

WINTER 2019/20

INFORMED

NEWSLETTER OF THE COLLEGE OF NATUROPATHS OF ONTARIO

Registration renewal opens Feb 14 2

Discipline: An ND's Essay 4

Ownership & transfer of
patient files 7

About Member accommodation 9

Volunteer with us! 11

Governance Review 13

Students' Corner 14

News & events 16

PAGE 2

**Registration
renewal opens soon**
Find out when

SAVE THE DATE!

Registration renewal opens February 14, 2020 at 9 a.m.

While it might seem a long way off, the registration renewal deadline will be here before we know it. Renewing well before the **March 31, 5 p.m. deadline** gives you time to deal with unforeseen complications and helps avoid having to pay any penalties or fees.

Members with a current email on file with the College will be sent a renewal link in February, so we encourage you to make sure your Member account and contact information are up to date.

THINGS TO KNOW: Important changes this year

- 1.** The **renewal deadline time has changed to 5 p.m.** on March 31 from 11:59 p.m. in previous years to ensure staff are on hand to help leading up to the close of renewal. Avoid having to pay a late fee by noting this change in your calendar now.
- 2.** **Thinking of changing registration class for 2020-21? You have until March 17 to do it.** There will be a blackout period for class changes from March 18 to 31. Because approvals can take up to 10 business days, we urge you to [submit a class change](#) as soon as possible and by no later than March 17, 5 p.m. Class changes must be approved before you can renew your registration in the requested class. Otherwise you will have to renew in your current class and may end up having to pay more (e.g., if changing from Active to Inactive class). **Registration renewal fees are non-refundable.**
- 3.** The pilot **Payment Plan Program will be discontinued** due to a number of factors. Renewal fees must be submitted in full as a single lump sum payment by 5 p.m. on March 31. For more information, please click [here](#).

REGISTRATION RENEWAL

THINGS TO DO NOW

- ❑ **Insurance** – check the expiry date and policy information. Make sure your professional liability insurance is always up to date to avoid possible suspension of your certificate of registration and having to pay a reinstatement fee. Incorrect information entered during renewal will result in issuance of a correction notice and an administrative fee. If in doubt about your policy information (e.g., broker vs insurer or policy number) please contact your insurance broker for clarification.
- ❑ **Name change** – if you have changed your name since you renewed in 2019, [submit a Name Change form](#) and payment now to avoid potential processing delays later.
- ❑ **Update your Member account** – if you've moved, changed practice locations, emails, or any other contact details, **you are responsible** for [logging in to your Member account](#) and updating your profile within 30 days of making any change. College staff cannot make changes to your contact, residential or clinic information.



REMEMBER: Registration renewal is a 2-step process:

- 1 Completing the online Information Return
- +
- 2 Paying the fee through your Member account

Please note that your renewal is not complete until both the Information Return form and your fee payment have been received by the College.

Incomplete renewals could result in issuance of a correction notice and an associated administrative fee and/or late fee.

RENEWAL EXIT SURVEY

A big thank you to Members who completed last year's online satisfaction survey after submitting their renewal. Your feedback helps us make continuous improvements. Where possible, we will be incorporating your suggestions into Renewal 2020.



Discipline Outcome

A Naturopath's Essay: Lessons Learned

At an uncontested hearing on April 30, 2019, a panel of the Discipline Committee found that Dr. Elvis Ali, ND (registration #0617) had committed professional misconduct.

In addition to suspending his registration to practise for eight months*, the panel directed the College Registrar to impose specified terms, conditions and limitations on the Member's certificate of registration requiring him to unconditionally pass a three-day ethics and boundaries course for health care professionals (the PROBE Program) and to write an essay summarizing the lessons he learned a result of

his participation in PROBE. The Panel determined that the essay shall be published by the College at a time and in a format determined by the Registrar.

In this article, we summarize the allegations against Dr. Ali, ND; we include the findings of the Discipline panel; and we quote portions of his essay and his key conclusions.

Our goal in publishing this information is to help readers understand what constitutes professional misconduct and what is expected of naturopaths as regulated health professionals.

