

## Professional Practice Standard #19 – Vaccination

On May 4, 2015, the Council of the College of Homeopaths of Ontario (CHO) approved Professional Practice Standard #19 on Vaccination. This standard is in keeping with the position taken by Health Canada and the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care. See the full standard for complete details. The intent of this standard is to provide guidance to Registrants and the public about the expectations of the CHO when the issue of vaccination is raised. The best interests of the patient must be paramount. A treatment plan and any professional opinion must be delivered in a manner that does not confuse the patient or compromise the patient's care.

### Policy

Vaccination is not within the homeopathic scope of practice.

A nosode is not a vaccination. Currently there is no homeopathic remedy which may be considered a substitution for vaccination.

A Registrant shall not advise his or her patient against vaccination. A Registrant shall, in his or her professional judgment, provide care which is in the best interest of the patient and shall not intentionally put the patient in harm's way.

### Questions & Answers

Here are some frequently asked questions and answers to help Registrants understand how to deal with the issue of vaccination when it arises in a practice setting.

#### Q1. Annually, I hold a flu clinic at my office. How does this standard affect this event?

**Answer:** This answer depends on the activities carried out during the event. Homeopaths may not offer vaccinations or suggest to a patient that a remedy or general course of treatment is a substitution for vaccination. If you have specific questions about activities in your clinic, contact the College to find out if the services you offer fall in or outside of the homeopathic scope of practice.

#### Q2. Can I provide my patients with remedies that act prophylactically or as a preventative for the flu?

**Answer:** If the patient consultation, case taking, and repertorization points to the selection of a particular homeopathic remedy, as the most appropriate remedy for that individual patient, it is proper to prescribe such a remedy. This remedy can be any appropriately selected remedy including a nosode. The prescribed remedy is not an alternative to vaccination, and at no time may the homeopath imply that he or she is giving an alternative to vaccination. The best interests of the patient must always be paramount. Communication with patients and treatment of a patient must be delivered in a manner that does not confuse the patient or compromise the patient's care.

#### Q3. How should I deal with questions related to vaccination?

**Answer:** In responding to general health-related questions by patients that relate to issues outside the homeopathic scope of practice such as administering vaccinations, a Registrant shall:

1. Advise the patient that vaccination is outside the homeopathic scope of practice and the patient should consult with a health-care professional who has vaccination within his/her scope of practice;
2. Respond in a professional, accurate and balanced manner in the context of providing primary health-care to the patient consistent with the homeopathic scope of practice (see question 2 above); and
3. Encourage the patient to be an active participant in his/her own health-care and to make fully informed decisions concerning his/her health-care<sup>1</sup>.

#### Footnotes

1. CHO Professional Practice Standard 15 Scope of Practice, page 10.

## More Questions & Answers

### Q4. What information can I provide to my patients about their choice to vaccinate?

#### Answer:

1. Inform the patient that the matter of vaccination is outside of the homeopathic scope of practice.
2. You are unable to provide an opinion as to whether the patient should or should not choose to be vaccinated.
3. See answers to Q3 above
4. Follow the standards of informed consent in any health-care discussion and treatment recommendations made. This means that you must give a balanced response about the pros and the cons of vaccination, as well as the pros and cons of any supportive treatment within the scope of practice of the homeopathy profession and allow the patient to make their own informed choice regarding the matter.
5. Explain to the patient that you respect their decision and whatever choice they make you will provide ongoing or supportive care within the homeopathic scope of practice.

### Q5. What happens if I do not comply with Standard 19?

**Answer:** Registrants are reminded that they may be the subject of an inquiry, complaint or report concerning their providing of homeopathic services or discussions related to general health-related questions from patients. The Inquiries, Complaints and Reports Committee (ICRC), composed of both elected (homeopath) and appointed (public) members of Council will review any inquiry, complaint or report to determine the Registrant's compliance with all relevant standards of practice. In exercising its discretion, the ICRC may consider whether the discussions with the patient related to general health questions and were consistent with this standard of practice<sup>2</sup>. If warranted, the outcome of review by the ICRC may lead to actions such as a Specified Continuing Education or Remediation Program, oral caution before a panel of the ICRC, or referral to the Discipline Committee.

