

# THE REGULATED HEALTH PROFESSIONS ACT

## What does this new legislation mean for ARNPEI & members?

### Introduction

The purpose of this newsletter is to inform and educate Registered Nurses and Nurse Practitioners about a change to our provincial legislation that will have a significant impact on ARNPEI and our membership. The Registered Nurses Act (RNA) will be repealed this Fall (2017) and replaced with the Regulated Health Professions Act (RHPA), with a suggested implementation date of March 1, 2018. The most obvious change under the new legislation is our name; we will become known as the **College of Registered Nurses of PEI**. The current mandate and objects of ARNPEI (as identified in the RN Act) can likely continue under the new legislation, with minor changes.

### Background

Throughout 2017 and even prior to this, ARNPEI has been engaged in discussions with government about the potential of coming under the new Regulated Health Professions Act. We have been carefully examining whether this is a good move for us and how our current processes would have to change if, and when, such a change occurs. Very recently, we were seeking significant changes to the RN Act, particularly in relation to Nurse Practitioner practice and regulations (note: these were drafted at a time when NP practice was very new to PEI). Government has recently informed us (September 15, 2017) that they are not willing to open the RN Act for any further revisions. The changes that we are recommending are being seen as the impetus for the change to RHPA. Government is going to proceed with a plan to repeal the RN Act in the Fall 2017 sitting of the House.

Currently Pharmacists and Pharmacy Technicians are the groups covered by the RHPA. Other groups will also be coming under this new legislation in early 2018 (e.g. Licensed Practical Nurses, Dietitians, & Occupational Therapists) and within the next 2 years several others will be joining (Physiotherapists, Optometrists, Massage Therapists, Laboratory Technicians, Respiratory Therapists, Counsellors, & Physicians).

Overall, it is our view that the RHPA is well thought-out and comprehensive, however it represents a significant change from the status quo. Differences in terminology in the legislation, differences in processes, and differences in roles for people who are expected to work within the legislative regime that will be created by RHPA, will require expenditure of resources and education of members.

### Key Changes Associated with RHPA

- The transformation from an Association to a College seems to imply more of a focus on regulation than member services and advocacy.
- There will be strength in numbers with respect to understanding, interpreting, and applying the RHPA because numerous professions will be subject to it, and all can learn from each other.
- The RHPA is slightly more modern than the *Registered Nurses Act*.
- The discipline process includes specific timelines which should help streamline processes.
- The RHPA gives both the respondent and the complainant the right to appeal discipline decisions to the Supreme Court.
- Audits of a member's practice are permitted under the RHPA, which can be useful in discovering practice problems before actual discipline offences occur.
- Members of Council will be more directly involved in decisions in the discipline process.
- There is a presumption that discipline hearings will be open to the public.
- A larger proportion of public representatives on Council (1/3 of Councillors).

**Stay tuned! Updates will be sent regularly as we move through this process.**