* Two months of which were remitted as Dr. Ali had successfully completed the PROBE course and provided the required essay.

DISCIPLINE OUTCOME

ALLEGATIONS AND FINDINGS

The allegations against Dr. Ali, ND included the following.

1. Falsifying numerous documents related to the care and treatment of patients whom he never saw or treated. These false documents included patient sign-in sheets, intake and consent forms, treatment notes and plans, and invoices.
2. Providing false and/or misleading information to an insurer and to the College.

The Discipline Panel's findings of professional misconduct included that Dr. Ali, ND:

- failed to keep records in accordance with the standards of the profession;
- signed or issued, in his professional capacity, a document that the Member knows or ought to know contains a false or misleading statement;
- falsified a record relating to the Member's practice; and
- engaged in conduct or performed an act relevant to the practice of the profession that, having regard to all the circumstances, would reasonably be regarded by Members (other NDs) as disgraceful, dishonourable or unprofessional.

[Our website includes full details about hearing outcomes.](#)

SUMMARY OF ELVIS ALI'S ESSAY

In his essay, Dr. Ali, ND, identified many of the core qualities that are inherent to professionalism

and the high standards to which regulated professionals are held by society overall.

"Naturopathic Doctors have an obligation to act in a manner that justifies public trust and confidence, that upholds and enhances the integrity of the profession, that serves the interests of society and above all, that safeguards the interest of the individual patients, along with the standards of practice."

"I engaged in unacceptable conduct which I am to be held accountable for, whether in a clinical setting or outside of my practice. I must always use good morals and ethical reasoning at all times. Because of my misconduct; I learnt that under no circumstances should I [ever] lie, cheat or be dishonest."

He remarked on how being ethical, truthful, competent, accountable, trustworthy, principled, and respectful, all contribute to the integrity of the profession and the image of those who practise it. He further wrote about how his actions and failure to adhere to the Code of Ethics not only called him into question as a professional, but impacted confidence in naturopathy as a whole.

Dr. Ali, ND explained how the course highlighted the social contract that exists between society and regulated health professionals including how, in exchange for giving naturopaths the privilege of self-regulation, members of the profession are expected to be accountable, competent, trustworthy, ethical and transparent.

"We are held in high regards and respected by those around us that we must be accountable to. This includes our associations, CAND and OAND, CONO [the College], government agencies, law/

DISCIPLINE OUTCOME

police, media, community, bank, Ministry of Health, insurance companies, family, colleagues, staff and patients. I now realize my actions affected not only the patient and insurance companies but everyone in my community and society as a whole.”

“The PROBE course also reinforced the importance of the doctor-patient relationship and my fiduciary role, which is to have responsibility and always act in the best interest of patients.”

“My conduct was inappropriate as a professional in deciding whether to cross a boundary with a patient. I should have considered the likelihood of benefit or harm to the patients and the principles of beneficence and nonmaleficence.... I disregarded the virtues of trust in the professional – patient relationship and all virtues related to the modern principle of autonomy and respect of the patients.”

He also recognized how his lack of professional judgement and discernment resulted in the exploitation of patients and coercion.

The PROBE Program explains how failing to adhere to ethics and principles can become a “slippery slope” where one small lapse can snowball into more significant issues or violations. Dr. Ali, ND recognized how his failure to consider the outcomes of his actions was a step along a path to more serious concerns. In that context, his decision to accept requests of the clinic owner to falsify documents led to further complications that included lying to an insurance company and to the College about his actions.

By nature of their usage, a health professional’s administrative tools hold inherent value

and power. In this case, these were used for fraudulent financial gain. Dr. Ali, ND acknowledges the importance of his signature, credentials, and stamp as extensions of his role as a regulated professional.

“The consequences, repercussions and ramifications, I am sad to say has made my colleagues, insurance companies, patients and family realize that my act was disgraceful dishonorable and unprofessional. This was injustice because the insurance companies had to pay for fees not rendered.... The end result is that the public suffers, since they now have to pay higher premiums.”

