

College of Midwives of Alberta

2019 ANNUAL REPORT



Photo Credit: GNWT

For the Year Ended December 31, 2019

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Mandate

The College of Midwives of Alberta (CMA) ensures public safety by regulating the practice of midwifery in accordance with the *Health Professions Act*, *Midwives Profession Regulations*, the CMA's Standards of Practice and Competence, and Bylaws and any other relevant legislation. The CMA upholds the minimum standard of practice and competencies expected of all midwives registered to practice in Alberta.

Vision

Through regulatory excellence, we will inspire trust and confidence in Midwifery Care for all childbearing families in Alberta.

Mission

The CMA's mission is to ensure public safety and support the midwives of Alberta in the provision of safe and effective midwifery service by following the Midwifery Code of Ethics and the Standards of Practice and Competencies.



2019 Elected Registered Midwife Council Members



Cassandra Evans RM
President

Tiffany Harrison, RM
Vice-President

Eileen March, RM
Treasurer



Marianne King, RM

Kayla Blinkhorn, RM

2018 Appointed Public Council Members



David Crocker

Chelsey Cabaj

President's Report

Statement of Purpose/Goals

The Council is responsible for governance of the midwifery profession in Alberta to protect public safety. This is done through setting standards for practice and ensuring that the standards are met through registration processes and disciplinary processes as needed.

Summary of Activities in 2019

The past year at the College of Midwives of Alberta (CMA) has been busy! We experienced numerous changes as a result of our official transition to the *Health Professions Act* on April 1, 2019.

The CMA Council composition changed from 5 council members to 7, an increase from 3 to 5 midwives while maintaining 2 public members. We welcomed Eileen March, Kayla Blinkhorn, and Marianne King as new Council members. Eileen is a registered midwife in the Calgary zone and Kayla and Marianne are registered midwives in the central and north zones respectively. The Council has benefited immensely by having greater provincial representation geographically.

The CMA hired Theresa Barrett to take on the role of the Complaints Director in May of 2019. The Complaints Director is a new position mandated under the *HPA* that is responsible for receiving complaints regarding regulated members and ensuring the complaints process is carried out in accordance with regulations. A Hearing Director was also appointed by Council and was accepted by Juliana Cunha. The CMA welcomed Juliana in the position of Deputy

Registrar following the retirement of Marylyn Waters in early 2020.

Over the past year several committees needed to be created or to have terms of reference altered to be aligned with the composition, roles and responsibilities outlined in the *HPA*. Additionally, CMA documentation, policies, guidelines, statements, and processes have required review and revision to ensure compliance with the *HPA*. This is an ongoing goal that staff and Council continue to work on.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE

There was much excitement from the public and registered midwives regarding the expanded scope of practice midwives achieved under the *HPA*. Listed as Advanced Authorizations in the Regulation, expanded scope items include activities such as the ability to prescribe birth control and order medications to initiate induction of labour independently.

Shortly before the transition to *HPA*, the CMA received communication that we were required to engage in consultations with a government appointed Advisory Committee of key stakeholders to review changes to policy, our Code of Ethics, Standards of Practice, Competencies and other documentation prior to granting Advance Authorizations to further ensure public safety.

The Advisory Committee began consultations with the CMA in the summer of 2019, but the meetings were temporarily put on hold while waiting for a legal opinion in late fall. Plans to resume in early 2020 were thwarted by the Covid-19 pandemic. It is our goal to resume the Advisory Committee talks as soon as possible so that we can move forward with expanding midwifery scope of practice in Alberta. Once the

Advisory Committee consultations are complete, the CMA plans to publish rigorous policies and provide access to the education and courses necessary for midwives to be granted the ability to safely begin to practice expanded scope activities.

COVID-19

The Covid-19 pandemic was unexpected universally. However, the CMA Council, Registrar (Sharon Prusky) and staff quickly adapted to the abrupt changes required for the CMA to ensure public safety, provide necessary direction to registered midwives, and work collaboratively with our provincial government and Alberta Health Services.

