

CITIZEN ADVISORY GROUP (CAG)

CAG Meeting Report: May 13, 2023

College of Traditional Chinese Medicine Practitioners
and Acupuncturists of Ontario's (CTCMPAO)
Proposed Registration Changes

DATE: Saturday, May 13, 2023

TIME: 9:00 am—10:30 am

LOCATION: Virtual (Zoom)

FACILITATOR: Cate Creede, The Potential Group

INTRODUCTION:

The session started at 9:00 am with welcomes, a land acknowledgment, and an outline of the agenda. Members introduced themselves and shared how long they have been part of the CAG.

OVERVIEW: [COLLEGE OF TRADITIONAL CHINESE MEDICINE PRACTITIONERS AND ACUPUNCTURISTS OF ONTARIO \(CTCMPAO\)](#)

Since this was the first time that CTCMPAO independently engaged with Members, CTCMPAO provided an overview of [Traditional Chinese Medicine \(TCM\)](#), how CTCMPAO [regulates the profession](#), and [what patients can expect](#) when they see a TCM Practitioner or Acupuncturist.

CTCMPAO introduced their proposed registration changes and wanted to learn from Members if they supported enabling more opportunities for qualified individuals to practise in Ontario and what protections or safeguards are needed to feel confident that safe, effective care is provided.

1. PROPOSED PROVISIONAL CLASS OF REGISTRATION

CTCMPAO is proposing a new class of registration (“Provisional Class”) to register experienced and trained practitioners who may be qualified to practice in Ontario but may not meet all the current requirements for their General Class of registration. CTCMPAO wanted to learn if Members support the creation of this new class and to explore what safeguards are needed for these Provisional Class holders to provide safe and effective care to Ontario patients.

Q. What are the possible benefits and risks of creating this proposed Provisional Class?

Members agreed that introducing the Provisional Class would bring a bigger pool of TCM practitioners into the profession in a timely manner as well as enable a greater variety of experiences and backgrounds (i.e., specialty training from outside Ontario or Canada).

Members emphasized that increased access to care is essential and that CTCMPAO should limit potential roadblocks for new registrants to support patients accessing the help they need.

The primary risks identified by Members were whether individuals applying to the Provisional Class have kept up to date on their knowledge, skills, and any new TCM modalities if they have not practiced for a while and concerns related to the role and responsibilities of the supervisor.

Q. What safeguards would need to be in place for you to feel confident that Provisional Class holders are providing safe and effective care?

The key themes that emerged throughout this discussion were accountability, awareness, and transparency. In particular, Members suggested the following would increase their confidence:

- Knowing whether the TCM practitioner is a Provisional or General Class holder (e.g., what this distinction means for the patient and to whom the practitioner is accountable).

This information should be offered by the practitioner to the patient at their appointment and also be easily accessible and available on [CTCMPAO's Public Register Search](#).

- Clarifying and clearly outlining the General Class supervisor's role, responsibilities, and requirements for overseeing and training Provisional Class registrants. For example, the supervisory role must be well-defined, ensure that the supervisors are practising and teaching in line with CTCMPAO's expected standards, and should be done in person.
- Public education and awareness around TCM and CTCMPAO's role are needed, as many patients in Ontario may not know what TCM entails or what to expect from a visit.

Q. How confident are you with CTCMPAO's proposed requirements to transfer from the Provisional Class to the General Class? What type of assessment should be required to assess Provisional Class members' competencies?

In addition to a formal competency assessment, CAG Members reiterated the key role of the supervisor throughout this discussion and suggested the following aspects be part of CTCMPAO's assessment process to transfer to the General Class:

- "Report Cards" from the supervisor to assess the Provisional Class holder's knowledge, skills, and competencies that enable opportunities for feedback and improvement,
- Public transparency surrounding the Provisional Class holder's transfer status and the currency and relevance of the continuing professional development they are receiving,
- Require completion of a practicum to ensure that their competencies are demonstrated,
- Implement tools for patient feedback and assessment for Provisional Class holders, and
- Research the kinds of assessments offered by apprenticeship programs or other health regulatory colleges whose registrants provide complementary and alternative medicine.

2. CHINESE ENTRY-TO-PRACTICE (REGISTRATION) EXAMINATION

CTCMPAO has started to offer their entry-to-practice exam in Chinese (i.e., traditional and simplified) to enable more registration opportunities for new Canadians and for experienced individuals already living in Ontario. CTCMPAO wanted to learn if Members support this initiative as long as applicants can demonstrate their English or French fluency in another way that ensures that these practitioners will provide safe care.

Q. Are you supportive of this initiative to offer CTCMPAO's registration exam in Chinese?

Members reiterated their support for CTCMPAO's work to enable more registration opportunities for qualified providers to practise in Ontario and agreed that the language of the examination does not matter as long it reflects the skills and competencies required to provide safe care.

Members suggested that CTCMPAO consider offering the exam in additional languages (i.e., other than English, French, or Chinese) to further increase accessibility and to support equity,

diversity, and inclusion (EDI). One suggestion was to examine the demographic data of CTCMPAO's current registrants to help determine which additional languages could be added.

Q. What safeguards should be in place to ensure safety and quality care if CTCMPAO continues to offer their registration exam in Chinese?

Suggested safeguards included requiring CTCMPAO registrants to inform patients if English or French is not their first language, ensuring that all translation is done at an expert level, and being mindful of any relevant language requirements for patient record-keeping in Ontario.

Existing challenges to accessing care and finding effective treatment were highlighted and Members reiterated that patients just want help ("results matter") and more treatment options and modalities ("the more access to care, the better"). If CTCMPAO has deemed a TCM practitioner competent to provide safe care, it is ultimately the patient's choice of provider.

Additional comments highlighted the need for public awareness and education about who can provide TCM and acupuncture in Ontario (i.e., CTCMPAO-registered acupuncturists vs. other regulated health professionals), validating credentials from outside Canada, and questions related to standardizing rates and fees to access TCM services in Ontario.

REFLECTION: KEY DISCUSSION THEMES

The key themes and suggestions that emerged from Members during the discussion included:

- Enthusiastic support for expanding opportunities for individuals trained elsewhere or who have not practised TCM for a while to now become regulated through CTCMPAO.
- Supervision requirements need to be transparent, understandable, and accountable (for example, oversight should include monitoring the provision of controlled acts, the need for transparency around potential concerns or complaints, and assurance that they are practising TCM in a way that is consistent with the standards expected by CTCMPAO).
- The need for public awareness, communication, and support about what quality TCM care looks like, which TCM modalities are appropriate, and what to expect from a visit.

Adjournment

Members were thanked for their input and feedback, and the meeting adjourned at 10:30 am.