Dr. Ali, ND also learned about the value of taking an “ethical time out” before making decisions. This gives practitioners an opportunity to stop before acting to consider how their behaviour and decisions might negatively affect or impact patients, including potential risks and the likelihood of benefit and harm. In his situation, his agreement to help falsify insurance claims involved harm and was of no benefit to patients or society.

In conclusion, Dr. Ali, ND noted that no matter where a professional works, it is their responsibility to behave ethically and act with virtue, honesty and integrity, regardless of how that responsibility may conflict with financial interests, job security, or relationships with other health care providers who may be engaged in illegal or unethical behaviour.

Note: Dr Ali, ND changed his class of registration from Active to Inactive on November 4, 2019 and he cannot use the title ND without including “(Inactive)” after ND.

10 Tips

Ownership & Transfer of Patient Files

Members often ask us about the ownership and transfer of files when they leave a practice and how their patients should be notified of any changes. Here are our top 10 tips based on the College's *Standard of Practice for Record Keeping* and provincial privacy laws.

1

When a Member joins a clinic, takes over, or buys a practice from another naturopath it is strongly recommended that a written agreement be put in place about who is responsible for and maintains the patient files. That is, who will act as the Health Information Custodian as required by the [*Personal Health Information Protection Act, 2004*](#).

2

No matter who is responsible for and maintains the patient files created by a Member, it is a Member's responsibility to ensure that they are maintained in accordance with the [*Standard of Practice for Record Keeping*](#).

3

It is usually money well spent to have a lawyer who is familiar with privacy laws and the College's regulations and standards of practice to review any contract or agreement before you sign it.

4

When a Member leaves a practice and takes the original patient files with them, the clinic may not make a paper copy or keep an electronic copy without the patient's consent.

5

Members are responsible for making sure that patients are notified in writing when the ND is leaving a clinic, as well as where and how a patient can access a copy of their record. A Member may designate someone to notify the patients on their behalf. It is advised that this process be included in the written agreement.

6

The College does not dictate how far ahead of time patients are to be notified that their naturopath is moving. It depends on how far in advance the Member knows they will be leaving the clinic, which could be months or weeks.

OWNERSHIP & TRANSFER OF PATIENT FILES

- 7 Written notification to patients may be through a letter that is sent by mail or by email (if the patient has consented to this form of communication). Other notification methods such as website and social media posts, as well as a notice in the newspaper, may be used to reach out to patients the Member has not treated for some time and for whom they may not have reliable contact information.
- 8 Patients have the choice to access their naturopathic care from whomever they want. They also have the right to access a copy of their file or release a copy of the file to the health care practitioner of their choice. However, patients do not have the authority to determine who keeps the original copy of their file.
- 9 A clinic does not and cannot “own” a patient. Ownership of the patient file determines who is responsible for maintaining the original patient record. It is not tied to who the patient sees for their health care. The original patient record may be stored in one location while the patient may see a naturopath somewhere else.
- 10 Have a succession plan regarding patient records in place to prevent an interruption in patient care or a breach of their privacy in the event that a Member moves, retires, becomes incapacitated or dies unexpectedly.

Further information can be found online in our publications:

[*FAQ: I am leaving a clinic that I took over from another naturopath. Can I take the patient files with me?*](#) – News Bulletin, October 2019

[*Obligations to Patients When Changing or Closing a Practice Location*](#) – iNformed, Fall 2018

[*Succession Planning to Prevent Abandoned Records*](#) (blog post)

[*Pitfalls to Avoid When Joining a Practice**](#) (blog post)

[*7 Tips for Using Electronic Records in Your Practice**](#) (blog post)

* These are archived posts and readers will need to be logged in to their account to access them and/or comment.



For additional guidance, contact our Manager of Professional Practice, Dr. Mary-Ellen McKenna, ND (Inactive) at 416 583-6020 or maryellen.mckenna@collegeofnaturopaths.on.ca



Member Accommodation

In its broadest definition, “accommodate” means to “fit to, or adapt”. As a regulatory body, the College has a duty to ensure that Members needing additional assistance, e.g., due to a disability:

- Have equal and fair opportunity to meet their professional responsibilities, and
- Have equal access to College information and programs.

