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# Communiqué

September 2019

[version française](#)

**This month: Fraud, professional misconduct, QA reminders + more**

## By-election: Voting now open!

A by-election is being held in CRPO region [District 6](#) (Central West), where two candidates stepped forward to run: Parmjit Rathaur and Radhika Sundar.

Voting is now open; those eligible to vote in District 6 may log in to their user accounts, click on the “Election” tab and follow the instructions for casting a ballot. You may first [review the candidates’ statements here](#). District 6 has some important, unique features [highlighted in this video](#). Not sure if you live in District 6? Check out the [handy map here](#) or check the “Election” tab in your user account.

Congratulations to Heidi Ahonen, RP, who was acclaimed to the District 1 (West) Council seat when the nominations period closed on July 24. Heidi has previously served as an appointed member on the Discipline and Registration Committees. Council and staff are looking forward to her contribution as an elected member.

Questions? Email [elections@crpo.ca](mailto:elections@crpo.ca)

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Andrew Benedetto,  
CRPO President

## President's Message

As my third term as president comes to an end, I have had the privilege of gaining some insights into the role of CRPO as a regulator of the profession of psychotherapy in Ontario.

While the College was built for “public protection” it has become evident that we could also describe the work of CRPO as *ensuring that the public can be assured of competent and accountable psychotherapists*. It is important to remember that regulation identifies competencies for new psychotherapists, encourages ongoing professional development, and maintains professional practice standards, all toward supporting the work of psychotherapy professionals. CRPO’s role in taking and addressing complaints is surely a significant function in its mandate, but one of many functions that serve the public interest.

I have learned that the regulation of a profession is not a static endeavour if it hopes to continue to deliver on its mandate. A regulator should work to identify and adapt to changes that occur in the profession and the regulatory environment.

For this reason, the Council of CRPO is undertaking its first strategic plan to determine goals and priorities for the coming years. A good amount of information has been gathered from stakeholders over the previous year to help inform the strategic planning process. And, an opportunity exists to ensure that College governance, the structures and processes that describe how decision-making is undertaken to meet its objectives, can best meet the needs of the organization in delivering on its mandate. Council is undertaking a review in this area.

CRPO is in the fortunate position of building on a solid foundation—the public protection mandate has always been clear and explicit. As we consider where CRPO might adapt or change based on identified needs, anticipated changes in health regulation, and best practices in regulation, we will no doubt be asking of any decision: “How does this serve the public interest?”

As always, I encourage all stakeholders to share their perspective on the work of CRPO through public consultations among other College initiatives and invitations for your input.

I would like to thank Council members as well as Deb Adams and her staff for their high level of engagement in our shared work and I look forward to continuing to serve on Council. The next CRPO president will be announced in the next issue of the Communiqué.

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## Insurance Companies Cracking Down on Fraud

Whether it's happening inadvertently or deliberately, a number of CRPO applicants and registrants have recently been investigated by insurance companies for committing insurance fraud, most commonly by using the wrong billing code in relation to their registration status with CRPO. Applicants who are not yet entitled to use the Registered Psychotherapist or Registered Psychotherapist (Qualifying) title must not use the billing codes reserved for these titles on insurance documents. Those with the RP or RP (Qualifying) title must not use a billing code that suggests they are a psychologist or other type of care provider.

CRPO expects all applicants and registrants to conduct themselves within the confines of the law, CRPO's [Professional Practice Standards](#), and aspiring to uphold the [Code of Ethics](#). In particular, registrants should be familiar with the standards on [Business Practices](#). If you are unsure about billing practices – particularly if you are part of a supervised practice that bills under another provider – you may wish to contact the Practice Advisory to ensure you understand your professional obligations.

CRPO has also seen more inquiries from insurance companies about scope of practice, the use protected titles and access to up-to-date registration information. These inquiries indicate that there is a growing recognition of the skills and services RPs contribute to the mental health system. We know that much of this is due to the work of individual RPs and professional associations toward obtaining third party insurance coverage for services provided by Registered Psychotherapists and it would seem that progress is being made on this front. Fraud erodes those efforts.

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## Professional Misconduct

Did you know the following could be considered professional misconduct if used on your psychotherapy website, business cards, or in a clinical setting?

- Dr. Jane Doe, RP (use of doctor title in clinical capacity)
- Jane Doe, RP(Q) (not fully spelling out “Qualifying”)
- Jane Doe, RP, PhD (if the academic degree unrelated to psychotherapy, e.g. computer science)

To make sure that you’re using your title properly, refer to the practice standard on [Use of Terms, Titles and Designations](#).

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**Currency Reminder**

Members in the [Registered Psychotherapist category](#) are required to maintain 750 currency hours of broadly defined activities related to psychotherapy on a rolling three-year basis. Inactive members also need to be mindful of their currency hours.

When spread out over the three years, this amounts to less than 5 hours per week.

If an Inactive member is short of 750 currency hours in the three years prior to requesting to return to active practice, their request may be referred to the Registration Committee.

Members who have completed fewer than 750 currency hours in the previous three calendar years may be required to complete upgrading activities or undergo a peer and practice assessment.

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## QA Deadline For 2015 And 2017 Registrants

Did you register with CRPO in 2015 or 2017? If so, you have an important mandatory QA deadline coming up.

By November 30, 2019 you need to make sure you've met your Professional Development (PD) requirements. Show us you've met your requirements by making sure you've completed each of these PD tools within the past 2 years:

- Self-Assessment
- Learning Plan
- Learning Record

These tools are available in the QA Portal, which you can access by clicking on the "QA" tab in your [CRPO account](#). You can learn more about these QA requirements, including the 40-hour learning activity requirement, by reading the [PD Guide](#).

## Providing References

As a Registered Psychotherapist, you may be asked to sign off on supervision hours or comment on someone's character and competence as a psychotherapist. In such cases, you should be mindful of the weight that your words carry. As a self-regulated professional using a protected title, you have an explicit obligation to the people you serve and to the public. You have also made a commitment to following a code of ethics that is based on principles that include excellence in practice, integrity and responsibility. You are encouraged to keep these commitments in mind when providing information to the College or other third parties.

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## Scam Targeting Psychotherapists

CRPO has heard from several registrants who have been contacted by scammers recently. The scam is that the potential client will contact an RP about booking a series of sessions over a period of one to three months, usually in advance of the “client” being in town for a short period of time, such as a vacation or sabbatical or a break in work. The client asks for fee information, and pays up front for the series of sessions. Shortly before the first session, the client will cancel for whatever reason (e.g. the purported vacation being cut short).

[This article on the scam](#) explains the rest:

*Here's the issue: the original check will always bounce. Not only are you out the original fee (no big deal—you never actually rendered services), but you also lose whatever amount you "refunded" plus bank fees for the bounced check. The scammer quickly runs off with your "refund" often before you even have a chance to cancel the check.*

Registrants are encouraged to contact local law enforcement agencies if they suspect they have been targeted in this scam.

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**New Legislation in Effect: Missing Persons Act**



There is a new law, effective July 1<sup>st</sup>, that applies to everyone but may have special application to health care practitioners. The *Missing Persons Act* (<https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/18m03>) enables police to make an “urgent demand for records” where the “missing person” has not been in contact with people they would expect to have been in contact with and there is reasonable grounds to believe their safety is at risk. While this demand can be made of anyone, **it is anticipated that health care practitioners, cell phone providers and financial institutions are most likely to receive these requests**. The request from the police will specify the type of information sought, which information is intended to assist the police in locating the individual. This new power is designed to assist in cases where no criminal activity is suspected (where search warrants would be available). Likely the exceptions in the *Personal Health Information Protection Act* (PHIPA) already permits this disclosure, but now **cooperation is mandatory**.

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## Community Housing and Homeless Services

Ontario’s *Housing Services Act, 2011* aims “to provide for community based planning and delivery of housing and homelessness services with general provincial oversight and policy direction” (s 1(a)). These services include rent-geared-to-income housing assistance. If someone requiring this assistance has been subject to abuse or trafficking, their household may be given priority. **Registered Psychotherapists are among a list of professionals who may, in appropriate circumstances, provide a report confirming that abuse or trafficking has occurred.** The relevant rules are highly detailed and linked below. CRPO’s [Access to Care Position Statement](#) supports such measures allowing Ontarians to receive needed services that RPs are well-positioned to provide. Some relevant resources:

[Affordable Housing in Ontario](#)  
[Housing Services Act, 2001, Part V: Rent-Geared-to-Income Assistance and Special Needs Housing](#)  
[O. Reg. 367/11: General, under Housing Services Act, 2011, Rent-Geared-to-Income Assistance — Priority Rules](#)

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**Listen Up!**

Two CRPO staff, Jenna Smith and Mark Piro, participated in a podcast recording hosted by CLEAR (Council on Licensure, Enforcement and Regulation) called “Addressing Mental Health Concerns in the Investigative Process.” [Listen here](#).

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CRPO is now on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and [LinkedIn](#). Follow our feed for the latest on new resources, Council election updates, governance decisions and more!

The next meeting of CRPO Council will take place on September 13, 9:30 - 3:30 at the [CRPO office](#). Want to attend?

Register ahead of time and review the [guidelines on attendance](#).

Seating is limited and so you are asked to ensure you have a confirmation before attending!



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Please do not unsubscribe. CRPO uses email to communicate with registrants about important College updates. If you choose to unsubscribe, it is then your responsibility to regularly check our website to keep yourself informed about your College obligations. It is the responsibility of each registrant to make sure CRPO has your current contact information, updated within 30 days of a change, and ensure that the organization you work for does not block CRPO emails.

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