



*An External Assessment of Council Effectiveness  
College of Denturists of Ontario (CDO)*

*Final Report*

*Deanna L. Williams  
Dundee Consulting Group Ltd.  
August 2024*

## Table of Contents

	<u>Page</u>
1. Introductory Comments	3
2. Findings across Assessment Themes:	5
a. Working together for greater effectiveness.	5
b. A clear focus on the public interest.	6
c. Assuring skills and competence on Council.	7
d. A sound process for identifying/reviewing risk.	8
e. Council materials and meetings- supporting good Governance and effective decision-making	9
3. Identified Opportunities for Improvement	11
4. Concluding Remarks	12
5. Appendices	
Appendix 1: Assessment criteria that guided the review	13
Appendix 2: Those I spoke to in this review	14
Appendix 3: About the reviewer	15

## 1. Introductory Comments

The College of Denturists of Ontario (CDO) has contracted this external assessment of its effectiveness to fulfill expectations set out under Measure 1.2.b of the College Performance Measurement Framework ('the CPMF').<sup>1</sup> The CPMF was established by the Ontario government's Ministry of Health in 2020 and is the first such system-wide regulatory reporting tool of its kind in Canada. All Ontario health regulatory Colleges are required to annually provide evidence as to how they meet, partially meet, or do not (yet) meet set expectations across various domains and must include their proposed plans to meet any unmet expectations going forward.

The overarching aim, as noted in the introduction to the CPMF Reporting Tool, is to help answer the following key question: "*How well are Colleges executing their mandate which is to act in the public interest?*"; in regard to the CPMF requirement to engage in an external assessment of Council effectiveness at least every three years, this question implies that a clear and compelling link exists between a Council's focus and commitment to the public interest and its overall effectiveness as a regulatory governing board.

The CPMF sets out the expectation that "*the framework includes a third-party assessment of Council's [the Board's] effectiveness at a minimum of every three years*", and yet what constitutes 'effectiveness' of a Council has been left largely open to interpretation. My approach in this assessment process reflects my personal understanding that the expected third-party assessments are not meant to constitute full blown governance reviews but should be more appropriately focused on assessing how the regulatory Board demonstrates regulatory effectiveness at meetings, and on identifying areas where opportunities for improvement may exist.

This is an assessment of the CDO Council, and the criteria against which its effectiveness was assessed<sup>2</sup> were adapted, with permission, from Harry Cayton's 'Checklist for Regulatory Boards'.

In addition to my personal observation of two Council meetings held on September 29, 2023, and June 14, 2024, my findings from this assessment were informed through my review of previous Council meeting materials provided to me, and one-on-one interviews conducted with 12 members of the CDO Council and senior staff team.

My assessment finds that overall, the Council of the College of Denturists of Ontario works very well together towards effectively meet the College's mandate to regulate the Denturist profession in the public interest. Although in our one-on-one discussions, both the members of the Council and the senior staff indicated they believe that the CDO Council places public interests above all other interests some professional Council members told me that to be more effective the College needs to do more to

---

<sup>1</sup> [https://health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/hwrob/CPMF\\_summary\\_report.aspx](https://health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/hwrob/CPMF_summary_report.aspx)

<sup>2</sup> See Appendix 1

help and support the profession in gaining more public appreciation, for example through an enhanced scope of practice. These comments would suggest that the differences between the roles of the College (to advocate for the public interest) and the Associations (to advocate for the profession's interests) may not be fully understood by all professional members, or by the profession at large.

There have been two 'competing' denturists associations in Ontario for many years, and some respondents told me that the two associations struggle to be seen by government and other stakeholders as one strong advocacy voice, and that they believe the two should amalgamate into one strong association in order to better serve denturists in Ontario. Indeed, in my experience, the interests of any regulated profession is always best and most effectively served when they are represented by one strong and united advocacy association.

In my personal observations of the two Council meetings in September 2023 and June 2024, I identified several missed opportunities on the part of Council to consider and/or highlight how or why a particular matter under discussion would benefit or serve the public interest- and these are discussed under 2.b in the report.

This report finds that the Council works collaboratively with staff and with each other, to ensure its set goals are met in a collegial and respectful way. The different roles and responsibilities assigned to the Council and to the Staff are generally seen to be clear and respected. The Council relies on its Registrar to identify risks and bring issues of concern to its attention, but I found that Council does not evidently or effectively fulfil its oversight role regarding identifying and reviewing risk, including risks of harm. This is also explored and discussed in more detail below.

