

CDHO

Annual Report

2024

[Read the report](#)



Who We Are

The College of Dental Hygienists of Ontario (CDHO) is the regulatory body for over 15,000 Registered Dental Hygienists (RDHs) in Ontario.

What we do

We set **requirements** for becoming an RDH so only qualified individuals can practise.

We set **standards** to ensure RDHs provide safe, ethical care.

We keep a **Public Register** so you can verify if your RDH is registered and in good standing.

We have a **Quality Assurance Program**, which supports continuous professional development.

We **investigate complaints** and **take action** when standards aren't met.

Message from our Chair

On behalf of Council, I'm pleased to present the College's 2024 Annual Report. As you'll read in the following pages, 2024 was a year of change and continued growth for CDHO. In March, Council received the final report from the governance review conducted by Harry Cayton and Deanna Williams. A lot of thoughtful discussion emerged after reading the report, and I'm grateful for Council's willingness to tackle the nine recommendations head on and for their commitment to continuous improvement.

Council worked quickly on one key recommendation – development of a strategic plan. Working with a third-party consultant, we developed a plan to guide CDHO's work over the next three years through a comprehensive process of reflection, discussion and active listening. This process involved assessing CDHO's achievements, considering the evolving regulatory landscape, and gathering perspectives from partners, the public and RDHs. By December, a draft strategic plan was developed, which Council will approve in March 2025.

2024 is also my final year as Chair of Council. It's been a privilege to serve at a time of tremendous growth and momentum for CDHO. I'd like to thank my Council colleagues – both past and present – for their contributions; Dr. Glenn Pettifer for his dedication to the organization and steady leadership; and the College's hard-working staff for their commitment to our mandate. I look forward to seeing what's next as CDHO continues its evolution.



Terri Strawn

RRDH, BDS CDH, MEd

Message from our Registrar

Reflecting on 2024, I'm struck by how months – and in some cases, years – of hard work by Council and staff come to fruition.

In March, Council received the final report following an external governance review – a significant milestone in our journey of continued modernization and improvement. Council carefully considered the report's recommendations, demonstrating their commitment to stronger accountability, transparency, and alignment with modern governance principles. We were pleased to work with Council on the development of a strategic plan that will guide our work from 2025 – 2027, and staff is looking forward to developing and implementing initiatives that will support achievement of strategic goals.

In the spring, we delivered several optional Peer Circles to introduce this exciting new initiative to the profession. Nearly 1,100 RDHs participated in these events, and we were thrilled to see the excitement. By the summer, we were prepared to welcome RDHs to volunteer for the 2025 Quality Assurance Assessment. We expected around 500 volunteers, and over 800 RDHs put their name forward. The profession is embracing a new and collaborative approach to Quality Assurance, and I want to thank RDHs for their continued support of these initiatives. You can learn more about our work with the Quality Assurance Program in this Annual Report.

I'd like to thank Terri Strawn for her years of service and leadership on Council, and Council for their willingness to embrace change and strong commitment to the public interest. None of our achievements would be possible without the dedication of CDHO's staff – thanks to everyone for their efforts and hard work!

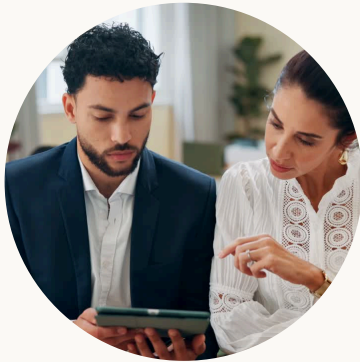


Dr. Glenn Pettifer

Registrar/CEO



The Year in Review



Governance review published

In September 2023, Council launched a third-party review of its processes, systems and governance conduct. The review was led by Harry Cayton and Deanna Williams, two internationally renowned experts in governance effectiveness. The review examined Canadian and international trends in regulatory governance modernization and included interviews with Council members and CDHO's senior staff. Harry Cayton and Deanna Williams [presented their report](#) at the March 2024 Council meeting.

In keeping with its commitment to continuous governance improvement, Council carefully considered all recommendations to modernize its approach to regulation in the public interest. At the end of 2024, Council began the process of developing a strategic plan for 2025 – 2027, a key recommendation of the review. The strategic plan will help build on our successes and provide a road map as we continue refining our approach to right-touch, collaborative regulation to better protect the public interest.