The CMA will continue to do what is required to assist midwives to provide safe and compassionate midwifery care during this difficult time.

STAFF CHANGES

In February 2020 we said good-bye to two of our office staff, Marylyn Waters (Executive Director) and Margaret Barnes (Administrative Assistant). Marylyn and Margaret were with the CMA since the CMA formed in 2013. We are forever grateful for their dedication and contributions to the CMA and we wish you all the best in your retirements.

Shireen Mathew was hired in the position of Office Assistant and Financial Director. We are excited for both our new hires: Shireen and Juliana (Deputy Registrar and Hearing Director), and look forward to working with them both.

Sincerely,

Cassie Evans RM MN
President, College of Midwives of Alberta



Registrar's Report

College Staff

Registrar: Sharon Prusky

Executive Director: Marylyn Waters (retiring February, 2020)

Deputy Registrar: Juliana Cunha, hired in December, 2019

Administrative Assistant: Margaret Barnes (retiring January, 2020)

Administrative Assistant: Shireen Mathew, hired in November, 2019

Statement of Purpose/Goals

The Office of the Registrar manages the day-to-day operations of the CMA, including administrative, financial, and governance obligations under the *Health Professions Act*. Along with acting as the first point of contact for midwives seeking registration in Alberta, the Registrar is also responsible for completing the legacy complaint files in process from before the CMA moved to the HPA.

Summary of Activities in 2019

2019 has been full of integration of the *HPA* into CMA activities and documents. Many thanks to CMA staff, Council, committees and Diane Rach for the integration work done so far!

All year, CMA Council has used the applicable designated parts of the *HPA* to guide their work and decision-making.

PART 1: GOVERNANCE

Council Registered Members increased from three to five, and with that CMA Council became more provincially represented. We now have a midwife from north of Edmonton, one from Central Alberta, and three from the Calgary area. This necessitated a new format for Council meetings, incorporating video and teleconferencing options for Council meetings. Our Public Members on council continue to be valued voices and share their individual expertise in many operational, administrative and experiential ways.

Committee structure and function changed with the *HPA* as well. Registration Committee took on the challenge of policy rewrite to match *HPA*. The Conduct and Competency Committee and the Practice Review Committee were both dissolved and the membership recommitted to a new Continuing Competence Committee. A Complaints Director was hired with a new *HPA* role.

PART 2: REGISTRATION

Registration policy is complete and up on the website. The registration and practice permit process are running smoothly.

Registration renewal for the 2019 year was completed through the new Register system, and during November and December, went relatively smoothly in the online fashion. Registered Midwife numbers continue to grow. See Figure 1.

Category	2016	2017	2018	2019
General Registrants/ Full Practice Permit	87	96	115	122
General Registrants/ New Graduates	23	13	15	15
Provisional Registrants	1	3	1	2
Courtesy Registrants	0	0	1	0
Total Active	111	112	132	139
Non- Practising/Inactive	13	13	11	30
Students	39	33	24	32
Total Registered	163	158	167	201

Figure 1 - Historical increasing record of registrants 2016-2019

NEW REGISTRATION APPLICATIONS

According to the new *HPA* Registration Policy and CMA website information, applications for registration as a midwife are received in three ways:

1. Graduates from approved Canadian Midwifery Education Programs (MEPs)
2. Midwives practicing in other Canadian jurisdictions via the Canadian Free Trade Agreement (CFTA)
3. Internationally-educated Midwives (PLEA)

Figure 2 represents the trends on these applications.

	2016	2017	2018	2019
MEPs	15	10	13	12
CFTA	6	4	3	4
PLEA	5	4	4	9
Total	26	18	20	25

Figure 2 - Trends on new applications

As part of the application process, the CMA oversees the writing of the Canadian Midwifery Registration Exam (CMRE, held twice yearly), and the Objective Structured Clinical Exams (OSCE). In 2019, CMA began an arrangement with UBC Midwifery Program to accept applicants for the OSCEs held at the UBC SIM Lab. This opportunity affords a very consistent, objective, pertinent assessment of skills for Alberta candidates in the future.