Examples of accommodations provided by the College include the provision of paper-based communications, larger-font forms, and one-to-one staff support to complete requirements that are available in an online format only. In all cases, the College seeks to work with the Member to make alternative arrangements to ensure that the Member can fully participate.

REQUESTING AN ACCOMMODATION

There are a number of steps that should be followed when requesting an accommodation.

- Ask for the accommodation you need by sending a signed letter to the College by mail or email. The letter must include your authorization for the College to contact the identified individual providing supporting

documentation on your behalf to confirm your need for accommodation. This could, for instance, include a regulated health professional with whom you have a patient-practitioner relationship (e.g., medical doctor, physiotherapist, psychiatrist, ND) or a religious leader if the accommodation pertains to a religious accommodation (e.g., rescheduling a Peer and Practise Assessment due to a religious observance or holiday).

MEMBER ACCOMMODATION

- Provide specific information that is directly relevant to your needs, restrictions, or limitations.
- Participate in discussions with the College about possible accommodation solutions.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

In addition to your request, you will be required to provide supporting documentation (e.g., from your health care provider or religious leader) which gives the following information:

- the reason for the accommodation and the specific accommodations needed;
- the time period of accommodation, e.g., temporary versus an extended period of time;
- information about how the accommodation relates to the noted need; and
- contact information of the person providing the supporting documents on your behalf.

This information must be dated within six months of the request for accommodation.

Note: Requests for accommodation related specifically to the sitting of College exams are managed under our [Examinations Program Policy](#)

TIMELINES

Accommodation requests that relate to a date-sensitive matter, such as annual registration renewal, must be received a minimum of 30 days before the deadline date of the matter. In no instance will a deadline be extended, or a late fee waived, because of a late request for accommodation.

Members are notified of the decision related to the request for accommodation within 10 business days unless additional information is needed.

In reviewing the request and supporting documentation, the College will consider whether the requested accommodation addresses the needs of the Member, and the College's reasonable ability to provide the accommodation in relation to "undue hardship", which is defined as any significant factors related to cost, availability of outside funding, and any posed risk to health and safety that would result from providing the accommodation. This means we will pursue all measures that can be taken without causing undue hardship to the organization.



Contact our Membership department at members@collegeofnaturopaths.on.ca or 416 597-6002 for more information.

*Give back. Get involved. **Volunteer!***



There is no kinder act than lending a hand and joining over 80 members of the profession who volunteer with the College. The contribution and assistance of all volunteers is a very valuable resource that helps the College support patient rights and safety.

What volunteer opportunities are available at the College?

We currently have positions available for:

- Statutory Committee members
- Non-statutory Committee members
- Exams-related work and committee members (French and English) including examiners, question writers, exam maintenance, and Prior Learning Assessment Program assessors
- Quality Assurance – Peer & Practice Assessors and Inspectors

For more details about position types and requirements please [visit our website](#).

WHEN CAN I VOLUNTEER?

All our current volunteer opportunities are available weekdays or weekend. Some preparatory work may be involved before the meetings or activities, but this can be done any time in the comfort of your home or office.

HOW MUCH TIME DO I NEED TO COMMIT?

The College offers a wide range of opportunities to easily integrate into your current schedule. We have opportunities that range from 1 hour every quarter up to a maximum of 7 hours per month. We appreciate any time that a volunteer can contribute. We are here to work with you and will endeavour to match your available time commitment to the most suitable available role.

GIVE BACK. GET INVOLVED. VOLUNTEER!

HOW LONG DO I HAVE TO COMMIT TO MY ROLE?

We are seeking a minimum commitment of six months to one year for many of our volunteer opportunities. Each role has specified terms of reference that outline the commitment period.

WHERE IS THE VOLUNTEER WORK?

Most of our volunteer opportunities take place in our office in conjunction with some teleconferences. Our Quality Assurance Program allows for our volunteers to travel throughout the province.

Is there training?

Yes! Each volunteering opportunity includes a minimum of one to three hours of training.

DO I GET PAID?