Increased registrant engagement and education

In response to feedback from the profession, we launched three **Communities of Practice (CoPs)** to provide RDHs with a space to connect, ask questions, access resources, and discuss topics specific to their area of practice. The Restorative, Orthodontic, and Public Health CoPs grew quickly, with over 3,600 RDHs signed up by the end of 2024. We also recruited RDH community leaders to support the CoPs.

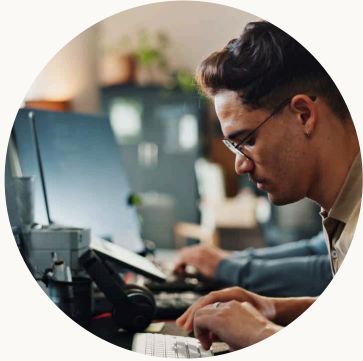
As part of our efforts to support RDHs in their continuing professional development, we launched the [Trauma- and Violence-Informed Care \(TVIC\) e-learning module](#). It explores the effects of trauma, offers guidance on providing TVIC, and describes how TVIC builds trust and creates a safe environment for clients and staff. Additional e-learning modules on [Consent, Confidentiality and Privacy, and Mandatory Reporting](#) are also available, with more in development.



Introduction to Peer Circles and volunteer QA Assessment

In 2024, we introduced Peer Circles as a new Path option for RDHs to participate in the QA Assessment if selected. Peer Circles provide RDHs with an opportunity to come together in small groups, facilitated by an RDH, to discuss cases developed by their peers. To give RDHs a chance to experience this initiative, we offered [28 optional Peer Circle sessions in 2024](#), and nearly 1,100 RDHs participated.

RDHs were also given the opportunity to volunteer for the 2025 QA Assessment rather than being randomly selected. Over 800 RDHs responded to the call for volunteers, far exceeding our expectations. Volunteers could select any of the four Paths, and more than 600 selected Peer Circles as their preferred option.



Preparing for a new database

We engaged a consultant and began the work of upgrading our database, which powers the Public Register and Self-Service Portal. The upgrade will improve functionality, security and ease of use. As part of the upgrade, the Public Register and Self-Service Portal will be re-designed with a modern, streamlined look, and the login process for RDHs will change. In 2025, we will invite RDHs to volunteer to test the new Self-Service Portal before its launch in March 2025.



Continued public engagement and new public awareness campaign

We continued our annual Voice of the Patient (VOP) survey, which is administered by a third party in four languages – English, French, Mandarin and Punjabi. Each year, 2,000 patients are surveyed about their experiences with Dental Hygiene practice, with questions focusing on equity, diversity and inclusion. CDHO uses this data to improve resources for RDHs and develop more patient-focused information. The [results of the VOP survey](#) are available on our website.

Findings have shown low awareness of CDHO and its regulatory role. To help increase awareness and engagement, we worked with a third-party vendor to design and execute a province-wide **public awareness campaign**. Recognizing the unique nature of the public we serve, the campaign includes digital and traditional media (i.e., newspapers and radio), and is being delivered in Indigenous, northern, and remote communities. The campaign launched at the end of 2024 and will run until the summer of 2025.

Practice Advice Stats



1,306 calls



1,127 emails

Top question categories

- Standards of practice (Process of care, Knowledge Network, records, practice management)
- Independent practice
- Infection prevention and control (IPAC)
- Billing
- Scope of Practice

