



Understanding the Difference: Regulator, Association, and Union

The Health Professions Act requires a clear separation between the responsibility of the profession's regulatory functions that protect the public and those related to salary negotiations, economic, and social wellbeing of registrants of the profession. This Info Sheet is intended to support an understanding of the distinct functions of:

REGULATOR

Regulatory colleges under the Health Professions Act exist to protect the public through the following regulatory functions:

- Sets education, registration, and annual renewal requirements
- Sets and enforces practice, conduct, and ethical standards for delivery of professional services
- Ensures compliance with healthcare legislation and regulation
- Sets continuing competence requirements
- Investigates concerns regarding questionable conduct of a registrant
- Maintains a public database of registrants who are licensed to practice in the profession
- Provides regulatory focused information and education about the practice of the profession, and expected professional standards, and guidelines that support public safety

ASSOCIATION

An association advocates on behalf of and promotes the interests of its members. Membership is voluntary and an association is accountable to the members of the association through functions such as:

- Advocates for the interests of the profession to the government, employers, and other healthcare organizations
- Develops and provides education and career opportunities
- Promotes research interests of the profession
- Provides networking and social activities
- Promotes forming collegial relationships between members of the profession
- Provides recognition and achievement awards

UNION

A union is an organized body that establishes a bargaining relationship with intent to promote collaborative labour relations between employees and employers that include:

- Negotiates conditions of employment such as wages, benefits, conditions of work, and job security
- Processes contractual grievances
- Assists employees with labour issues
- Ensures fair representation of employees
- Promotes and protects health and safety of employees
- Provides access to opportunities for professional development

For more information registrants can access the collective bargaining agreement that governs their workplace setting. In non-union organizations these factors are managed directly between the employer and employee.