



Psychological Care at Risk Under HPOA

How HPOA's new powers threaten trust, privacy, and access to psychological care in B.C.

Our Mission

To bring attention to [The Health Professions and Occupations Act \(HPOA, Bill 36\)](#) so it can be repealed or amended. It makes major changes to how psychologists are regulated and raises serious concerns about ethics, standards of care, and risks to people seeking mental health services in British Columbia.

Key concerns and why they matter.



Legislative Process

The HPOA is a sweeping overhaul of how health professionals are regulated. British Columbia is the only province in Canada where the government has taken such control of regulating professionals. For psychologists, it was passed without meaningful use of their expertise on the work that they do.



Regulation & Governance

The HPOA shifts from professional self-regulation to a model where the government appoints all board members. There is no guaranteed seat on the board for psychologists. This removes democratic and ethical safeguards crucial to psychology.



Confidentiality & Privacy

Quality Assessors can read client files without their consent. This violates a core ethical commitment to confidentiality by psychologists. Resisting can result in major fines and jail time for psychologists. And a feared loss of privacy will deter clients from entering or fully engaging in therapy.



Investigative & Penalty Powers

The HPOA permits so much government over-reach that psychologists can be disciplined for violating unwritten rules. Yet the discipline panel has only one psychologist on it. HPOA has the power to seize files without a warrant, shut a psychologist's practice before a hearing is held, and a psychologist cannot appeal to another court, like any other citizen.



Compelled Requirements

The HPOA has broader proactive powers where psychologists must now report bankruptcies, arrests, and lawsuits, and disclose any personal information the College requests. They can also be compelled to be vaccinated. These requirements must be met to hold a license and exceed normal limits on privacy and consent.



Risks to Clients & the Profession

Due to fear of a stranger reading their file, clients may avoid therapy or withhold crucial information. Psychologists may avoid high risk cases; many are retiring early or moving away. New psychologists may avoid BC due to more balanced regulation elsewhere. This threatens access, increases wait times, and leaves people with complex needs without adequate help, in an already strained system.

How You Can Help

Join the conversation. Visit our website to learn more.

www.hpoa-psychologists.com



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Protect Mental Health Care

Expert psychological care is essential for therapy and assessment. Suicide is the second cause of death for ages 10–24, and psychologists are highly trained to support youth and others in severe distress. They also provide critical assessments for brain injury, learning disabilities, autism, and child custody; without these, people can be denied compensation and children may go untreated or remain in unsafe situations.

A Path Forward

Psychologists of BC for Ethical Care & Governance call for greater awareness and education about the impact and concerns with the HPOA. We need policy makers who are willing to engage in constructive dialogue and help champion thoughtful reforms, stronger privacy protections, and meaningful psychology representation, such as creating a College of Mental Health Care Providers. We want to ensure competent, sustainable mental health care in British Columbia.

Take Action

If you share concerns about the HPOA, you can:



Contact your **MLA and the Minister of Health** to request review and changes to the HPOA.



Public sector workers can ask **unions or employers** to assess HPOA's effects and advocate.

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