homeopaths meet the education and clinical experience criteria set out by the College of Homeopaths of Ontario. Homeopaths will also be required to undergo assessment to demonstrate their knowledge, skills and judgment in the practice of the profession. The competency-based assessment is conducted by a third-party assessment expert. Once the homeopath has completed their assessment and satisfied the other necessary registration requirements, they may be considered for registration with the College of Homeopaths of Ontario.

Once registered, the Homeopath’s name will appear on the Public Register of the College. The Public Register provides the public with information about the practitioner including business name and address, years in practice, status of College regulation, and information about any formal disciplinary or fitness to practice issues.

### **Regulated Health Professions Act, 1991**

The *Regulated Health Professions Act, 1991* (RHPA), which came into force on December 31, 1993, and was amended in June 2007, provides a common legislative framework under which all regulated health professions in Ontario must function. Currently 28 health professions (27 fully regulated, 1 transitional) are regulated under the RHPA.

The underlying objectives of the RHPA are:

- To protect the public from harm and from unqualified, incompetent or unfit providers;
- To promote safe, high quality care;
- To make regulated health professions accountable to the public;
- To provide patients/clients access to health-care professionals of their choice;
- To achieve equality and consistency by requiring all regulated health professions adhere to the same purposes, procedures and public interest principles;
- To treat individual patients/clients and health professionals in an equitable manner.

### **Homeopathy Act, 2007**

Every regulated health profession in Ontario has, in addition to the RHPA, a profession-specific Act which establishes a regulatory college responsible for governing the profession to ensure the public is protected. The *Homeopathy Act, 2007* establishes the College of Homeopaths of Ontario.

The *Homeopathy Act, 2007* sets out:

- The scope of practice of homeopathy is defined as "...the assessment of body system disorders and treatment using homeopathic techniques to promote, maintain or restore health";
- Title protection, authorizing only members of the College of Homeopaths of Ontario the use of the title "homeopath," a variation or abbreviation or an equivalent in another language;
- The composition of the College Council.

### **How does the College protect the public?**

In Ontario, the law sets out the responsibilities, powers and procedures for the College of Homeopaths of Ontario to regulate the profession of homeopathy in the interest of public protection. The College works for the public to ensure that homeopaths are qualified to offer safe, competent and ethical care.

### **Accountability**

While anyone can legally provide homeopathy education and advice, what sets registered homeopaths apart is that, under the *Regulated Health Professions Act, 1991*, they are accountable to the College of Homeopaths of Ontario to provide safe, competent and ethical practice. Each homeopath must participate in quality assurance and practice assessment programs to ensure continuing competency. Under certain circumstances, homeopaths and employers have an obligation to report registrants who are not practising ethically, safely and competently.

### **Complaints Resolution Process**

The College also has a complaints resolution process in place for anyone who has a concern or complaint about the services they have received from a homeopath. The College has the responsibility and power to investigate and take action in all complaints.

### **Homeopath: A Protected Health Profession Title**

In Ontario, only members of the College of Homeopaths of Ontario are regulated and authorized to use the title "Homeopath" or "HOM." Individuals who are not members of the College are prohibited from using this professional designation or from holding themselves out as qualified to practise as a homeopath. You can verify that your homeopath is a qualified and registered member by consulting the Public Register.