



OMFC REGISTRATION REVIEW

Manitoba Naturopathic Association Final Registration Review Report (2013)

OFFICE OF THE MANITOBA FAIRNESS COMMISSIONER

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Introduction

This Final Registration Review Report presents the results of the Office of the Manitoba Fairness Commissioner's (OMFC) registration review with the Manitoba Naturopathic Association (MNA) as of March 2013.

Registration reviews are conducted as part of the Fairness Commissioner's mandate to review the registration practices of regulatory bodies subject to *The Fair Registration Practices in Regulated Professions Act (Act)*.

The purpose of a registration review is to enable the Fairness Commissioner to determine a regulator's compliance to the Act and to make recommendations to improve compliance. Compliance refers first and foremost to the fairness of assessment and registration practice, with particular attention drawn to the need for the fair consideration of internationally educated applicants. It also refers to the co-operation of the regulator with the Fairness Commissioner.

The Act stipulates that a registration review for any given regulator is to be undertaken at times specified by the Fairness Commissioner. The content of a registration review is to include an analysis of the relevance and necessity of registration requirements, the timeliness of decision making, the reasonableness of fees and the registration of internationally educated individuals. This may involve the review of any third parties employed in the assessment and registration process.

The OMFC's review process culminates in a Final Registration Review Report, complete with an Action Plan from the regulator. This report is a public document submitted to the Province's Minister of Immigration and Multiculturalism and posted on the OMFC's website.

Review Process

For the purposes of the 2012/13 registration review cycle, regulatory bodies with few internationally educated applicants and/or that rely heavily upon third parties for their assessment process participated in a self-assessment review process.

The review process had several steps: agreeing to a review schedule, arranging for the involvement of key staff and council members, participating in a two-day self-assessment workshop, drafting an action plan and finalizing the plan in consultation with the Fairness Commissioner.

The process was designed to support meaningful reviews that concretely identify fairness issues and lead to progressive change.

The Fairness Standard and Self-Assessment Workshop

As a first review encounter with the OMFC, regulatory practice was evaluated against a single broad fairness standard as defined by the OMFC's *Fairness Standard and Criteria Document*:

Dedicated and fair practices are applied for the assessment and registration of internationally educated applicants. Policies and procedures are documented, consistently followed and periodically reviewed to ensure their effectiveness.

This fairness standard covers the full spectrum of fair assessment and registration practice and is defined with multiple elements and criteria in the *Fairness Standard and Criteria Document*.

Over the course of a two-day self-assessment workshop, the standard was explained and regulators examined their practice in light of the various elements and criteria involved. Special emphasis was placed on the importance of clear, complete and accurate assessment and registration information, fair third party assessment practice and the consideration of qualifications acquired through professional work experience. Solutions and best practice models were presented as regulators drafted action plans to address issues of concern.

Action Plan & Compliance Statement

Shortly after the workshop, regulators submitted board-approved Action Plans to the OMFC. Regulators met with the Fairness Commissioner to discuss the plans and in some instances, revisions were made.

The Action Plan contained in this report has been reviewed by the Fairness Commissioner and is comprised of actions needed to address fairness concerns and improve compliance to *The Fair Registration Practices in Regulated Professions Act*.

Concluding this report, the Fairness Commissioner's Compliance Statement provides comment on the suitability of the regulator's Action Plan and the overall compliance of the regulator's registration practice.

Overview of the Assessment and Registration Process of the Manitoba Naturopathic Association

The Manitoba Naturopathic Association (MNA) regulates the practice of naturopathy in Manitoba under the authority of *The Naturopathic Act* (C.C.S.M. c. N80) and 'Manitoba Naturopathic Association Regulations'.

Only persons licensed with the MNA as a registered naturopath may practise naturopathy, or use the title "Naturopath" or any other designation that implies the practice of naturopathy.

Naturopathic doctors provide medical care to patients through the use of natural methods and substances to enhance healing. Their approach emphasizes support and stimulation of the body's own healing mechanisms. Naturopathic doctors work in private clinics and integrative medical clinics. Some practitioners work in hospitals.

Provincial immigration statistics indicate that no internationally educated naturopaths immigrated to Manitoba from 2005 to 2011.

Qualifications

Principal qualifications needed for registration include possessing a doctorate degree from a school of Naturopathic Medicine approved by the Council on Naturopathic Medical Education (CNME) and successfully completing the Naturopathic Physicians Licensing Examinations (NPLEX) and Manitoba board examinations.

Applicants who have not graduated in one of the CNME's six approved academic programs of Naturopathic Medicine are directed to seek advanced standing and graduation from one of these schools.