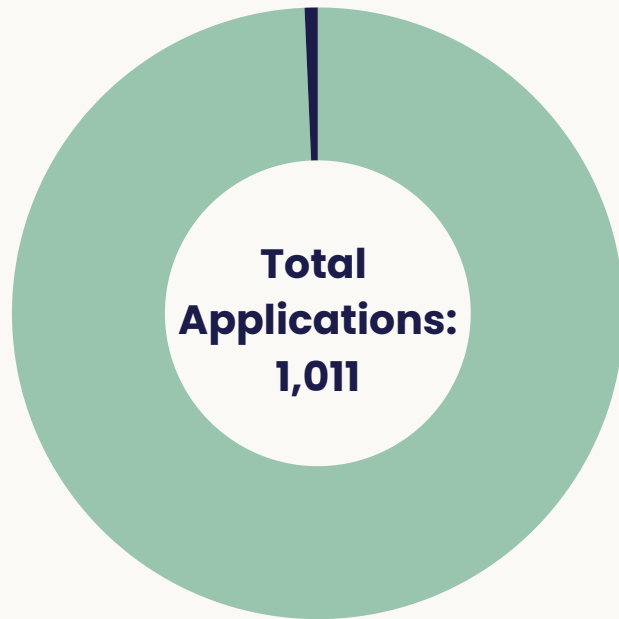




Registration

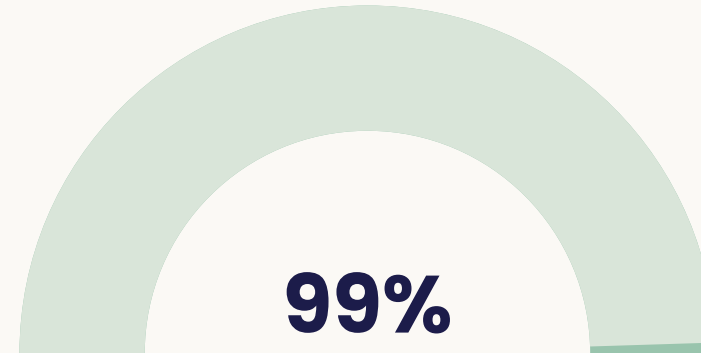
New applications received

- From Canadian Graduates
- From International Graduates



Registration process

CDHO aims to process and approve completed applications within 10 business days of receipt. In 2024, **99%** of completed applications were approved within that timeframe.

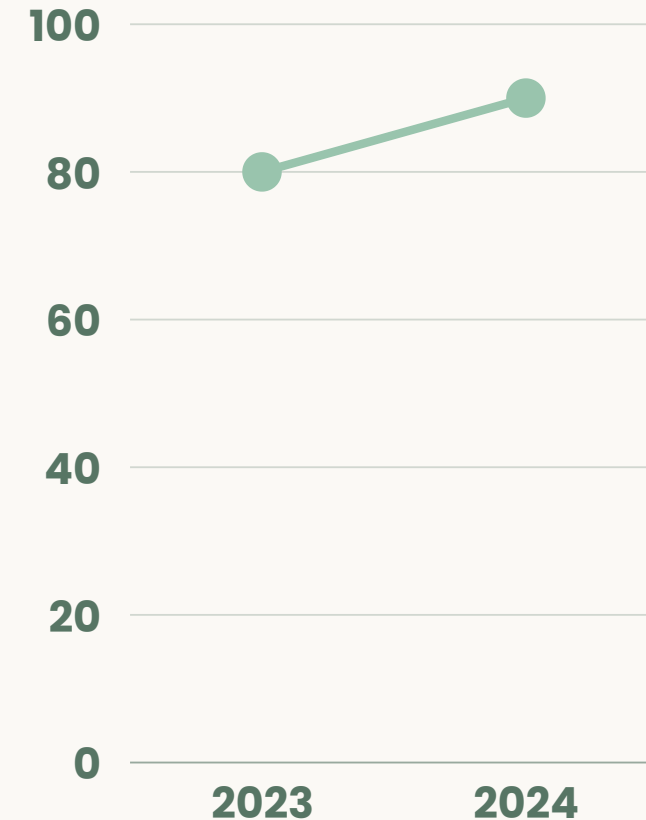
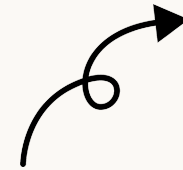


Applications requiring review from the Registrar

In 2024, the Registrar reviewed six applications, and two were referred to the Registration Committee for review. Reasons for referral can include a positive result on a criminal record check and academic misconduct.

Registrant Experience Survey results

As part of our commitment to continuous improvement of application and registration practices, we conduct an ongoing Registration Experience Survey. Recent applicants are asked to complete a voluntary survey to provide feedback on the application process and identify any areas for improvement. In 2024, applicants' overall satisfaction with CDHO's registration process increased from **80% in 2023 to 90%**. View the [Registration Experience Dashboard](#).