	2016	2017	2018	2019
CMRE	11	14	14	16
OSCE	7	0	3	1
Total	18	14	17	17

Figure 3 - Numbers of candidates in each exam over the past four years.

PART 3: CONTINUING COMPETENCE

The Continuing Competence Committee, according to legislation, has five years to get a program fully operational. This committee has developed a workplan, examined an overall program approach, visited other colleges to get examples, drafted a number of policies and are currently sequencing key areas into place. Please see Continuing Competence Committee's report section in the Annual Report.

PART 4: PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

One of the key roles of the CMA is to take in all public concerns and complaints. Each one is reviewed and then carefully processed (with attention to fairness and equitability) to address the perspectives of all parties involved. The following chart (Figure 4) provides an historical summary of the CMA's concern and complaint activity.

2019 is a straddle year, where *HDA* files are being processed and completed and *HPA* files are being opened. Starting in May, 2019, the Complaints Director took over all **new** concerns and complaints. A brief summary of the remaining *HDA* files is below.

	2016	2017	2018	2019
<i>Files open Jan 1</i>	4	4	10	16
<i>New files Jan 1 – Dec 31</i>	8	9	6	0
<i>Files closed</i>	6	3	3	7
<i>Files still open Dec 31</i>	4	10	16	9

Figure 4 – Number of complaints received under the *HDA*

Prior to the *HPA* change, whenever a concern or complaint was filed, the Registrar was tasked with determining how the matter should proceed. Below (Figure 5) is the historical summary of those decisions regarding the *HDA* files. *HPA* report is stated under the Complaints Director's Report as follows.

	2016	2017	2018	2019
<i>Dismissed</i>	0	0	0	3
<i>Referred to Practice Review</i>	4	5	6	0
<i>Referred to Investigation</i>	2	4	8	5
<i>Proceeded to Hearing</i>	0	1	2	1
TOTAL	6	10	16	9

Figure 5 – Action steps: should only reflect *HDA* data, and be clearly marked *HDA*

PART 5:

Not applicable

PART 6: OTHER MATTERS

CMA staff, Council and committees continue to revise the myriad of documents to reflect *HPA* language. This is ongoing.

PART 7: TITLE PROTECTION

Interestingly, the CMA has had one case to deal with this year. A person around the Edmonton area is charging money to be a pregnancy, birth and postpartum “support and helper”. Her name is known, her website is public and CMA did follow up with our legal counsel around this matter, after a birth occurred with this woman (birth family was a midwifery client), and the midwife was called after the birth occurred. This “support and helper” woman is well known previously in Saskatchewan. Very tricky and coy wording is used on her website.

PART 8: REGULATIONS, BYLAWS, CODE OF ETHICS, STANDARDS OF PRACTICE

Bylaws have been approved by Council. Alberta Health and the CMA have continued to interface during 2019. Once the CMA moved under the *HPA*, there was much work to be done. A decision was made by Alberta Health to strike an Advisory Committee for the CMA, to review key documents and processes. The stakeholder group consists of representatives from Alberta Health (Professional Practice, Workforce, Immunization, Medical Director), Alberta Health Services (PMAO), Alberta College of Pharmacy, CARNA and CPSA. This group met three times in the fall of 2019, and once Terms of Reference were agreed upon, was able to review previously prepared CMA Standards of Practice and Code of Ethics. These have been generally approved by the group. Thanks to many of the stakeholders for the helpful comments, tips and direction to

great resources. The Standards of Competence are partially reviewed, and as of January 1, 2020, this Advisory Group is on hold, pending an AB Health legal review of the postpartum component of the *Midwives Profession Regulation (237/2018)*. CMA wishes to state that this halt is detrimental to Registered Midwives becoming autonomous health care providers and self-regulating, and for the Advisory Committee to reconvene as soon as possible.

PART 9:

Not applicable.