Assessment and Registration Process

The MNA's assessment and registration process has a few key steps:

Advanced Standing and Bridging Program:

Applicants with academic training outside of the CNME's six approved academic programs begin by acquiring advanced standing from one of these institutions. The Canadian College of Naturopathic Medicine provides detailed admission requirements for applicants seeking a standing status. This will involve submitting educational transcripts to be evaluated on a course-by-course basis.

Those with gaps in academic qualification must complete coursework to achieve full standing.

The Canadian College of Naturopathic Medicine (CCNM), offers bridge delivery of its naturopathic medical program. Developed specifically for international medical graduates (IMGs), the two year program incorporates the competencies of an approved naturopathic medical program and acknowledges the applicant's previous medical experience and education. Graduates receive the naturopathic doctor (ND) recognized by the CNME.

To be eligible for the CCNM's bridging program, applicants must have successfully completed the Medical Council of Canada Evaluating Examination (MCCEE) or the United States Medical Licensing Examination I (USMLE I) within the last six years. Graduates of non-English academic programs must provide proof of English proficiency by way of a valid IELTS or TOEFL IBT test, meeting minimum specified test scores. Total cost of the program is \$13,115.00.

Examination Process:

North American Board of Naturopathic Examiners (NPLEX)

Upon academic qualification, applicants apply to the North American Board of Naturopathic Examiners to write the NPLEX exams. Applicants supply documentation attesting to academic standing and identification.

NPLEX exams have two parts. The NPLEX Part I Biomedical Science Examination tests foundational knowledge of anatomy, physiology, biochemistry & genetics as well as disease and dysfunction. The NPLEX Part II Core Clinical Science Examination is designed to test knowledge of diagnosis, medication, other treatment modalities and medical interventions. NPLEX also offers two elective tests in acupuncture and minor surgery.

NPLEX Examinations are case-based. The examination is comprised of clinical summaries followed by several questions pertaining to the patient's case. On the Part I – Biomedical Science Examination, the clinical summary is very brief. On the Part II – Clinical Science Examinations, the clinical summary is more extensive. Items on the Part I – Biomedical Science Examination do not require clinical training, as all relate to the biomedical basis for the patient's condition, not diagnosis or treatment. Items on the examinations are all in a multiple-choice, single-answer format.

The Part I Biomedical Science Exam costs \$450.00 for test, application and administrative fee. Cost and administrative costs for Part II Core Clinical Science Exam, Clinical Elective Acupuncture Science Examination and Clinical Elective Minor Surgery Exam are \$725.00, \$100.00 and \$100.00 respectively. All of NPLEX fees are in US dollars.

NPLEX exams can only be taken in Toronto or Vancouver and in a few locations in the United States.

Exams results are provided approximately 7 weeks after the exam writing. Applicants can view a pass or fail status on-line and a written exam report follows.

Application to the Manitoba Naturopathic Association

Upon successful completion of NPLEX exams, applicants apply to the MNA. This involves completing an application form, paying a \$200.00 application fee and supplying the following documents:

1. Official transcripts from an accredited naturopathic educational college; transcripts must be sent directly to the Manitoba Naturopathic Association.
2. Criminal Records Vulnerable Sector Search and Child Abuse Registry conducted by local police station and sent directly to the Manitoba Naturopathic Association.
3. NPLEX scores for both basic science and clinical exams. The transcripts must

be mailed directly from NABNE to the Manitoba Naturopathic Association (Attention: Registrar).

4. Proof of \$2-million liability malpractice insurance, \$3-million for those working with IV therapy.

Applicants must also pass the MNA's Provincial Board Exams. These include:

Oral Practical Exam

The oral exam involves a hypothetical, mock practice scenario. Applicants must ask the appropriate questions, conduct the appropriate exams/diagnostic tests, etc. to arrive at a diagnosis and treatment plan.

Written Jurisprudence Exam

This written exam tests jurisprudence knowledge of the Manitoba Naturopathic Act.

Sittings for the Oral Practical exam occur on a quarterly basis in Winnipeg: on the second Tuesday of January, April, July and October. The MNA provides written notification of exam results within 4-6 weeks.

MNA Registration

Upon meeting all of the requirements above, the final step in the process is to register with the MNA. For first year practitioners the fee is \$1,500.00.

Appeal Process

Following MNA Regulations, decisions to deny or condition registration can be appealed to the MNA's board. Following the registrar's decision, the appellant has 30 days to file a written notice of appeal. The board has 90 days from when it receives this notice to hold a hearing. The appellant may appear with counsel. The board has 90 days following the appeal to make a decision and another 30 days to inform the appellant. Unsuccessful appellants have a 30 day opportunity to file a notice of appeal with the Court of Queen's Bench.