Snapshot of the Profession

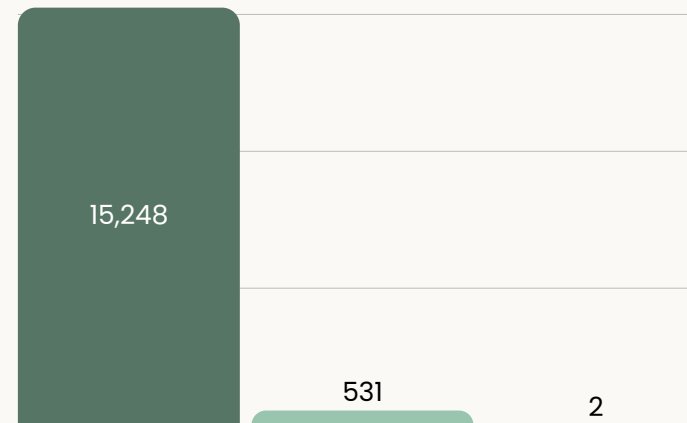
Total number of RDHs

● General ● Inactive ● Specialty

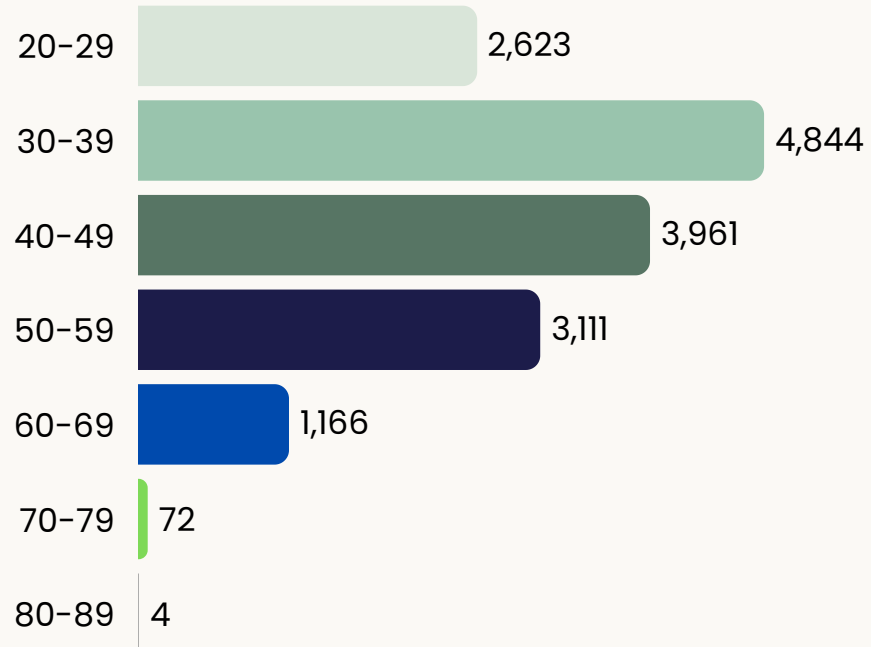


Gender

● Female ● Male ● Non-Binary/Other



Age



TOP 5

Languages spoken by RDHs

English
French
Hindi
Punjabi
Urdu

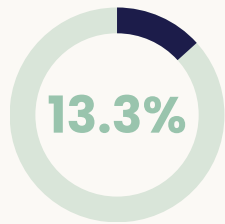
Countries of initial education

Canada
United States of America
United Kingdom
Colombia
Israel

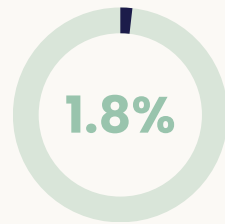


Demographics

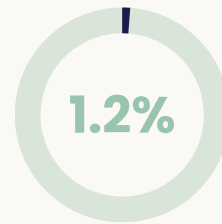
RDHs were not required to provide answers to the following demographic questions. As such, it may not accurately reflect the demographics of the profession.



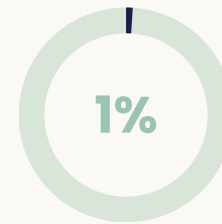
**Identify as
a visible minority**



**Identify as
Indigenous**



**Identify as
LGBTQ2+**



**Identify as
having a disability**



Quality Assurance

CDHO's Quality Assurance (QA) Program helps RDHs maintain their knowledge and skills so that they can provide safe and ethical care.

Annual review of QA records

In 2024, 21 RDHs were selected to submit their QA records for assessment, and 19 records were assessed. When selected for assessment, RDHs choose one of three paths, or the Quality Assurance Committee can assign a path.