PARTNERSHIP AND PROFESSIONAL RELATIONS

Alberta Association of Midwives (AAM), the Provincial Midwifery Administration Office (PMAO) within AHS, Mount Royal University (MRU) Bachelor of Midwifery (BMid) Program, and Alberta Health are the main groups that the CMA interfaces with regularly. AAM, CMA, and PMAO have different mandates, but also need to work collaboratively for the registration process, the New Registrant’s program, practice issues, workforce planning and for continuing competence of registered midwives in the province. Regular two-way and three-way meetings continue to happen, creating a forum for ongoing communication and building understanding. Under the *HPA*, CMA has a legislated responsibility to oversee the MRU BMid program. Regular meetings occur with this program, focussing on education and curriculum, preceptors, student issues and new the Alberta Midwifery Regulations.

CMA is also a member of the Alberta Federation of Regulated Health Professionals (AFRHP), and continues to realize value from this membership. For a newer college, this group affords multiple

resources otherwise hard to obtain. From Bill 21 resources around learning modules for members and a client relations program, to government relations support, this network is an essential resource for the Registrar and the CMA. Within AFRHP there are interest groups and meetings: Registration Interest Group, Continuing Competence Interest Group, Complaints Process Working Group have all been informative and helpful for CMA to integrate the *HPA* into processes and document revisions.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon Prusky, Registrar, CMA

Complaints Director's Report

Statement of Purpose/Goals

The Complaints Director was elected by legislation as of April 1, 2019, when it moved under the *Health Professions Act*. The Complaints Director is responsible for reviewing all formal written, signed complaints against regulated members of the College of Midwives of Alberta.

Following the review of a formal complaint, as per the *Health Professions Act*, the Complaints Director can take several action steps. These steps include:

- Dismissal of the complaint if the complaint is trivial or vexatious, or,
- Informal resolution (attempting to solve the complaint via encouraging communication, etc.), or,
- Conducting of an investigation into the complaint.

Following an investigation, a complaint can be:

- Dismissed
- Formal resolution / agreement of the complaint or
- Referred to a Hearing Tribunal

Summary of Activities in 2019

The Complaints Director has been to numerous conferences, workshops and courses to understand the complaints process, investigations, hearings, sexual abuse and sexual misconduct. Such courses, workshops and conferences were held by Field Law, CARNA, Foundation of Administrative Justice, and AFRHP's Complaints Process Working Group.

The Complaints Director helped draft Hearings Director policy and is drafting a Conflict of Interest Policy.

NUMBER OF COMPLAINTS RECEIVED

From April 1, 2019 – Dec 31, 2019 we have had 7 complaints under the *HPA*

SOURCE OF COMPLAINT

Of the 7 complaints:

- 4 - Public
- 2 - AHS members
- 1 - Complaints Director

COMPLAINTS ALLEGING SEXUAL ABUSE OR SEXUAL MISCONDUCT

Under changes to the *HPA* that came into force on April 1, 2019, all health profession regulators are required to report on complaints alleging sexual abuse or sexual misconduct. CMA has established a patient relations program for clients who come forward with complaints of

sexual abuse or sexual misconduct by offering counselling to clients who require support.

HEARINGS RELATED TO COMPLAINTS OF SEXUAL ABUSE OR SEXUAL MISCONDUCT

There were no complaint or hearings held relating to complaints of sexual abuse or sexual misconduct. Accordingly, there were no findings, based in whole or in part, of sexual abuse or sexual misconduct.

DISPOSITION OF COMPLAINTS

7 Complaints:

- 2 – Formal Resolution: Complaint Resolution Agreement
- 1 – Trivial: Dismissed
- 1 – Informal Resolution: Closed
- 3 – Under investigation

With a focus on patient safety, fairness and opportunities to improve midwifery practice, CMA is committed to protecting the public through managing, investigating and resolving complaints about Registered Midwives.

