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## NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Health Services

### **B.C. MODERNIZES REGULATION OF MEDICAL PROFESSION**

VICTORIA – Starting June 1, the medical profession will come under the Health Professions Act to further increase accountability and transparency, said Health Services Minister George Abbott.

The College of Physicians and Surgeons of British Columbia is the fifth health profession college to transition under the act since May 2008. The act now applies to 21 health professions governed by 20 colleges.

“Over the past 13 months, we have modernized and revamped the legislation and regulation governing most of the health professions in British Columbia,” said Abbott. “Uniform legislation helps protect the public and ensure that our health profession regulators maintain the highest levels of accountability and transparency, while ensuring their members can safely practise to the full extent of their skills and abilities.”

The College of Physicians and Surgeons of British Columbia was established by the provincial legislature in 1886 as the licensing and regulatory body for all medical doctors in the province.

“We have worked with the ministry to make sure that the transition under the Health Professions Act is as smooth as possible for the public and for our registrants,” said Dr. Darlene Hammell, president of the College of Physicians and Surgeons of BC. “As we align with other health professions under the Health Professions Act, we will continue our focus on protecting patients by ensuring that registrants of this college maintain high standards of qualification and medical practice.”

The college is governed by a board composed of 10 elected members of the profession and five public representatives appointed by the Minister. In April 2009, the minister appointed the college’s first board under the Health Professions Act. This transitional board takes office June 1 and will remain in place until the first election of the 10 professional members is held in 2011.

“I would also like to express my appreciation to the College of Physicians and Surgeons of B.C. for their significant commitment in collaborating with the ministry to manage the transition,” added Abbott. “This continuing partnership with the college will help us work together to address future health system challenges.”

B.C. has made a number of changes to strengthen its health profession regulatory process and to increase accountability and promote patient safety. As of October 2008, every new member of a board of a health profession college is required to take an oath of office to ensure that they are guided by the public interest in the performance of their duties. As well, since November 2008, all health profession colleges governed under the Health Professions Act are required to provide the public with information about disciplinary actions taken against their members.

Additionally, the Health Professions Review Board, which has the power to review the timeliness and outcome of health profession college decisions, began receiving applications for review in March 2009.

Other professions now covered by the Health Professions Act are: chiropractors; dental hygienists; dental technicians; dentists; denturists; dietitians; licensed practical nurses; massage therapists; midwives; naturopathic physicians; occupational therapists; opticians; optometrists; pharmacists; physical therapists; psychologists; registered nurses (including nurse practitioners); registered psychiatric nurses; and traditional Chinese medicine practitioners and acupuncturists.

For more information on the regulation of health professions on B.C., please visit [www.health.gov.bc.ca/leg/](http://www.health.gov.bc.ca/leg/).

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