

**Ontario Coalition of Mental Health Professionals**

***Frequently Asked Questions***

**New Law Regulating Psychotherapy**

August 2007

**Q. When does the new *Psychotherapy Act* come into effect?**

A. Bill 171, of which the *Psychotherapy Act, 2007* was a part, received Royal Assent on June 4. Only Sections I, 2 and 12 of the *Act* came into force at that time. They provide for the name of the new College; for incorporating the Health Professions Procedural Code into the *Act*; and for the transition period to set up the new College before the rest of the provisions come into force.

**Q. When will the new *College of Psychotherapists and Registered Mental Health Therapists of Ontario* be up and running?**

A. It is impossible to predict how long the transition period will last, however, the time required to set up a new regulatory body can often take two years or more. During that time, the Transitional Council is responsible for setting standards for registration, processing applications, issuing certificates of registration, and setting application fees.

**Q. How is the Transitional Council chosen?**

A. The members of the Transitional Council are appointed by the provincial government. There will be a public selection process conducted by the Public Appointments Secretariat. The Coalition is encouraging qualified applicants from its member groups to submit applications. *Guidelines* on the appointment process and a *Candidate Profile* have been circulated to all Coalition partners.

**Q. Who will be regulated?**

A. There will be two protected titles granted to registrants of the new College, *Psychotherapist* and *Registered Mental Health Therapist*. The Transitional Council will develop standards and criteria for determining which registrants are certified under each of these professional titles. The Coalition has lobbied for an expansive approach to regulation that would include a broad range of mental health professionals.

**Q. Can I keep practicing legally using my current professional title?**

- A.** Yes. Nothing will change during the period in which the Transitional Council is setting up the new College. You can continue to legally offer services under whatever professional title you are currently using. Even after you are registered as a *Psychotherapist* or a *Registered Mental Health Therapist*, you can continue to practice using your current professional title, provided it is not a title legally restricted to other practitioners under the *Regulated Health Professions Act*.

**Q. Will members of Coalition partner groups automatically qualify for registration in the new College?**

- A.** No. Registration will be conducted on an individual basis and each mental health professional will be required to apply independently and meet the standards and criteria established by the Transitional Council.  
OAMFT is hopeful that the standards that are already required to become a Clinical Member of AAMFT, will meet the standards yet to be established by the Transitional Council. There will likely be a place in the College for those who are Associate, Affiliate or Student members, but all this will be decided by the Transitional Council.

**Q. If I don't qualify for registration, how long will I have to upgrade my qualifications?**

- A.** The Transitional Council will develop the criteria for assessing the right combination of academic training and professional experience that will be required to register. Each applicant that does not qualify initially will be provided with precise information about the upgrading required and the relevant timelines.

**Q. What about grandparenting?**

- A.** Grandparenting is a mechanism that allows new regulatory bodies to register members who do not meet the academic/clinical requirements but who can show that they have relevant experience in the field. The Transitional Council will decide the timelines and qualifications necessary for the grandparenting of experienced practitioners of psychotherapy.

**Q. How much will it cost to join the new College?**

- A.** The fees will depend largely on the number of registrants. The fees vary in Colleges governed by the Regulated Health Professions Act depending on the size of the membership. The approximate annual fee psychologists is \$795.00; occupational therapists, \$500.00; social workers, \$340.00; and nurses, \$124.00.

**Q. If I'm already in a regulated profession such as psychology or social work, will I have to also register in the new College?**

**A.** No. You can continue to practice in the regulated profession of which you are already a member. However, if you wish to practice under the protected title of *Psychotherapist* or *Registered Mental Health Therapist* you must register in the new College or risk legal sanctions.

**Q. Will all registrants of the new College be able to perform the Controlled Act of psychotherapy?**

**A.** The Transitional College will develop criteria for granting the Controlled Act to registrants of the new College. The *Act* does not specify who among the registrants will be granted the Controlled Act, it only defines the Controlled Act. The Coalition has already conducted an initial review of relevant case law in Ontario and Alberta in order to address this important policy issue.

**Q. Is the same true for the other regulated professions granted the Controlled Act of psychotherapy?**

**A.** Yes. The *Psychotherapy Act, 2007* grants the Controlled Act to physicians, psychologists, nurses, occupational therapists and social workers. Their respective regulatory bodies will establish standards and criteria for granting the Controlled Act to members who meet the qualifications..

**Q. Will I still need to be a member of my professional association after joining the new College?**

**A.** Colleges and professional associations have two distinct and totally separate functions. Colleges exist to serve and protect the interests of the public, the consumers of services, while professional associations exist to serve the interests of its members and the profession, the providers of services.

There are clear benefits to retaining membership in OAMFT/AAMFT after joining the new College. OAMFT has functioned to serve its members for more than 30 years and will continue to do so. Check the members benefits page to review your benefits as a member of OAMFT.