#### Footnotes

2. CHO Professional Practice Standard 15 Scope of Practice, page 10.

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## STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES

**TITLE:** Vaccination  
**DOC #:** Standard 19  
**STATUS:** Approved by Council  
**APPROVAL DATE:** May 4, 2015

*Note to Readers: In the event of any inconsistency between this document and the legislation that affects homeopathic practice, the legislation governs.*

*College publications contain practice parameters and standards which should be considered by all Ontario homeopaths in the care of their patients and in the practice of the profession. College publications are developed in consultation with the profession and describe current professional expectations. It is important to note that these College publications may be used by the College or other bodies in determining whether appropriate standards of practice and professional responsibilities have been maintained.*

### INTENT

The intent of this standard is to provide guidance to Registrants and the public about the expectations of the College of Homeopaths of Ontario (the College) when the issue of vaccinations is raised. The best interests of the patient must be paramount. A treatment plan and any professional opinion must be delivered in a manner that does not confuse the patient or compromise the patient's care.

### POLICY

Vaccination is not within the homeopathic scope of practice.

A nosode is not a vaccination. Currently there is no homeopathic remedy which may be considered a substitution for vaccination.

A Registrant shall not advise his or her patient against vaccination. A Registrant shall, in his or her professional judgment, provide care which is in the best interest of the patient and shall not intentionally put the patient in harm's way.

### DESCRIPTION OF STANDARD

In responding to general health-related questions by patients that relate to issues outside the homeopathic scope of practice, such as administering vaccinations, a Registrant shall:

1. Advise the patient that the performance of the act is outside the Homeopathic scope of practice and the patient should consult with a health-care professional who has the act within his/her scope of practice;
2. Respond in a professional, accurate and balanced manner in the context of providing primary health care to the patient consistent with the homeopathic scope of practice; and
3. Encourage the patient to be an active participant in his/her own health-care which allows the patient to make fully informed decisions<sup>1</sup> concerning his/her health care.

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<sup>1</sup> Refer to the CHO Standard of Professional Practice #10 Informed Consent.



### **Responding to General Health-Related Questions**

As indicated above, Registrants cannot advise their patients against vaccination. It is outside the scope of practice of the profession.

If a Registrant does so, he or she may be breaching s. 30 of the RHPA:

Treatment, etc., where risk of harm

30. (1) No person, other than a member treating or advising within the scope of practice of his or her profession, shall treat or advise a person with respect to his or her health in circumstances in which it is reasonably foreseeable that serious bodily harm may result from the treatment or advice or from an omission from them. 1991, c. 18, s. 30 (1); 2007, c.10, Sched. M, s. 6.

### **Failure to Comply**

Registrants are reminded that they may be the subject of an inquiry, complaint or report concerning the provision of homeopathic services or discussions related to general health questions from patients.

The Inquiries, Complaints and Reports Committee (ICRC), comprised of both elected (homeopath) and appointed (public) members of Council will review any inquiry, complaint or report to determine the Registrant's compliance with all relevant standards of practice. In exercising its discretion, the ICRC may consider if the discussions with the patient relating to general health-related questions were consistent with this standard of practice.

