

THE COLLEGE OF PSYCHOLOGISTS OF ONTARIO
L'ORDRE DES PSYCHOLOGUES DE L'ONTARIO

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To: Insurers and Other Third Party Payers

Re: Psychologists and Psychological Associates: Eligibility to Certify Disability Tax Credit Forms; Provision of Services under the Statutory Accident Benefit Schedule; and Other Third Party Payment Situations

There has been some confusion with respect to who may provide psychological services in Ontario and who may bill for such services. This information is provided in an effort to clarify any misunderstandings related to these issues.

To practise psychology in Ontario, an individual must hold a current certificate of registration from the College of Psychologists of Ontario; the regulatory body for the profession of psychology. Under the authority of the Regulated Health Professions Act, 1991 and the Psychology Act, 1991, the College registers two classes of autonomous practitioners:

Psychologists

Psychological Associates

A Psychologist or Psychological Associate who holds a certificate of registration authorizing autonomous practice may provide services without supervision, within his or her area of competence, and may bill for these services. While most members of the College have no explicit term, condition or limitation on their certificates of registration, some do and must practice in accordance with any such restriction.

To qualify for professional registration to practise psychology requires successful completion of:

- rigorous educational and training requirements;
- acceptable supervised professional experience;
- a standardized written examination that evaluates comprehensive knowledge in psychology and is used throughout Canada and the United States;
- a written examination that evaluates the candidate's ability to apply knowledge in jurisprudence, ethics and professional standards for practice in Ontario; and,
- an oral examination designed to evaluate readiness for autonomous professional practice.

Once registered, a member of the College is expected to practise in accordance with applicable legislation, regulations, standards of conduct, professional guidelines and professional codes of ethics.

Only a member of the College of Psychologists of Ontario may offer psychological services in the province or use the title *Psychologist* or *Psychological Associate*. In addition, use of the terms *psychology* or *psychological*, or any abbreviations or variations of these terms and titles in describing services, is restricted to members of the College. Psychologists and Psychological Associates respectively may also identify themselves with the designation C.Psych. or C.Psych.Assoc. after their names.

The College maintains a register of all current members. Information about an individual Psychologist or Psychological Associate may be found in the searchable Public Register on the home page of the College website (www.cpo.on.ca) or obtained from the College by telephone 416-961-8817 or by e-mail: cpo@cpo.on.ca

The College has received inquiries with respect to the status of Psychological Associates providing services under legislative provisions such as the Statutory Accident Benefits Schedule (SABS) as well as under other public and private third party insurance programs. In 1996, the Registrar of the College sought clarification respecting providers under the SABS in an exchange of correspondence with Mr. Rob Sampson, MPP, who was at that time Parliamentary Assistant: Financial Institutions, Ministry of Finance. In his letter addressing this issue, Mr. Sampson stated:

"I have asked legal staff to review the definition in the Statutory Accident Benefits Schedule (SABS) and whether a psychological associate falls within this definition.

I am pleased to report the definition of psychologist used in the SABS includes psychological associates. Under the SABS a "psychologist" means a person authorized by law to practise psychology. As both a psychologist and psychological associate are authorized under the Psychology Act to practice they both meet the definition under the SABS."

More recently, the College sought clarification from the Federal Minister of Finance regarding the ability of Psychological Associates to certify eligibility for the Disability Tax Credit (DTC). In a letter from Mr. James Flaherty, Minister of Finance dated January 31, 2007 he stated:

"It is my understanding that the Ontario Psychology Act authorizes both Psychologists and Psychological Associates to practice psychology. Accordingly, holders of both titles are allowed to certify impairments with respect to an individual's ability in mental functions necessary for everyday life for the purposes of eligibility for the DTC.

My officials have contacted their colleagues at the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) to communicate this understanding. The appropriate changes have been made to CRA's administrative practices to ensure that Psychological Associates are allowed to certify impairments in mental functions necessary for everyday life."

In summary, both Psychologists and Psychological Associates are members of the College of Psychologists. Members with either title are qualified psychological practitioners in the province of Ontario.

Questions regarding Psychologists and Psychological Associates or other matters related to the regulation and practice of psychology in Ontario may be directed to the College.
