



# Code of Ethics

Approved by Council

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COLLEGE OF  
**ALBERTA DENTURISTS**



# Code of Ethics

## COLLEGE OF ALBERTA DENTURISTS

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### Acknowledgements

The College of Alberta Denturists acknowledges the efforts of the individuals who were instrumental in the reform and on-going development of this Code.

Your hard work and dedication to the denturist profession are greatly appreciated. Thank you.



## Authorization and Policy Alignment

The College's Code of Ethics ("Code") and the Standards of Practice ("Standards") are two separate, yet interdependent documents authorized under Section 133 of the Alberta *Health Professions Act*.

## Interpretation of the Code

The Code should be interpreted in a manner consistent with and which considers other associated College policy and practice guidance documents. For example, the Code of Ethics and the Standards of Practice share common glossary terms which are defined, bolded, and italicized.

The College may also, from time-to-time, issue practice ***Guidelines, Advisories, Position Statements***, or similar policy documents to supplement the Code and Standards.

## Revision of the Code and Standard

The College undertook a review of its Code in 2019. It further engaged stakeholders in a thorough review of its Standards in 2020. The Alberta Health Interest Group's feedback, received in early 2021, on the Code were incorporated such that it aligned the Code and the proposed new Standards.

## Purpose of the Code

The Code details Alberta denturists' ethical responsibilities. The Code's core values and guiding principles are intended to ultimately foster public trust and provide denturists a framework to guide their ongoing active, reflective, and ethical professional practices.

The Code provides a benchmark for **regulated members**, in conjunction with the Health *Professions Act*, the *Denturist Profession Regulation*, the Standards, other regulatory requirements and workplace policies, for self-evaluation and ethical decision making.

## Member Expectations

Regulated members must adhere to the Code in all professional relationships and engagement with **patients, clients**, the public, **colleagues**, the College, and others. The Code is binding on all denturists regardless of their practice setting such as clinical and laboratory practice, education, research, and administration.

Members who contravene any aspect of the Code may be investigated and, if found to have engaged in **unprofessional conduct**, subject to professional discipline.



### **Fundamental Ethical Denturist Responsibilities**

Ethical professional practice is an important element of developing trusting professional relationships. Denturists enhance their trustworthiness by being mindful of and upholding their professional ethical, responsibilities to the public, patients, clients, the College, the profession, and themselves.



## Responsibilities to the Public, Patients, and Clients

A regulated member:

- i. always act in the best interest of and respect professional patient and client **professional boundaries**.
- ii. delivers respectful, timely, safe, and competent professional care/services in keeping with the Standards of Practice requirements.
- iii. works to address the unique needs of patients or clients when providing **denturist care and/or services**.
- iv. obtains assistance, when necessary, to proactively address barriers that may affect their ability to provide culturally safe and **patient/client-centered care**.
- v. delivers care and treatment with full regard for patient or client's rights, autonomy, and dignity.
- vi. provides culturally safe care and services, which is free of abuse, assault, harassment, and discrimination, consistent with federal and provincial legislation.
- vii. refers the patient or client to appropriate healthcare providers, as required, and inform the patient or client of the referral.
- viii. discloses any **conflicts of interest** and seek guidance from the College, legal counsel, advisors, or third parties to address the conflict.
- ix. does not offer or provide **inducements** to patient and clients as a condition of receiving professional services.
- x. abides by all relevant privacy and related legislation and policies in dealing with patient or client records, in a manner consistent with the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner's requirements.
- xi. obtains **informed consent** from the patient or client, as required by law and regulatory policies, prior to providing professional services or releasing patient records.
- xii. provides patients and clients with continuity of care, and make available **episodic or emergent care**, as necessary. In episodic and emergent care situations, the regulated member supplies information on alternate care providers and appropriately refers patients and clients when the member is unable to provide care or services.
- xiii. deals with episodic or emergent care situations, for another denturist's patient or client, and then appropriately refer the patient or client back to their original denturist. With the patient or client's consent, the denturist subsequently informs the original denturist of the episodic or emergent conditions and rendered care/service.



## Responsibilities to the Profession

A regulated member:

- i. upholds the dignity of the College and profession by maintaining integrity and ethical behaviours in all professional interactions.
- ii. understands that **self-regulation** is a privilege and demonstrates their **governability** by complying with legislated, College, employers and **administrative authorities'** policies related to practice obligations as a **regulated health professional**.
- iii. promotes the profession's reputation by maintaining their **good character and reputation**.
- iv. supports the profession's responsibility to provide fair, equitable, and safe access to professional dentist care or services.
- v. represents themselves appropriately and accurately with respect to their title, credentials, and qualifications.
- vi. demonstrates honesty in all professional interactions.
- vii. recognizes and abides by the Minister of Health's delegated authority provided to the College; the member interacts with College staff, Council members, volunteers, advisors, and others professionally, respectfully, collaboratively, and honestly.
- viii. communicates honestly and effectively with the patient/client, the patient/client's representative, and other healthcare professionals.
- ix. uses appropriate means of professional verbal, written, and electronic communication, consistent with professional and legislated requirements.
- x. does not accept any unethical or inappropriate financial or other benefits, directly or indirectly, for the referral of a patient or client.
- xi. engages only in appropriate business practices, including but not limited to, advertising and referral that respect the dignity, reputation, and/or practice of the profession or of other healthcare professionals.
- xii. engages in social media, personally and professionally, in a manner that does not jeopardize the rights, dignity, reputation, or practice of themselves, the profession, the College, other healthcare professionals, or patients/clients.
- xiii. accurately represents their competencies and does not present themselves as the only regulated member who uses any agent or product, method, or dentist technique.
- xiv. effectively uses **evidence-informed practice** to maintain and advance their **competence** through life-long professional, self-evaluation, **continuing competence**, education, and quality assurance.