### **RELEVANT COMPETENCIES & PERFORMANCE INDICATORS**

*Competencies are the specific knowledge, skills, attributes and abilities required of an entry-to-practice homeopath in order to practise safely and ethically. These competencies, from the Competency Profile for Entry-to-Practice Homeopaths Practising in Ontario, were adopted by the transitional Council of the College of Homeopaths of Ontario in 2012.*

*Note to Readers: The performance indicators listed below each competency are examples of the possible indicators which demonstrate performance consistent with the competency. The list of performance indicators is not exhaustive.*

*For complete information please refer to College documents Competency Profile for Entry-to-Practice Homeopaths Practising in Ontario (February 27, 2012) and Performance Indicators (March 2012).*

1.1 Provide patient-centred care within the scope of homeopathic practice as per *Homeopathy Act (2007)*.  
(K, S)

### **RELEVANT PERFORMANCE INDICATORS**

1. Demonstrate the use of strategies that engage patient in a collaborative approach.
2. Describe the scope of practice as defined by the *Homeopathy Act (2007)*.
3. Explain the role of homeopathic care within the Ontario health-care system.



1.2 Develop a professional therapeutic relationship with patient, maintain boundaries and act in the best interest of the patient. (K)

**RELEVANT PERFORMANCE INDICATORS**

1. Recognize patient's concerns and requirements.
2. Demonstrate respect for patient's personal boundaries.
3. Identify commonly occurring boundary violations.
4. Describe actions used to address boundary violations.

1.3 Demonstrate sensitivity to and respect for each patient's rights, autonomy, dignity and uniqueness. (K,S)

**RELEVANT PERFORMANCE INDICATORS**

1. Identify homeopath's role in fostering the patient's right to make his/her own decisions regarding health and social well-being.
2. Communicate in a manner that respects the patient's uniqueness.
3. Identify socio-economic or socio-cultural factors that may be relevant to the patient.

**DEFINITIONS**

**Homeopath**

"Homeopath" means a registrant of the College of Homeopaths of Ontario.

**Registrant**

A Registrant is a member of the College of Homeopaths of Ontario.

**Homeopathy Scope of Practice**

In the *Homeopathy Act, 2007* a registrant's scope of practice is defined as "The practice of homeopathy is the assessment of body system disorders and treatment using homeopathic techniques to promote, maintain or restore health."

**LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT**

Registrants are reminded that the following provision may apply to this standard under *Homeopathy Act, 2007*, Ontario Regulation 315/12 Professional Misconduct Proclamation date April 1, 2015:

1. The following are acts of professional misconduct for the purposes of clause 51 (1) (c) of the Health Professions Procedural Code:

1. Contravening, by act or omission, a standard of practice of the profession or failing to maintain the standard of practice of the profession.
3. Doing anything to a patient for a therapeutic, preventative, palliative, diagnostic or other health-related purpose except,
  - i. with the informed consent of the patient or the patient's authorized representative, or



- ii. as required or authorized by law.
- 4. Failing to reply appropriately to a reasonable request by a patient or a patient's authorized representative for information respecting a homeopathic assessment or treatment provided or recommended by the member.
- 7. Recommending or providing treatment that the member knows or ought to know is unnecessary or ineffective.
- 8. Attempting to treat a condition that the member knows or ought to know he or she does not have the knowledge, skills or judgment to treat.
- 9. Failing to advise a patient or the patient's authorized representative to consult another member of a health profession within the meaning of the *Regulated Health Professions Act, 1991*, where the member knows or ought to know that the patient requires a service that the member does not have the knowledge, skills or judgment to offer or is beyond his or her scope of practice.
- 10. Performing a controlled act that the member is not authorized to perform.
- 26. Making a claim about a homeopathic treatment, other than a claim that can be supported as reasonable professional opinion.
- 38. Contravening, by act or omission, a provision of the Act, the *Regulated Health Professions Act, 1991* or the regulations under either of those Acts.
- 48. Engaging in conduct or performing an act relevant to the practice of the profession that, having regard to all the circumstances, would reasonably be regarded by members as disgraceful, dishonourable or unprofessional.
- 49. Engaging in conduct that would reasonably be regarded by members as conduct unbecoming a member of the profession.

#### **RELATED DOCUMENTS**

- #10 Standard of Practice on Informed Consent
- #15 Standard of Practice on Scope of Practice
- #6 Guideline on Infection Control