	ASSESSMENT OF KNOWLEDGE	ASSESSMENT OF SKILLS AND JUDGMENT	NUMBER OF RDHs ASSESSED
Path 1	Completion of a learning portfolio	Completion of a practice profile	8
Path 2	Completion of the QA written assessment (QA Test)	Completion of a practice profile	10
Path 3	Completion of the QA written assessment (QA Test)	Completion of an on-site practice assessment	1

As of December 31, 2024, **95%** of the 19 QA records assessed met the assessment guidelines. The remaining RDHs are participating in activities to help enhance knowledge and skills, or the review is still in progress.

On-site practice assessments

In 2024, three on-site practice assessments were completed to assess RDHs' compliance with the Standards of Practice following a review of their QA records. All three RDHs had met the assessment guidelines.

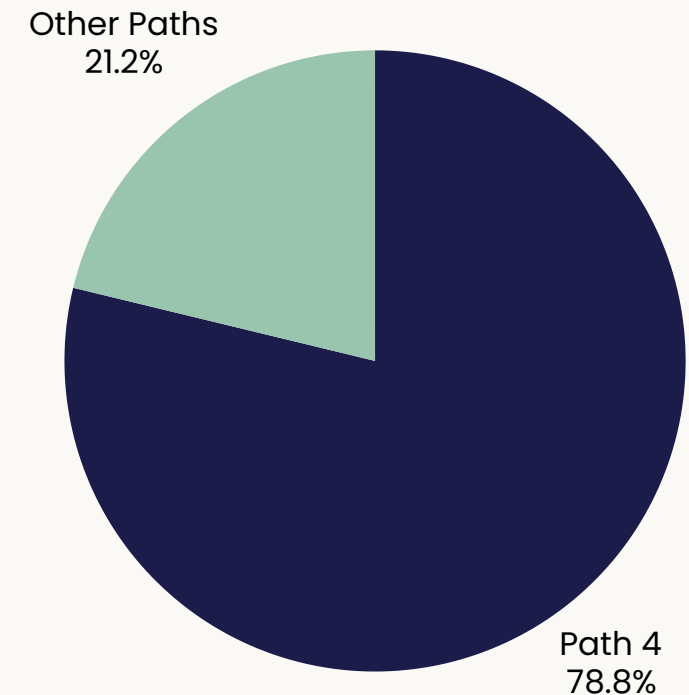
Development of Peer Circles

In collaboration with RDHs, CDHO continued the development of Peer Circles, which will become a foundational component of the QA Program. Peer Circles are facilitated group discussions using hypothetical cases that highlight challenging and relevant practice issues.

In 2024, capacity for Peer Circles expanded to accommodate increasing interest. 85 trained facilitators delivered a total of 28 optional Peer Circles events, with 15 in-person sessions and 13 online. These sessions provided nearly **1,100 RDHs** with valuable exposure to the Peer Circles learning experience, which will be integrated into the QA Program as an assessment Path in 2025. RDHs who chose this option will participate in two Peer Circles, submit a written reflection, and engage in a one-on-one coaching conversation after each session.

In July, CDHO asked for volunteers to participate in a QA Assessment cycle for 2025, with Path 4 being an available option. **806 RDHs** volunteered, with **635 of those indicating interest in selecting Path 4**. In the fall of 2024, 23 case writers and 16 case reviewers came together to develop more Peer Circle cases.