- xv. engages in ethical research opportunities and ethically discloses all findings. The member ensures that their research is evaluated scientifically and ethically by an ethics board that adheres to the Standards, regulatory legislation, and College policy documents.

When conducting research that involves patients/clients, the member obtains their informed consent and advises them that they have the right to decline or withdraw from the study at any time, without jeopardizing their ongoing care.

- xvi. takes appropriate action, including **mandatory reporting** to the appropriate authority, when their professional practice or that of another healthcare provider is compromised or has caused or may cause harm to a patient/client, or is or has been unethical.



## Responsibilities to Self

A regulated member:

- i. reports and obtains assistance, when necessary, to proactively address barriers that may affect their ability to provide professional, safe, and competent denturist services.
- ii. does not allow for any interference or influence which may adversely affect their professional judgment and integrity.
- iii. is aware of personal or professional bias, unconscious or otherwise, they may have; the member is aware and reflective, and practices with **due diligence** and care.
- iv. maintains their professional competence and proficiency such that they meet **currency of practice** requirements.
- v. maintains the required mental and physical wellness and **fitness to practice** as a denturist.





## Glossary

**Administrative authority(ies)** means a governmental, public, or private agency or commission that is legislatively required to adopt and enforces regulations, standards, and guidelines. In the context of denturist practice, this includes, but is not limited to professional regulatory authorities, professional Colleges, healthcare and health and safety authorities, special government commission(s) and officer(s) and denturist employers.

**Advisory(ies)** may be issued from time to time by the College to supplement the Standards of Practice, practice statements, guidelines, and directives.

**Client** specifically refers to a denturist's colleagues, spouse, adult interdependent partner, child, student/mentee or the agent representative, spouse, parent, guardian, child, alternative decision-maker, or other person with whom a denturist's patient has an interdependent or close personal relationship and who is engaged in the patient's care. An individual is considered a client:

- a. when they marry or consent to and begin a personal interdependent or business-related relationship with the denturist; or
- b. when they consent to receiving ONLY episodic care or emergent services from a denturist; or
- c. when the denturist agrees to provide education, supervision and/or evaluation to a student or mentee while the student or mentee is engaged in a formal educational, training or mentorship program; or
- d. when a denturist's patient first consents to receiving denturist care or services and the denturist becomes, or is made aware, that the other person has an interdependent or close personal relationship with the denturist's patient or is actively engaged in the patient's care as a legal guardian or alternate decision maker; and
- e. until the conclusion/termination of the denturist and patient/or client relationship.

**Colleague(s)** includes industry and business partners, associates, clients and suppliers, employees, peers, other regulated or unregulated healthcare providers or any person with whom the denturist has as an interdependent business relationship or affiliation.

**Competence** is defined in the *Health Professions Act* as "the combined knowledge, skills, attitudes and judgement required to provide professional services." It is the habitual and judicious use of communication, knowledge, technical skills, clinical reasoning, emotions, values, and reflection in daily practice for the benefit of the patients and others being served.

Competence depends on habits of mind, including attentiveness, critical curiosity, self-awareness, and presence. Professional competence is developmental, impermanent and context dependent.

**Conflict of interest** refers to a conflict between the private interests and the professional responsibilities of a person in a position of trust.

**Continuing competence** means maintaining professional competency and proficiency in relations to the passage of time and evolutionary College requirements, professional practice standards, competencies, body of knowledge and denturist practice role(s), work setting(s), and tools requirements.



**Currency of practice** means maintaining professional competence and proficiency in relation to College's and the profession's current requirements.

**Denturist care** encompasses healthcare related services provided to patients/clients, by a denturist, as part of a denturist-patient or denturist-client care encounter.

**Denturist service** encompasses those professional denturist services, which may not be associated with healthcare service provision, but which are provided to patients and clients by a denturist. This includes, but is not limited to educational, training, supervision and mentorship services provided by a clinical denturist or a denturist administrator, educator, or researcher.

**Due diligence** is acting in a manner comparable to that of another reasonable and prudent regulated member under similar circumstances.

**Emergent care** condition is considered to exist when an individual is experiencing suffering or is at risk of sustaining serious bodily harm if care, services, or interventions are not promptly provided.

**Episodic care** means professional patient/client care or service encounters that are unlikely to lead to on-going care or service beyond a single professional care or service episode.

**Evidence-informed practice** refers to practice that is based on successful strategies that improve patient outcomes and are derived from a combination of various sources, including client (patient) perspective, research, national guidelines, policies, consensus statements, expert opinion, and quality improvement data.