Volunteers receive \$150 per day for the work they do on the College's behalf. All related travel, meal, and accommodation expenses are eligible for reimbursement.

HOW CAN I GET INVOLVED?

Visit our [Volunteer Opportunities](#) web page for more details and to fill out an application form. Questions? Contact volunteers@collegeofnaturopaths.on.ca.

The College of Naturopaths of Ontario is an inclusive organization. Accommodation is available upon request under the *Ontario Human Rights Code* and *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

All applications are carefully reviewed to find the most suitable available opportunity that meets the applicant's interests and experiences. This will be followed by a brief phone screening interview to ensure the placement is the right one for both the applicant and the College. Once the applicant is appointed, training will be arranged for each new volunteer.

We appreciate interest from all applicants and endeavour to place each applicant in the position of their choice. In the event the selected position is no longer available, each applicant will receive feedback from the College regarding the option of an alternative open position for consideration or to leave their application on file for six months should the position of their choice become available.

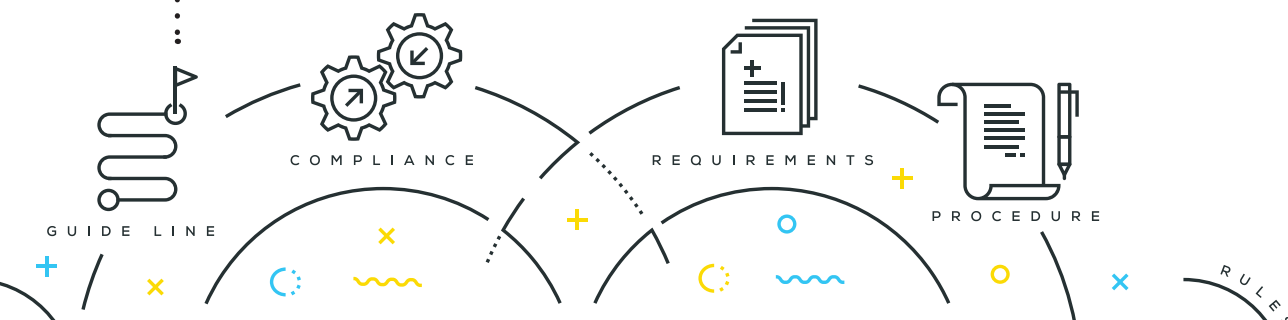
Governance Review update & consultation

Our [summer issue of *iNformeD*](#) outlined how the College Council is conducting a governance review to examine significant changes in how self-regulated professions are being governed and what these might mean for our organization. The review includes identifying trends and best practices in governance from Ontario and other jurisdictions that could further enhance public trust and safety in how the profession is governed.

“The review process is a preventive, proactive approach to ensuring the health of the College,” says College President, Dr. Kim Bretz, ND. **“It’s about scanning the environment, asking some critical questions about regulation, and identifying what – if anything – could be improved on or shifted to help us be a more effective regulator.”**

The review began earlier this year with a literature review and the preparation of a discussion document as a precursor to consulting with stakeholder organizations, the public and College Members this fall. [Learn more](#) and participate in the consultation until December 6, 2019.

The review will culminate in a two-day facilitated workshop with Council in January 2020 where it will explore and consider which – if any – changes and options it may wish to implement. A Governance Review report will be created based on the outcome of the workshop.





Students' Corner

COLLEGE EXAM DATES

Please see the News & Events section (last page of this newsletter) for dates of upcoming exams.

EXAM PREP RESOURCES

The [Resources section of our website](#) includes helpful handbooks and tools to help you prepare for College exams.

Entry-to-practise exams

- Ontario Clinical Exams (Practical) Handbook
- Ontario Clinical Sciences Exam Handbook (Aug 2019 update)
- Clinical Sciences Exam Reference Guide - AMENDED
- Quick Reference - Online Exam Registration

Prescribing Course & Examination

(4th year students only)

- Ontario Prescribing and Therapeutics Examination Handbook (August 2018 update)
- Exam Pre-registration Form for Non-Members
- Examination Rules of Conduct
- ON Prescribing Course Outline
- *5 Tips to Help You Prepare for the Exam*
- Article: *ND Insights about the Exam*

ADVERTISING & MARKETING

Promoting yourself and your future practice may not be top of mind while you're in the middle of your education program, however, it's a topic the College frequently gets complaints about. It's also an area where the media and public's awareness have increased about what is allowed and acceptable for regulated health professionals to promote.