Assessment Path choices

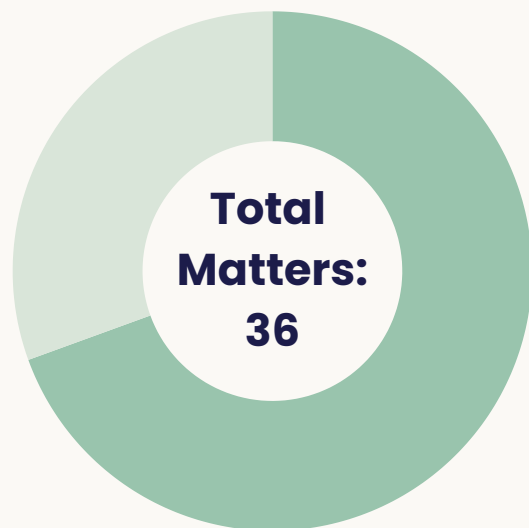




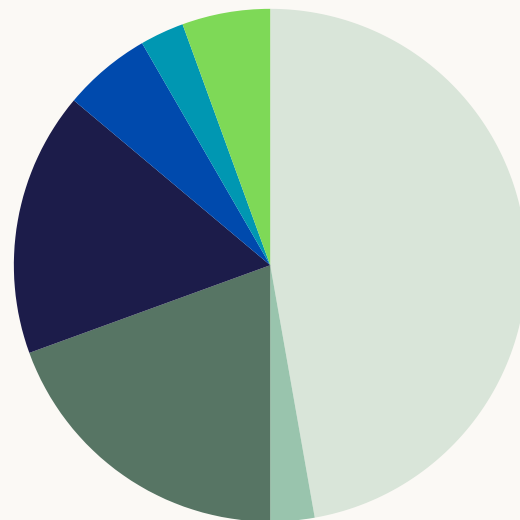
Complaints & Reports

In 2024, the Inquiries, Complaints and Reports Committee (ICRC) reviewed **57 matters**. Of the 57 matters, 39 were new and 18 were carried forward from 2023. The ICRC completed its investigation into **36 matters**, and 21 matters will be carried into 2025.

- Formal Complaints
- Registrar Reports



Decisions and outcomes of completed matters



TOP 5

Concerns raised by complainants

- Communication (e.g., rude behaviour, insensitivity)
- Failure to provide adequate treatment
- Inappropriate or overbilling
- Ethical concerns (e.g., soliciting clients, offensive or discriminatory conduct)
- Falsifying a record (e.g., altering a chart entry without noting the change, submitting false or misleading insurance claims)

Timelines



All colleges are required to complete complaint matters within 150 days. If the investigation exceeds that time and at the 150-day mark, a letter is sent to both parties explaining that the ICRC will not meet the deadline. At 210 days, CDHO must notify the parties and the [Health Professions Appeal and Review Board \(HPARB\)](#) of the delay and the reasons for the delay. After 210 days, either party can apply to HPARB seeking relief for the delay. In the interest of fairness and safety, CDHO aims to complete all matters, not just complaints, within 150 days.

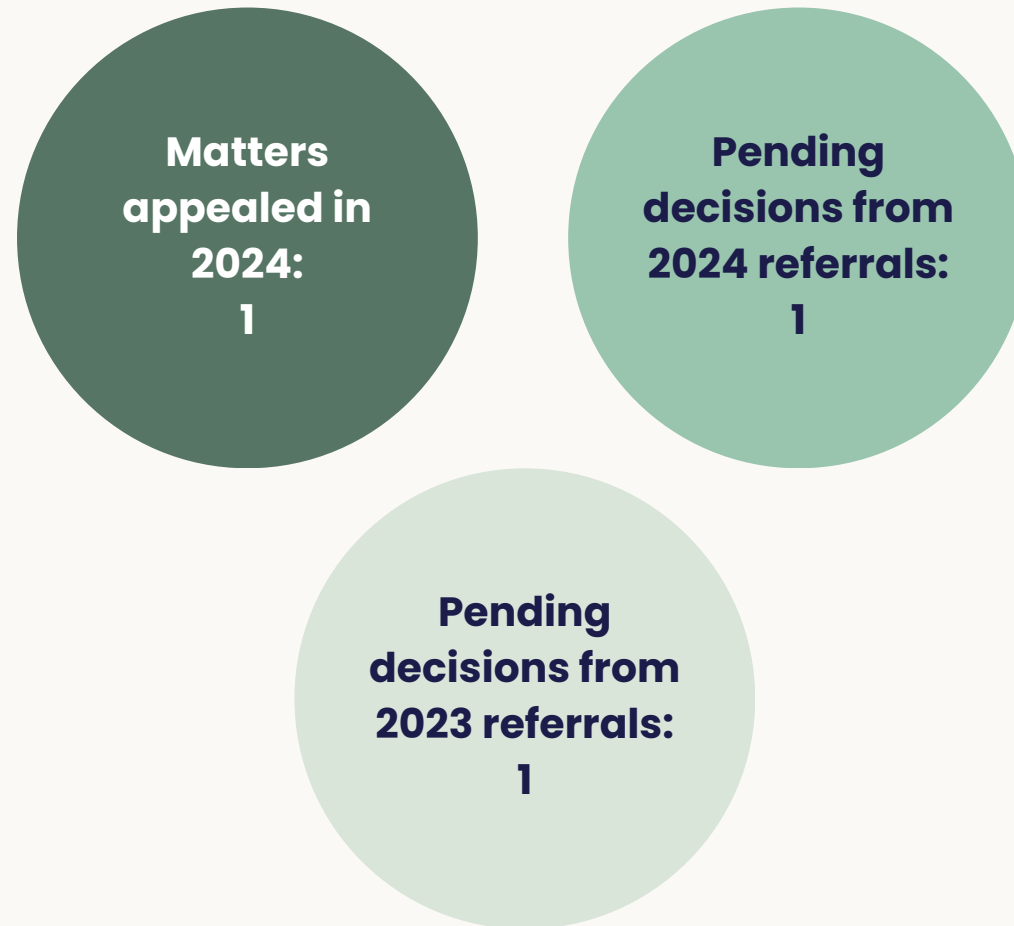
MATTERS	COMPLETED IN 150 DAYS OR LESS	COMPLETED IN MORE THAN 150 DAYS, BUT 210 DAYS OR LESS	COMPLETED IN MORE THAN 210 DAYS
Formal Complaints	12*	10	3
Registrar Reports	Nil	1	10



