



College of Homeopaths of Ontario

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STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES

TITLE:	ACCEPTING NEW PATIENTS
DOC #:	Standard 1
STATUS:	Approved by Council
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Note to Readers: In the event of any inconsistency between this document and the legislation that affects homeopathic practice, the legislation governs.

College publications contain practice parameters and standards which should be considered by all Ontario homeopaths in the care of their patients and in the practice of the profession. College publications are developed in consultation with the profession and describe current professional expectations. It is important to note that these College publications may be used by the College or other bodies in determining whether appropriate standards of practice and professional responsibilities have been maintained.

POLICY

Homeopaths must abide by the Ontario Human Rights Code, which prohibits discrimination on the following grounds: race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, sex, sexual orientation (which includes gender identity and expression), age, marital status, family status, and disability. The Human Rights Code applies to the provision of all services, including health care. Failure to abide by the Human Rights Code may result in a proceeding before the Ontario Human Rights Tribunal. It may also result in disciplinary action before the College.

INTENT

The intent of this standard is to provide guidance to registrants and the public about accepting new patients into a homeopathic practice.

PREAMBLE

This standard of practice has been developed in conjunction with the College's Standard of Practice on Discontinuing Care to provide guidance to both patients and practitioners on access to care.

Both patient and practitioner must be safe within the therapeutic relationship. Safe practice includes competent, ethical and trustworthy care and business practices delivered in accordance with the College's standards, guidelines and policies.

While homeopaths should ethically accept or refuse new patients on a first-come, first-served basis, clinical competence and scope of practice¹ are permissible grounds for prioritizing or limiting patient entry into a practice.

¹ Every homeopath has a unique scope of practice, which is determined by the homeopath's clinical competence, the patients the homeopaths cares for, the treatments provided and the practice environment. A homeopath's ability to perform competently in his or her scope of practice is determined by the homeopath's knowledge, skills and judgment, which are developed through training and



DESCRIPTION OF STANDARD

It is not appropriate for homeopaths to screen potential patients in a manner which may result in discriminatory actions. This behaviour can compromise public trust in the profession.

It is acknowledged that there are some legitimate times where it may be within the best interest of the patient to inform the patient that homeopathy can not help their current health status. This may be done by conducting a very brief initial assessment in person or by phone to determine if homeopathy is appropriate. In such situations it is necessary that the registrant inform the patient of the reason for withholding treatment or turning away the patient. For example, emergency care requirements outside of homeopathic scope of practice, contra-indicators, etc.

Clinical Competence and Scope of Practice

Some homeopathic practices are focused on treating certain groups of individuals, such as female or geriatric patients. Where the focus is legitimately based on clinical competence, experience and a clearly defined scope of practice, this would, in most cases, be an acceptable reason for refusing to accept a potential patient. Refusal on this basis likely would not infringe the Human Rights Code.

Decisions to accept or refuse new patients must be made in good faith. Clinical competence and scope of practice must not be used as a means of unfairly refusing patients or turning away patients who are perceived to be otherwise "difficult."

Clinical competence and scope of practice must be communicated to all individuals who inquire about becoming new patients. This will help determine if it is appropriate for the patient to make an appointment. The Registrant must make their best effort to assist the patient or refer on when possible.

Notwithstanding the above, it is appropriate for patients in need to receive priority access to care. Determination of need may be based on assessment by an individual homeopath. When determining the priority of need for the purpose of accepting new patients, each homeopath is expected to act in good faith.

DEFINITIONS

For the purpose of this standard the following definitions apply:

Homeopath

"Homeopath" means a registrant of the College of Homeopaths of Ontario.

Registrant

A Registrant is a member of the College of Homeopaths of Ontario.



LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT

Ontario Human Rights Code

Registrants are reminded that the following provision may apply to this standard under *Homeopathy Act, 2007, Ontario Regulation 315/12 Professional Misconduct* (Note: This regulation is not yet in force. It comes into force on the day named by proclamation of the Lieutenant Governor.):

48. Engaging in conduct or performing an act relevant to the practice of the profession that, having regard to all the circumstances, would reasonably be regarded by members as disgraceful, dishonourable or unprofessional.

RELATED STANDARDS

#7 Standard of Practice on Discontinuing Professional Services and Refusing Treatment

#14 Standard of Practice on Principles of Professional Ethics

SOURCE

College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario