

College of Midwives of Ontario Stakeholder Engagement Strategy



College of
Midwives
of Ontario

Ordre des
sages-femmes
de l'Ontario

Stakeholder Engagement Strategy

The role of the College of Midwives of Ontario (College) is to protect client safety and maintain public confidence in midwifery services. To achieve this, we register qualified midwifery professionals, set professional standards and standards for continuous education and professional development, and investigate complaints and reports about professionals' competence, conduct and fitness to practise.

We cannot effectively fulfil our mandate of regulating in the public interest without thoughtful engagement with stakeholders. We believe that we do better working with others, and that maintaining quality relationships with our stakeholders will enable us to achieve better regulatory outcomes. We recognize the limits of our own statutory powers and responsibilities. Our focus is always on the needs of the clients and the public and by building a comprehensive stakeholder engagement we will ensure that issues are dealt with by the most appropriate organization rather than simply falling outside our remit.

Purpose and Objectives

This strategy sets out how the College will engage with its stakeholders and includes the objectives and principles we work to.

Effective stakeholder engagement will help us achieve the following:

1. Make the best use of data and information held by the stakeholders to enable more effective use of College resources
2. Improve understanding of the external environment
3. Use stakeholder engagement as an effective regulatory tool to help the membership and students better navigate the regulatory landscape
4. Clarify roles and responsibilities of various organizations that have a stake in the midwifery profession or professional regulation in Ontario and other Canadian jurisdictions
5. Communicate the College's position and influence decision makers
6. Increase everyone's trust, confidence and knowledge of midwifery regulation in Ontario.

In the immediate future, our stakeholder engagement will contribute towards achieving our strategic priorities set out the [College's 2017-2020 Strategic Plan](#).

Modernization of Legislation and Regulation

The College is reviewing all of the legislation and regulations that govern midwifery and proposing amendments to the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (Ministry). Through strengthening partnerships with stakeholders, including those at the Ministry and legislative staff, and meaningful consultation with the public, midwives, and midwifery students, we will be better positioned to achieve this strategic priority.

Implementation of Risk-Based Regulation

Risk-based regulation means that the day-to-day activities of the College are guided by focusing activity and attention on issues and potential risks that pose the greatest risk to clients and members of the public. The College does not seek to eliminate risk completely, but to make the best use of its limited resources to proactively reduce the risks posed to an acceptable level. Risk-based regulation assumes that the quality of care received by midwifery clients is the result of a wide array of decisions made by different organizations, not just the College. Through effective engagement with stakeholders, we will ensure that the right issue is dealt with by the right organization.

Public Participation and Engagement

The College was created to stand up for the public and the public interest, and we do this by ensuring that all midwives in Ontario are held to our high and achievable standards. All decisions made by the College are made in the public interest. To increase our accountability to the public, we have prioritized increasing public participation and engagement. We have created a Public Engagement Strategy that is separate from this document and can be found on our website.

Principles of Engagement

The below core principles will guide our work and decisions around stakeholder engagement. We will consider each principle as we develop a plan of activities and implement the strategy.

1. We know who we are engaging and why.
2. We make use of existing networks and expertise.
3. We make sure that engagement is meaningful and mutually beneficial.
4. We see stakeholder engagement as a path to meeting our statutory obligations and strategic priorities.
5. We maximize meetings with stakeholders by ensuring relevant College staff are aware of meetings and decision points, and collaborate when appropriate.
6. We are cost-effective in our resource allocations and ensure value for money.
7. We are able to demonstrate that our outcomes are consistent with set expectations.

Our Stakeholders

We engage with governmental stakeholders, midwifery stakeholders, and other regulators to ensure that we are able to regulate effectively and using current best practice.

It is important to have good working relationships with our key stakeholders, and to have role clarity and clear boundaries where appropriate. The College has a unique role, and we need to ensure that our relationships with our stakeholders serve our mandate of regulation in the public interest.

Our main stakeholders are divided into the following categories:

- Midwifery organizations and regulatory partners
- Professionals (both current and future practitioners)
- Public and midwifery clients

We will continue to improve our networks in the interest of regulatory excellence, and will work with others as appropriate.

Midwifery Organizations and Regulatory Partners

The College will be far more effective if it engages in a meaningful way with stakeholders across the wider system of the midwifery regulation, as these stakeholders hold important levers that can affect the profession, midwifery regulation and the sector in general. This includes the government, health professional regulators, advocacy groups, and educators.

1. Association of Ontario Midwives

The Association of Ontario Midwives (AOM) is a member-based organization representing midwives and their interests in Ontario, including negotiating the terms and conditions of midwives' employment with the government.