Includes two matters that were withdrawn and two matters resolved through alternative dispute resolution (ADR).

HPARB Reviews

Both the complainant and the RDH who was the subject of the complaint may request a review of the ICRC's decision by HPARB. Decisions to refer specified allegations to the Discipline Committee or referrals for incapacity inquiries cannot be appealed to HPARB.





Discipline & Fitness to Practise

The **Discipline Committee** holds hearings to determine whether an RDH has committed an act of professional misconduct or is incompetent. It also holds reinstatement hearings to determine whether a former registrant whose Certificate of Registration was revoked should be re-admitted to the profession. In 2024, the Discipline Committee held and completed one hearing.

The **Fitness to Practise Committee** holds hearings and makes decisions about allegations of incapacity against an RDH. There were no referrals to the Fitness to Practise Committee in 2024.

Findings in closed matters

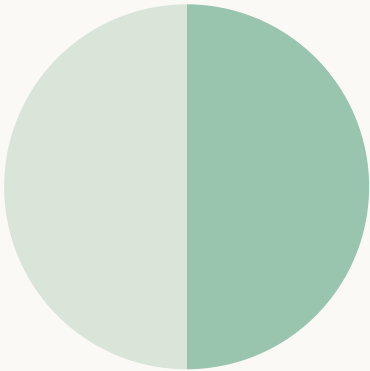
	Number of cases*
Dishonourable, disgraceful or unprofessional conduct	1
Failing to reply appropriately and responsively to a written inquiry from CDHO	1
Failing to cooperate with the Quality Assurance Committee or an assessor	1
Failing to comply with an order of a committee	1
Failing to cooperate with a College investigator	1
Conduct unbecoming of a Dental Hygienist	1



A discipline case may include **multiple findings**, such that the total number of findings may not equal the total number of cases completed during the period.

Penalty orders by type*

- Revocation
- Reprimand



*A discipline case may include **multiple penalties**, such that the total number of penalties may not equal the total number of cases completed during the period.