NDs are strictly regulated when it comes to how they promote themselves and their practice. Information that NDs promote must be both true and accurate. The same rules apply to students. As future Members of the College, students and new graduates should review our [Advertising Standards and Guidelines](#) and ensure that they, and any Member supervising them, are complying with these standards.

The advertising rules for NDs apply to everything from website content to blog posts, biographies, and social media posts, as well as more traditional forms of advertising such as billboards, newspaper, radio ads, etc.

Accepting patients

It's also essential to note that neither students nor new graduates may say they are "accepting patients" as this constitutes false advertising unless you have passed your entry-to-practise exams and hold a certificate of registration with the College of Naturopaths of Ontario.

STUDENTS' CORNER



Visit our website for more information about advertising, bios, and social media.

What to do?

If you're likely going to register to practise in Ontario, we encourage you to [review the infographics on our website](#) about advertising, bios and social media. If you still have questions, [reach out to our Manager of Professional Practice](#), Mary-Ellen McKenna, ND (Inactive). She interacts with NDs and students every day to help clarify questions about these topics. A quick conversation with her can easily point you in the right direction and help you avoid problems down the road.

USE OF TITLES

In Ontario, anyone using the title "naturopath", "naturopathic doctor", or "naturopathe", or "docteur en naturopathie" in French, or who uses the abbreviation "ND" in English or "D.N." in French, must register with the College before practising. The unauthorized use of a title is considered to be professional misconduct, and although students and new graduates are not yet registered with the College, the act itself could affect your registration application in the future.

Instead, if working with an ND during an externship for instance, consider using the

term "Student" followed by the name of your institution if your information is to appear on your supervising ND's website, or any other public domain or accounts such as your social media profiles.

For new graduates, we do not recommend using titles such as "ND candidate" or any title incorporating "ND" as it becomes a derivation of the protected titles set out in the [Registration Regulation](#). The same would apply to any title using "naturopath". It is imperative that any patient receiving care understands the status of anyone providing it. Of course, titles are important in today's world so consider using "intern", "CCNM Graduate" where applicable.

OTHER RESOURCES

Check out some of our other resources for students and soon-to-be grads.

- [Externship Guidelines](#) (iNformed, Fall 2018, page 18)
- [New Graduates Working for a College Member](#)
- [Pitfalls to Avoid When Joining a Practice](#)

NEWS AND EVENTS

Upcoming exam dates & deadlines

Exam	Exam Date	Registration Opens	Registration Closes*
Ontario Clinical Practical	February 9, 2020	December 9, 2019	January 6, 2020
Ontario Clinical Sciences	February 20, 2020	December 16, 2019	January 16, 2020
Ontario IVIT Exam	May 24, 2020	March 23, 2020	April 13, 2020
Ontario Prescribing Exam	June 21, 2020	May 4, 2020	May 27, 2020

* Any requests for exam accommodations must also be received by the College by this date.

Interested in serving on Council?

The call for nominations is now open and will close on December 15. Elections will be held in Districts 7 & 8 in the new year. Find your district and access the Election Handbook and nomination forms [here](#).

Next Council meeting: January 28 & 29, 2020. Meetings are open to the public and College Members. Seating is limited, so please [register in advance](#) if you would like to attend.



Read our 2018/19 Annual Report!

Check out the full report (available in English & French), our 1-page infographic of key stats, and detailed Financial Statements online.

Holiday office closure.

The College will be closed from December 24, 2019, noon and will reopen on January 2, 2020.

Check out our latest blog posts

[The Public Register: an important patient resource](#)

[6 Tips to Avoid Insurance Related Complaints](#)

[7 Tips for Using Electronic Records in Your Practice](#)

[Medical Devices](#)