The College benefits from consulting with the AOM as they provide midwives' perspectives on College activities such as regulation changes, by-laws, policies, and standards. In order to regulate effectively, we have to know that our high standards are achievable and our consultation with the AOM can help us with this.

2. Midwifery Educators and Bridging Programs

Midwifery education in Ontario consists of the Midwifery Education Programs (MEP), which are baccalaureate programs offered at Laurentian University, McMaster University, and Ryerson University. The International Midwifery Pre-registration Program (IMPP) is a bridging program for internationally educated applicants. The IMPP's main focus is orientation to midwifery practice in Ontario, preparation for the mandatory Canadian Midwifery Registration Examination, and knowledge and skills enhancement to ensure safe practice in Ontario.

3. Canadian Midwifery Regulators Council

The Canadian Midwifery Regulators Council (CMRC) is a network of provincial and territorial regulatory authorities across the country. Through consulting with the CMRC, the College is able to learn best practices for regulating midwifery in the Canadian context. The CMRC also administers the national Canadian Midwifery Registration Examination (CMRE), which is an entry-to-practice requirement in all Canadian jurisdictions where midwifery is regulated.

4. Federation of Health Regulatory Colleges of Ontario & Other Regulators

The Federation of Health Regulatory Colleges of Ontario (FHRCO) exists to foster health regulatory collaboration in Ontario, and its members are the 26 colleges that regulate 29 distinct health professions. FHRCO members are all governed by the *Regulated Health Professions Act, 1991*, and amendments to that act affect all FHRCO members.

FHRCO, and other regulators in Ontario and elsewhere can help us learn about best practices in regulation. Through collaborating with regulators who have the same mandate of regulation in the public interest, we learn about the innovative ways that others are modernizing legislation and regulations, implementing risk-based regulation, and engaging the public. Many regulators share our strategic priorities as their goals, and we can learn a lot through consultation.

5. Ministry of Health and Long-term Care & Government

The Ministry of Health and Long-term Care is the branch of the Ontario government that oversees health regulation in Ontario, and is led by the Minister of Health and Long-term Care. Ministry staff work with the College on our proposed amendments to legislation and regulations, and can advise us of legislative changes coming that will affect our members and the way we regulate.

Our strategic priority of modernizing the legislation and regulations governing midwifery means that we are frequently in touch with the Ministry of Health and Long-term Care, submitting amendments and answering questions about our proposals. We also submit an annual report to the Minister of Health and Long-term Care.

Professionals

We are committed to improving engagement with midwives to allow better and more effective communication about College requirements and professional standards expected of them. We also continue to engage with the membership on regulatory changes and changes to the standards of practice. It is also important to us to engage with those preparing to become midwives; midwifery students at the MEP, and candidates at the IMPP.

While our focus is and will remain firmly on the public interest, there is a growing body of research demonstrating that practitioners are more likely to comply with College standards and requirements when they view such standards and requirements as legitimate and effective in improving their practice.

1. Midwives (College Members)

Midwives in Ontario must be registered with the College, and we ensure that those practising midwifery meet our high and achievable standards. Membership with the College comes with some professional responsibilities, which are set out in the *Regulated Health Professions Act, 1991* (RHPA), the *Midwifery Act, 1991*, and in provincial regulations. We also have College by-laws, policies, and standards that govern midwifery. All members must adhere to our governing documents.

Our mandate is to ensure that when Ontarians choose a midwife, they are choosing a practitioner who has the knowledge and skills to provide safe and ethical care. Our governing documents may be excellent, but if midwives are not aware of how to apply them in practice, they are not useful. The very best way to keep midwifery clients safe and healthy is to ensure that the midwives working with them understand how to provide excellent care in every setting, and we believe we can best achieve that through engaging and educating our members.

2. Midwifery Students and IMPP Candidates

The College has an opportunity to engage with the leadership at the MEP and the IMPP, as detailed above, but must also engage with students and candidates at both programs. We will be better able to help future midwives understand how to transition to regulated professionals by ensuring that before they become registered with the College, they understand the legislation, regulations, by-laws, policies, and standards that govern the midwifery profession in Ontario.

Public and Midwifery Clients

The public and midwifery clients are key stakeholders for the College. It is our statutory duty to protect the public and the public interest; to promote and maintain public confidence in the profession; and to promote and maintain professional standards and conduct for members of the midwifery profession. We have published our [Public Engagement Strategy to our website](#). Those interested can review the strategy.



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