Treasurer's Report

Statement of Purpose/Goals

The purpose of the Treasurer is to oversee and present the budget, accounts and financial statements to the Council. The Treasurer liaises with the Executive Director and the Financial Director about financial matters and ensures that appropriate financial systems and controls are in place.

The Audited Financial Statements are presented with this report.

Summary of Activities in 2019

The College's operation:

1. To demonstrate fiscal responsibility in general operations:

Each year the College strives to maintain a balanced budget and has shown it is capable of achieving this. The 2019 projected budget was based on predicted income of \$338,900 and predicted expenses of \$336,418. Actuals for the year, with the added revenue of more registrations and an increase to membership fees resulted in a revenue higher than budgeted of \$395,518. While expenditures were also somewhat higher than predicted at \$353,869, we were left with a surplus of funds that will be invested appropriately to be used for hearing costs.

2. To establish a savings and investment portfolio to support any future costs as a result of concerns and or complaints brought forward:

Each year the College has made a budgetary commitment to contribute \$5000.00 per year into savings fund specifically for Hearings. We continued with this contribution in 2019 as well as the help of the membership levy, to build this fund to ensure the College has the ability to manage future expenses.

2019 HEARING INVESTMENT FUND

Balance *\$143,018*

The College continues to put some moneys in short term GIC's for hearings or any other contingency/emergencies required by the College.

Plans for 2020

The proposed budget for 2020 is included in this report.

The 2020 budget provides for the continued commitment in support of developing new Regulations and Policies needed with our move to the HPA. It also includes the income resulting from the increase in fees to members to provide for additional hearing fund expenses that will be incurred due to the higher number of complaints.

In addition, 2020 will see us move from TD Bank to BMO for all our day to day banking and investments. TD was not providing reliable services and support, nor were they helping us to invest as wisely as possible. BMO is providing us with a dedicated support and investment team who will help to ensure we are making the wisest investment decisions with our membership fees.



COMMITTEE REPORT

2019 Committee Chairs

Committee Chairs oversee the actions of the committees and reports back to the Council. Committee Chairs who are not elected members, attend Council meetings in an advisory capacity.

Registration Committee	Tiffany Harrison, RM Christy LeBlanc, RM
Competency Committee	Marianne King, RM Kayla Blinkhorn, RM RN

Registration Committee

Committee Chairperson(s):

Tiffany Harrison, RM
Christy LeBlanc, RM

Current Committee Members:

Helen Cotter, RM

Statement of Purpose/Goals

To identify the criteria necessary to determine the eligibility for new registration, initial registration and annual renewal of registration for midwives applying for registration with the College of Midwives of Alberta.

Our goal is to ensure public safety and the success of registered midwives through a process that ensures each midwife registered has the competence (knowledge, skill, attitude and judgment) required to practice as an independent, autonomous primary care practitioner in Alberta.

Summary of Activities in 2019-2020

The Registration Committee has been busy this past year as it continues to assess international applicants and applicants from across Canada in accordance with the *HPA* legislation.

In the early part of 2020, some members of The Registration Committee and CMA received formal training on new legislation around the *Fair Registration Practices Act (FRPA)* that came into force on March 1 2020. The act is in response to perceived unfairness and unacceptable delays in credential recognition for foreign-trained professionals and applies to over 60 professions.

The Registration Committee will be busy in the upcoming year as we examine our current registration process to ensure it is transparent, objective, impartial, and procedurally fair as set out in the *FRPA*.

The Registration Committee will continue to assist the Registrar and Deputy Registrar in assessing applicants as required and determine appropriate conditions when necessary on individual applicants and remove conditions once criteria has been met.

Plans for 2020 – 2021

1. Work closely with the Registrar and Deputy Registrar to update Registration Process in compliance with the *FRPA*;
2. To continue to assess new applicants for registration with the CMA; and make recommendations as needed;
3. Increase committee membership (retired midwives, public members, members from across the province etc.);
4. Examine our current PLEA process and determine next steps, after initial research into options available.