**Fit or fitness to practice** means that a person's ability to provide safe and competent professional services or care is not compromised by a medical, physical, cognitive, mental, or emotional condition or addiction(s) or drug impairment.

**Good character** means having moral and ethical strength and includes having and demonstrating consideration for others, respect for the rule of law and legitimate authority, ability to know right from wrong, integrity, responsibility, accountability, fairness, open-mindedness, candour, honesty, truthfulness, and trustworthiness.

**Good reputation** means that others consider one to behaves in a manner that demonstrates; respect and consideration for others, respect for the rule of law and legitimate authority, knowing right from wrong, integrity, responsibility, accountability, fairness, open-mindedness, candour, honesty, truthfulness, and trustworthiness.

**Governability** means that one is capable and amenable to being governed (controllable and manageable) subject to laws, regulations, regulatory and administrative authority programs, standards, policies, procedures, directives, and rules.

**Guidelines** are published from time to time by the College to interpret and provide context to the Standards of Practice and position statements.



**Inducement(s)** is/are an act or thing that are not required but are intended to persuade someone and can affect upon objective decision making. Inducements include rewards, gifts, cash, prizes, coupons, points or other inducement mechanisms or loyalty program that can be redeemed for rewards, gifts, cash, prizes or other goods or services (i.e., reward points, sales, travel/gift reward programs).

**Informed consent** refers to obtaining permission from a patient/client based on reasonable disclosure of the facts, costs, risks, and alternatives, to use or receive identified care, service, treatment, intervention, or procedures.

**Mandatory reporting** includes all required dentist reporting events or circumstances, including self-reporting, to the College and other authorities as per Alberta legislation and the College Standards of Practice.

**Patient** refers specifically to an individual who is actively receiving professional and on-going clinical, laboratory or research care or services from a dentist. A spouse or adult interdependent partner of a dentist is not a patient. An individual is considered a patient:

- a. when they first consent to receiving professional dentist care or services; and
- b. when the care or service extends beyond an episodic care or service episode; and
- c. until a minimum period of one (1) year has elapsed since the formal conclusion of the dentist care or services and the termination of the dentist-patient relationship.

**Patient/client-centered care** involves the diagnosis, treatment and ongoing delivery of dentist care or services, while directly and deliberately engaging the patient/client and their families in decision-making specific to their unique care needs, wants and circumstances.

**Positions statements** may be issued from time to time by the College to supplement the Standards of Practice.

**Professional boundaries** are the spaces between the health care professional's power and the patient/client's vulnerability. The power of the healthcare professional comes from their professional position and their access to sensitive and personal patient/client information and the patient/client needs, wants or desire to obtain professional care or service from the health care professional.

Healthcare professionals should make every effort to respect the power imbalance and ensure a patient/client centered relationship. Professional boundary management governs the parameters of how denturists interact with patients, clients, and others with distinction between what is "acceptable" and "unacceptable."

**Regulated health professional(s)** is a person registered with a professional health regulatory professional college, agency and/or authority, in Alberta or any other jurisdiction, as a regulated member and which includes regulated denturists and regulated provisional denturists.

**Regulated member(s) and regulated dentist(s)** is a person registered with the College under Section 33(1) (a) of the *Health Professions Act* and in accordance with the *Denturists Profession Regulation*. This includes those College members that are on the general and provisional registers.



**Self-regulated** means that the government has delegated its regulatory functions to groups that have the specialized knowledge, skills, and judgements necessary to regulate a profession in the public interest. The granting of self-regulation acknowledges professional members abilities and capabilities for self-governance, monitoring and compliance with requirements.

**Unprofessional conduct** is defined in the *Health Professions Act* (HPA) as one or more of the following, whether it was disgraceful or dishonorable for the dentist to:

- a. display a lack of knowledge of or lack of skill or judgment in the provision of professional services.
- b. contravene the HPA, the professional code of ethics or standards of practice.
- c. contravene another enactment that applies to the profession.
- d. represent or hold out that they were a regulated member and in good standing while their registration or practice permit was suspended or cancelled.
- e. represent or hold out that the Dentist's registration or practice permit is not subject to conditions when it is or misrepresenting the conditions.
- f. failing or refusing to comply with the requirements of the continuing competence program, or to co-operate with a competence committee or a person appointed under section 11 of the HPA to undertake a practice visit.
- g. failing or refusing to comply with a request of or co-operate with an inspector or to comply with a direction of the registrar made under section 53.4(3) of the HPA.
- h. failing or refusing to comply with an agreement that is part of a ratified settlement or to comply with a request of or co-operate with an investigator or to undergo an examination under section 118, or to comply with a notice to attend or a notice to produce under Part 4 of the HPA.
- i. contravene an order under Part 4, conditions imposed on a practice permit or a direction under section 118(4) of the HPA.
- j. carry on the practice of the regulated profession with a person who is contravening section 98 or an order under Part 4 or conditions imposed on a practice permit or a direction under section 118(4) of the HPA.
- k. carry on any conduct that harms the integrity of the regulated profession.



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