



Alberta College of
Speech-Language Pathologists
and Audiologists

ACSLPA INSIGHTS

Introduction to Regulatory Colleges & Self-Governing Professions

The Alberta College of Speech Language Pathologists and Audiologists. It says right in the name that ACSLPA is a college, but we don't offer the typical college experience of classes and degrees that might come to mind. ACSLPA is a **regulatory college**, but what does that mean?

Regulatory College:

A term used to refer to the regulatory bodies under which Alberta's health professions are organized. In the Health Professions Act (HPA) these are simply called 'Colleges.'

Regulated health professional/member:

Any member of a regulated health profession. These professions are listed in the HPA—and on the government of Alberta's website for easy access. These health professionals must be registered with their respective College and abide by the legislation governing them to practice.

Health Professions Act (HPA): This is a piece of provincial legislation in Alberta which governs the majority of regulated health professions in the province. It creates regulatory colleges, lays out restricted activities, and sets standard processes for regulating registration, continuing competence, and complaints and discipline.

Alberta has many regulatory bodies that oversee the work of professionals in the province. ACSLPA is part of a specific group of these that govern **regulated health professionals**. These health profession regulatory colleges were created by a piece of legislation called the Health Professions Act (HPA).

The government created the HPA to set in place rules that health professions must follow for the purpose of public protection. However, the government does not participate in the regulation of these rules, that responsibility falls to the colleges. The rules laid out in the HPA include the duties and responsibilities of colleges, regulated members, and employers. In order to allow colleges to regulate their professions the HPA also grants colleges certain legal authorities. In this way, the HPA delegates regulation of professions to colleges which must abide by the duties and responsibilities laid out in the act. Guided by the HPA, each college creates key documents, registration and competence procedures, and complaint investigation processes. The colleges create these structures to ensure regulated members are qualified and have a framework to guide their practice.

For example, the HPA has a list of restricted activities (which are high-risk activities that require certain competencies to be performed safely). Certain professions are authorized to perform certain restricted activities, as outlined by the regulation. When a regulated health professional fails to follow this legislation, their regulatory college must investigate this failure and can make disciplinary decisions in response. While these decisions have legal ramifications that may interact with government bodies such as judicial courts, the colleges are responsible for carrying out the disciplinary process.

Part of the delegation of regulatory power is the granting of several self-regulatory privileges. To be **self-regulating or self-governing** means exactly what it sounds like: to govern and manage oneself. Recent changes to legislation have increased the presence of public members on the councils of regulatory colleges in Alberta. ACSLPA, and many other colleges, are now considered to operate in a shared governance model which includes features of self-regulation with increased oversight and participation by the public.

The self-regulatory privileges given to health colleges allows members of ACSLPA to be involved in the regulation of their professions. All speech language pathologists and audiologists have a responsibility to protect the integrity of their professions in their own practice and by reporting unprofessional conduct to the College.

The ACSLPA Council reflects how the shared governance model works. The diagram here shows the hierarchy of authority within ACSLPA. The Council is made up of 50% regulated members (that means speech language pathologists and audiologists) and 50% members of the public that are appointed by the government. The speech language pathologists and audiologists on Council are elected by the members of the College as representatives of the professions. By participating on Council, voting in Council elections, and volunteering on decision-making committees ACSLPA members can govern and manage their professions; they are able to self-regulate their profession. Individuals from the public are appointed to ensure that regulated members are prioritizing the safety and best interests of the public.

If you want to learn more about regulatory colleges, shared governance, self-regulation, or any other the topics covered here you can always review the jurisprudence modules we have available on our website—and through the member portal! As legislation changes ACSLPA will update our members as to the impact on their professions. If you have further queries please email feedback@acslpa.ca. ■

Self-Governing: a self-governing profession is governed and managed by its professionals. ACSLPA is an independent public agency that enjoys many self-regulatory privileges.