Competency Committee

Committee Chairperson:

Marianne King, RM

Committee Co-chairperson:

Kayla Blinkhorn RM, RN

Current Committee Members:

Anna Gimpel,
Beth Larsson, RM
Sharon Prusky, Registrar

Statement of Purpose/Goals

Under the *HPA* the Quality Assurance Committee has been changed to the Competency Committee. The purpose of the Competency Committee as per *HPA* is to make recommendations to Council on continuing competency requirements and the assessment of those requirements. The Competence Committee may also conduct practice visits of members, if required. The Competence Committee is currently working on the continuing competence program which must be established within 5 years of joining the *HPA*. This program will help ensure competency of regulated members and enhance the provision of professional services.

Summary of Activities during 2019

We continue to work through various policies for the continuing competency program. We review various Colleges' continuing competency programs and have met with the College and Association of Physiotherapists of Alberta. We have begun developing a program mission for website interface for the CMA Continuing Competency Program.

Plans for 2020

1. Complete continuing competency program mission and begin website set up.
2. Survey members regarding competency in restricted activities to gain information on where program development is needed.
3. Finalize Competency Committee policies and send them to Council for review. These policies include:
 - a) Peer Case Review policy
 - b) Continuing Professional Development Activity Policy
 - c) Quality of Care Feedback Form
 - d) Continuing Competency Policy
4. Roll out College competency activity for the year: Bill 21 module (Client Protection and Trauma-informed care). This will be the 2020 required activity for registration.
5. Continue to push forward for advanced competencies by meeting regulatory requirements including consulting with an outside Advisory Group - currently on hold due to AB Health legal review of the Midwives Profession Regulation (postpartum piece).
6. Begin continuing competency program website development with OlaTech Corporation on the CMA website.

2020 Projected Budget

* 2021 Projected Budget Planning will occur in June 2020

Projected 2020 budget sub categories

Revenue

Registration fees

active	135 @ 2900	\$ 391,500.00	increase \$150
Student	30 @ 150	\$ 4,500.00	increase \$50
inactive	8 @ 200	\$ 1,600.00	increase \$50
service fees		\$ 200.00	

Total Revenue		\$ 397,800.00
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Expenses

Hearing Fund		\$ 5,000.00
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Legal (outside hearings)		\$ 35,000.00
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Staff wages and benefits	Registrar	Adding Policy Development Combined ED/AA Hearings Director/ treasurer Payroll/ Accounts receivable
	Operations Director	
	Finacial Director	
	Bookkeeper	
	Complaints Director	
	EI & CPP contributions	

Sub total		\$ 213,900.00
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Board and Committee	Council meetings	\$ 7,000.00
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RC	\$ 2,000.00
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PRC	\$ 3,000.00
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CC	\$ 3,000.00
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Sub total		\$ 15,000.00
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Executive Board Support Cost Recover		\$ 3,000.00
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Training/workshops/conferences		\$ 7,000.00
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Complaint investigation time/travel		\$ 20,000.00
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General and administration	Advertising and promotion	\$ 1,000.00
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	Bank service charges	\$	300.00	
	Dues and subscriptions	\$	3,000.00	
	Meals	\$	2,000.00	
	Office supplies	\$	2,000.00	
	Postage and delivery	\$	1,000.00	
	Printing and reproduction	\$	500.00	
	Consulting	\$	8,000.00	
	Repairs and maintenance	\$	1,000.00	
	Practice permit	\$	2,000.00	
	Telephone	\$	2,000.00	
	Audit and accounting	\$	6,000.00	
	Capital expense fund (replacement)	\$	2,000.00	
	General office fund	\$	500.00	
	Sub total			\$ 31,300.00
	Office rent	2636.56		\$ 33,000.00
	Insurance			\$ 5,000.00
	Travel			\$ 9,000.00
	Amortization and depreciation			\$ 2,200.00
	NEW REGISTRY PROGRAM			\$ 17,500.00
	Total expenses			\$ 396,900.00
	Balance Revenue Over Expenses			\$ 900.00