Time and Cost

The time and cost to register with the MNA vary significantly depending on the circumstances of the applicant. Internationally educated naturopaths who require gap training usually need to enrol in the Canadian College of Naturopathic Medicine's Bridging Program which will take at least two-years. Upon completion of the bridging program, the period from graduation to registration is approximately 5 months. Applicants who require examination re-writes can expect a 6-month period before they re-write the NPLEX examinations.

Costs are high. The MNA reports the average four-year naturopathic college graduate has an approximate debt of \$150,000.00 by the time they register with a provincial association. Internationally educated naturopaths also face steep costs: approximately \$16,500 for direct costs alone, which could easily be eclipsed by a variety of associated costs. By far, the lion share of the IENs time and expense will

lie in the need for out-of-province bridge training. NPLEX exams require out-of-province travel and if re-writes are required, could become a very expensive process. A list of direct costs can be seen below.

Fees

The Canadian College of Naturopathic Medicine Bridging Program: \$13,115.00.

Exams (NPLEX & provincial board exams) = \$1,600.00

MNA Application fee: \$200.00

Criminal Record Check: \$30.00

Malpractice Insurance: \$700

First Year Registration Fee: \$1500

Manitoba Naturopathic Association's Action Plan

In response to the self- identified Compliance Issues, the Manitoba Naturopathic Association proposed the following action plan as of March 2013. The plan is reprinted under the 'MNA's Planned Actions' column in the table below.

The MNA's Action Plan will form the basis of its relationship with the OMFC moving forward. The plan is monitored by the OMFC and will be tracked in the 'Completion Date' box of the Action Plan as it comes to fruition. As the report will be available online, this allows any interested party to see the progress to date.

Compliance Issues	MNA's Planned Action(s)	Short Term Less than 3 months	Medium Term 3 months to 1 year	Long Term 1 year or more	Completion Date
<p>1. There is a need to provide clear information regarding the MNA's use of third parties in the assessment process. The two bodies involved in third party assessment include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council on Naturopathic Medical Education (CNME) • North American Board of Naturopathic Examiners (NABNE) 	<p>a) The MNA will contact CNME, informing them of the fair registration processes required in Manitoba, and initiate a discussion to identify potential shortcomings with their current processes.</p> <p>b) The MNA will contact NABNE, informing them of the fair registration processes required in Manitoba, and initiate a discussion to identify potential shortcomings with their current processes.</p>	<p>✓</p> <p>✓</p>			

Compliance Issues	MNA's Planned Action(s)	Short Term Less than 3 months	Medium Term 3 months to 1 year	Long Term 1 year or more	Completion Date
<p>2. The MNA website does not contain clear, complete and accurate information about assessment and the registration process</p>	<p>a) A dedicated landing page for international applicants will be developed for the MNA website. It will provide clear, complete and accurate information about the assessment and registration process. This landing page will be easily accessible, contain appropriate links, and will be straightforward to navigate.</p> <p>(We will refer to documents provided by the Alberta Association of Naturopathic Practitioners regarding Substantial Equivalence for comparable content, and will review the Manitoba Medical Lab Technicians' website as a potential model www.cmltm.ca.)</p> <p>b) The MNA is willing to engage in a plain language website review with the OMFC and will request OMFC funding for website development.</p>		✓		
<p>3. That required qualifications are relevant and necessary for competent professional practice: As stated previously, the third party assessment system that we follow may not adequately assess competence of international applicants in a fair and transparent manner.</p>	<p>a) The MNA is in partnership with the Canadian Association of Naturopathic Doctors (CAND), our national body. The CAND is working with all naturopathic colleges and associations across Canada to create a 'National Competency Model' that will facilitate the potential registration of international applicants, based on agreed upon criteria. In a previous conversation with the Fairness Commissioner, the MNA has stated that recent funding cuts by the Federal Government to health projects is delaying this project.</p> <p>b) At this time the MNA is a very small association. Costs associated with alternative assessment (without 3rd party assistance) would require the MNA to seek financial support from various levels of government and including the OMFC.</p>			✓	

Compliance Issues	MNA's Planned Action(s)	Short Term Less than 3 months	Medium Term 3 months to 1 year	Long Term 1 year or more	Completion Date
4. That any third party assessments in the registration process are transparent, objective, impartial and fair.	<p>a) This will be addressed in our correspondence with NABNE and CNME (see compliance issue #1)</p> <p>b) The MNA meets regularly with the Canadian Naturopathic Coordinating Council (CNCC) We will encourage our representative and staff member to advocate for assessments that meet fairness objectives when meeting with national affiliates.</p>			<p>✓</p> <p>✓</p>	
5. That staffs responsible for assessment, appeals, and working with internationally educated applicants receive appropriate training and possess relevant experience	At present the MNA's staff is one part-time registrar. The MNA will seek OMFC training opportunities and funding to assist staff and the relevant committees (examination, registration) with assessing qualifications and the appeals process.			✓	

Fairness Commissioner's Statement of Compliance

The Manitoba Naturopathic Association's Action Plan is a constructive response to the registration review. The Association's proposed actions will support fairer practice and improve its compliance to *The Fair Registration Practices in Regulated Professions Act*.