Hearing summaries

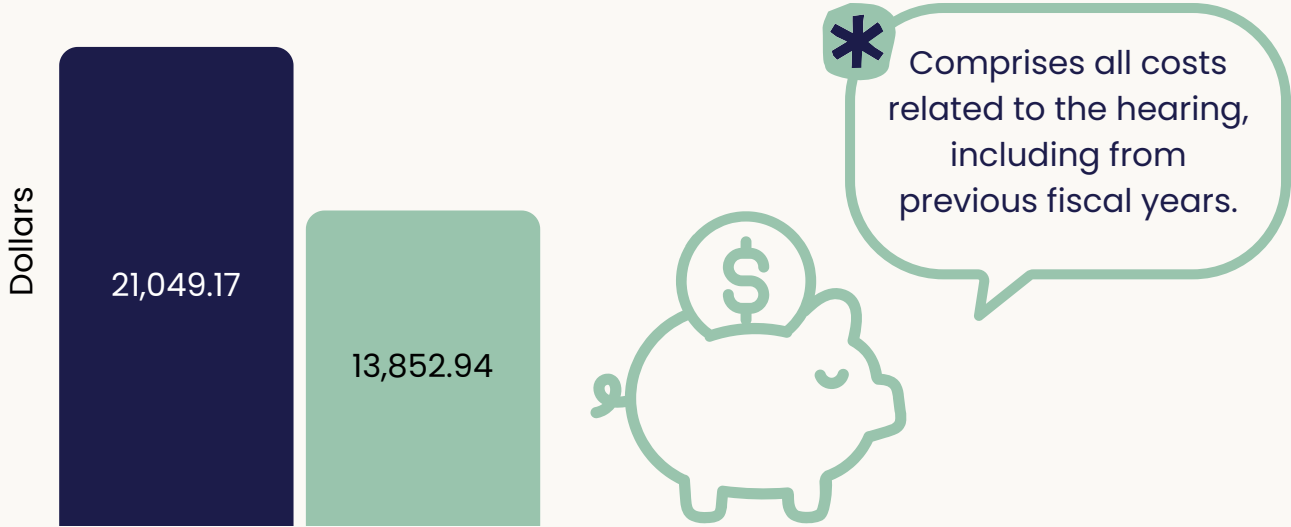
All decisions of the Discipline Committee are available on CDHO’s website. The reasons in the following matters were released in 2024.

[CDHO v. Zoe McIntosh](#)

Costs

In addition to imposing certain penalties, the panel can require the RDH to pay all or part of CDHO’s investigations and/or hearings costs. If the finding relates to sexual abuse of a client, the panel can require the RDH to reimburse CDHO for funding provided to that client for therapy or counselling.

- Cost of hearings completed in 2024*
- Costs awarded to the College
- Costs recovered to date (\$0)





Patient Relations

CDHO is required by law to have a Patient Relations Program. The Program incorporates measures for preventing and dealing with sexual abuse of patients, including:

- educational requirements for RDHs on sexual abuse and boundary issues;
- guidelines for the conduct of RDHs with their clients aimed at preventing and dealing with sexual abuse, such as the [Guideline – Prevention of Sexual Abuse and Maintenance of Professional Boundaries](#);
- training for CDHO's staff; and
- providing information to the public.

The Program is overseen by the Patient Relations Committee, which also oversees the program to provide funding for therapy and counselling for people alleging sexual abuse by an RDH. In 2024, no applications for funding for therapy were received.

Recognizing that some clients face additional barriers and expenses to accessing therapy or counselling, the Committee approved the Supplementary Supportive Funding Policy. This Policy will cover reasonable and necessary costs associated with accessing therapy/counselling, such as transportation, accommodation, dependent care, or other incidental costs as approved by the Patient Relations Committee.





College Council

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Maheen Cassim

Anne-Marie Conaghan

Jennifer Cooper

Krista Dufour

Farzana Hussain

Mary Yeomans

Juli Kreutner

Balbir Sohi

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Erin Betts

Pella Giabanis

Alessandro (Alex) Greco (until May 12, 2024)

Candace Herod (began August 29, 2024)

Ehizele (Martin) Iyamabo (until December 9, 2024)

Christina Lee-Rotstein (began July 11, 2024)

Angelica Palantzas (until September 1, 2024)

Amit Sethi (began on March 21, 2024)

Upneet (Sasha) Sidhu

Margaret Wade

College Committees

**CDHO's work is not possible without the hard work and dedication of our Committee members.
Thank you for your contributions!**

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Terri Strawn (Professional) – **Chair**
Michelle Atkinson (Professional) – **Vice-Chair**
Vanessa Pereira (Professional)
Loree Beniuk (Public)
Erin Betts (Public)

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Non-Council Member

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Non-Council Members

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Non-Council Members

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Siobhan Brennen

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Loree Beniuk

Pella Giabanis

Sasha Sidhu

Non-Council Member

Paula Malcomson

FITNESS TO PRACTISE

All Council Members

OWNERSHIP LINKAGE

Professional Members

Krista Dufour – **Chair**

Terri Strawn

Public Members

Martin Iyamabo

Margaret Wade

GOVERNANCE

Professional Members

Michelle Atkinson – **Chair**

Terri Strawn

Public Member

Erin Betts





Financial Statements

[View the summary financial statements](#)