

**Ministry of Health
and Long-Term Care**

Office of the Minister

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**Ministère de la Santé
et des Soins de longue durée**

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Dear Presidents, Registrars and Executive Directors:

The Premier recently announced initiatives to raise awareness of sexual violence and harassment, enhance prevention initiatives to combat sexual discrimination, harassment and violence, and improve support for victims. As part of her announcement, Premier Wynne has asked Ministers to bring forward options to enhance support for victims of sexual violence in a number of sectors, including health care.

The purpose of the sexual abuse provisions as set out in the Health Professions Procedural Code, which is Schedule 2 of the *Regulated Health Professions Act, 1991* (RHPA), is to encourage the reporting of sexual abuse by regulated health professionals, provide funding for therapy and counseling for patients who have been sexually abused by such professionals, and ultimately, to eradicate the sexual abuse of patients by health regulatory college members. However, concerns have been raised recently about the RHPA's sexual abuse provisions and whether changes are needed to update them.

As a result of these concerns and keeping the Premier's announcement in mind, I have established the Minister's Task Force on the Prevention of Sexual Abuse of Patients and the *Regulated Health Professions Act, 1991*. I have asked the Task Force to examine and provide me with advice and recommendations on how best to strengthen the RHPA's sexual abuse provisions by no later than the Spring of 2015.

I am pleased that Ms. Marilou McPhedran, the Honourable R. Roy McMurtry and Ms. Sheila MacDonald have agreed to participate on the Task Force. These individuals bring a wealth of knowledge and experience and their appointment signals the importance that I place on the issue of sexual abuse of patients.

Accordingly, I am asking that all Colleges fully participate in and cooperate with the Task Force as it carries out its advisory work.

I would also like to emphasize the importance of health regulatory Colleges' patient relations programs with regard to the sexual abuse of patients. I am therefore also asking each health regulatory College to provide me with information on the current status and operations of its patient relations program's measures for preventing and dealing with the

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sexual abuse of patients. Specifically, such information should include information on the patient relations program's educational requirements for members, guidelines for the conduct of members, training for college staff, and measures regarding the provision of information to the public.

I ask that the Councils and transitional Councils of each health regulatory College report back to my Ministry by no later than January 23, 2015. Please report back to the following ministry official:

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I further ask that Colleges continue to ensure that individuals who bring forward complaints regarding allegations involving sexual abuse of a patient are treated sensitively and compassionately.

I look forward to reviewing what the Task Force has to say on these issues and continuing to work with you to affirm and reinforce Ontario's ongoing commitment to a zero tolerance approach to sexual abuse of patients by regulated health professionals.

Yours sincerely,



Dr. Eric Hoskins
Minister