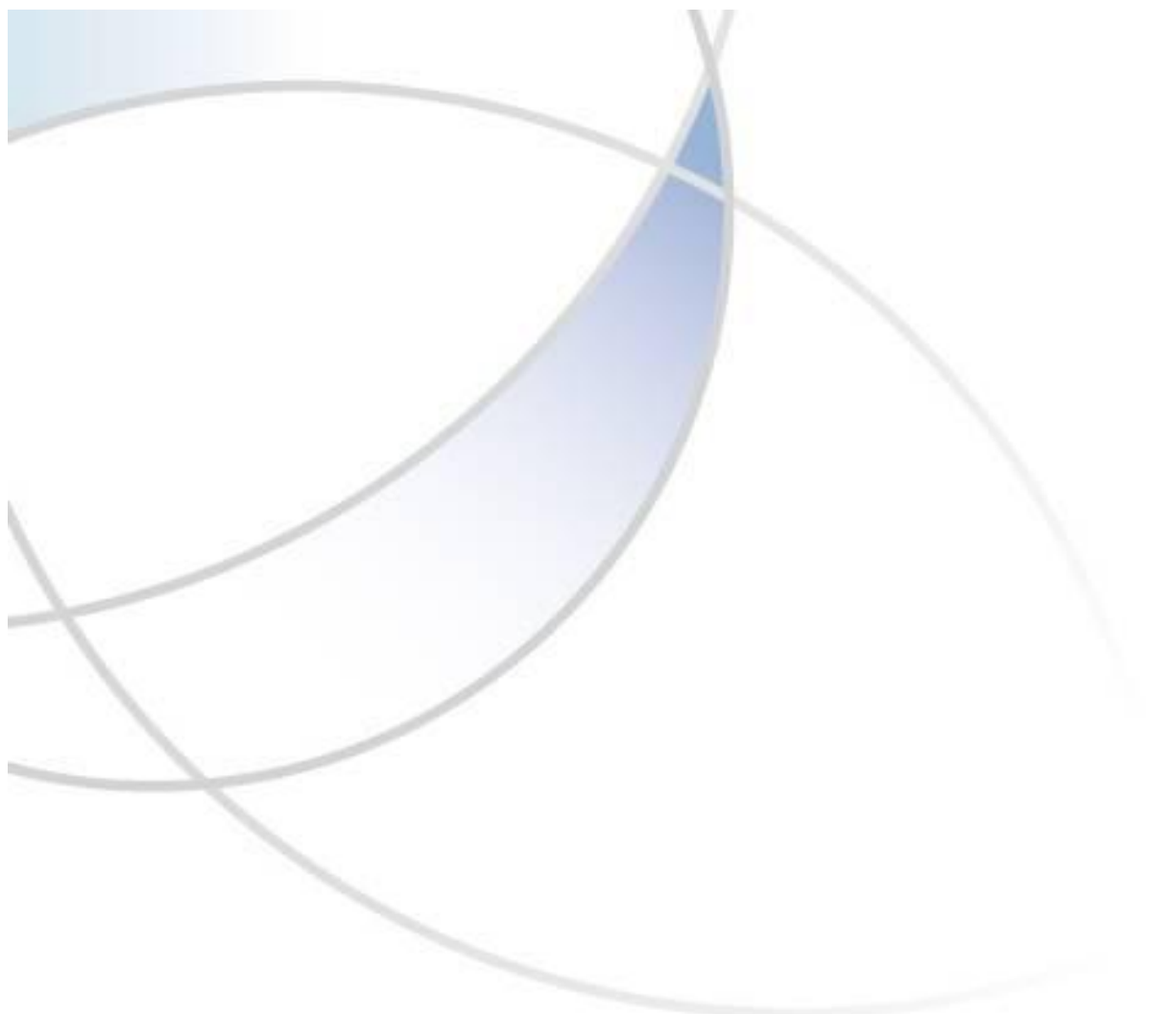
The Association is a small organization with limited resources. It faces big challenges and changes as it transitions under Manitoba's *Regulated Health Professions Act* and as provincial regulators across the country work under the Agreement on Internal Trade to harmonize standards nationally. The Association recognizes the need for and is committed to substantially improving its information package.

We appreciated the participation of the College's staff and board members at the OMFC review workshop and look forward to our work together moving forward.



Ximena Munoz

Manitoba Fairness Commissioner



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