



## Championing the profession: Doctors of BC's long-standing Health Professions and Occupations Act advocacy

On 1 April 2026, the new Health Professions and Occupations Act (HPOA) took full effect, introducing significant changes to the regulation of health professions in BC. I was at the Doctors of BC Board meeting in 2019 when we became aware that changes were on the horizon, following the release of the Cayton Report—an inquiry into the performance of the College of Dental Surgeons of British Columbia, along with recommendations on broader health profession regulation modernization.<sup>1</sup> Since that moment, Doctors of BC has advocated extensively on behalf of physicians, raising concerns with government about the HPOA's potential unintended consequences for the profession and patient care. We have also consistently emphasized the importance of meaningful consultation and engagement with physicians and other health care professionals. Unfortunately, it appears that the government has not listened to many of our concerns.

While there is support for some aspects of the HPOA, other changes remain deeply concerning to many of us. These include expanded government oversight of professional regulation, heightened anxiety and fear of retaliation stemming from the new complaints and investigations process, and a growing shift toward a culture of defensive medicine that could further increase health care costs. Many physicians are also reporting increasing moral injury and concerns about psychological safety.

Members have made it clear that BC needs a balanced approach to regulating health professionals that recognizes and

supports professional expertise, autonomy, and accountability. At a time when our province faces a serious health human resource crisis, physicians need assurance that their work is valued and that they remain trusted partners in the health care system. Overly rigid regulation signals mistrust and undermines the conditions needed for a high-functioning, sustainable health care system.

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Now that the HPOA is in effect, Doctors of BC is shifting its advocacy focus to monitoring the legislation's impact on physicians and advocating for mechanisms that ensure health professionals have meaningful influence over HPOA-related matters.

A key part of this work is hearing directly from members about their experiences. Already, some physicians have told us that the HPOA is contributing to early retirement decisions, while others are considering leaving the province. We want to better understand how these changes are affecting you and your practice. I encourage you to share your experiences through our “Have Your Say” online engagement platform

(<https://haveyoursaydoctorsofbc.ca>). Your feedback will help inform and strengthen our ongoing advocacy efforts.

Doctors of BC will provide ongoing updates and resources to help members navigate practice under the HPOA. Additional information on our advocacy efforts, member engagement, and ongoing work related to the legislation is available on the dedicated HPOA web page ([www.doctorsofbc.ca/HPOA](http://www.doctorsofbc.ca/HPOA)).

When it comes to advocating on your behalf—whether about the HPOA or about any issue affecting physicians and patient care—I encourage you to keep speaking up and working with us. Together, our voices are stronger. ■

—Adam Thompson, MD  
Doctors of BC President

### Reference

1. Cayton H. An inquiry into the performance of the College of Dental Surgeons of British Columbia and the Health Professions Act. December 2018. Accessed 19 May 2026. [www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/health/practitioner-pro/professional-regulation/cayton-report-college-of-dental-surgeons-2018.pdf](http://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/health/practitioner-pro/professional-regulation/cayton-report-college-of-dental-surgeons-2018.pdf).