I thank all who took time out of your busy schedules to meet with me for one-on-one discussions and share your valuable perspectives. I am especially grateful to the College's Registrar Roderick Tom-Ying, to the Council President Lileath Claire, and to Megan Callaway for providing me with much information, and for your collective willingness to provide clarification and answers to any questions that arose during this assessment process. Your collective support and assistance are both acknowledged, and much appreciated.

Deanna L. Williams

## **2. Findings across Assessment Themes**

### **A. Working together for greater effectiveness**

#### **What contributes to the Council's effectiveness now?**

A majority of respondents cite the capable and effective leadership provided to Council by its Registrar and its President as the greatest contributors to its current effectiveness. They also spoke highly of the positive and collegial relationships that currently exist amongst the Council members and between the Council and College staff.

Considerable efforts have been made to assure open and effective communication between Council and the senior staff team, and these are acknowledged and much appreciated. That Council works well and collaboratively, with each other and with the Registrar and his staff team, was also evident during my personal observations of the two Council meetings on September 29, 2023, and June 14, 2024.

The Registrar/CEO does not frequently 'jump in' to Council discussions but was observed to be very comfortable providing information, guidance or advice to the Council upon request, or when deemed necessary or appropriate. In return, the Council was observed to be very amenable in welcoming the Registrar's input which in my view, reflects the respectful, beneficial partnership that exists between the Council and the Registrar.

Several individuals specifically offered their views that the Council generally understands its role and does an effective job overall. The contributions brought to the Council table by public members were specifically seen to bring greater diversity of perspectives and experiences to Council's discussions. Materials provided to the Council in advance of meetings are generally seen to be comprehensive and are sent out in good time; and most respondents spoke favorably of the SharePoint system used by the College, which allows for secure and easy access to Council and committee materials. The Council meeting agendas are also widely viewed as well-organized and easy to follow.

#### **What could make the Council more effective?**

Several respondents told me that they think Council would be most effective if *all* members of the Council came to the meetings prepared to fully engage in Council discussions. There is a perceived lack of participation on the part of some Council members, but some uncertainty as to whether this may be due to unpreparedness, or a lack of experience or confidence. This can be a source of frustration for those Council members who come to each meeting prepared to fully engage in discussions and debate. A few individuals suggested that the Council could be more effective if its members asked more relevant questions to generate more fulsome discussion on agenda items. It was my observation that matters that were most likely to impact denturists and/or their practice(s) attracted a fair bit of questions and discussion from

the professional members on Council. I did not, however, observe questions asked about risk or how an impending decision or action may impact the public or serve its interests and such questions are important in assuring regulatory Councils effectively fulfil their oversight and regulatory governance roles.

Some respondents believe that Council does spend the right amount of time on the right things, but several other Council members said they feel that Council too often spends excessive time discussing some items, which then leaves little or no time for discussion on other matters. Respondents acknowledge it can be difficult to accurately predict the amount of time or discussion a particular agenda item might attract, and difficult to shut down discussions once they are underway, but several individuals suggested that a better way is needed to ensure that all agenda items are effectively addressed within the timelines of the meetings. While a few individuals say the length of meetings work for them, a number of Council members told me they think meetings are already too long. It was suggested that more stringent attention to timing on discussions is needed to ensure discussion is not 'rushed', that meetings do not have to go over time, and that unaddressed agenda items do not need to be deferred.

The College generally holds virtual Council meetings, live streamed on YouTube, except for one Council meeting a year which is held in person with a hybrid option offered to those who wish to attend virtually. At least a third of those I spoke to, told me they would like Council to return to in person meetings because these build and maintain better interpersonal relations, facilitate more interaction and encourage enhanced participation of those in attendance. Others said they support virtual meetings, citing lower costs, ease of access and not having to travel into Toronto as their reasons. While College staff confirmed that all observers of Council meetings, whether they are held virtually or in person, are identified, this fact may not be clear to all Council members. Some individuals suggested it was an advantage to see who were attending as observers during in-person meetings as this may prompt them to adjust what they might say about a particular item, or how they might say it.

### **B. Demonstrating a clear and unremitting focus on the public interest**

Council is reminded of the College's public interest mandate by the President at the start of the Council meetings, and briefing notes and reports put before Council are now including a public interest rationale. In the one-on-one discussions most of the respondents said that Council does keep 'public interest' at the forefront of issues considered; however, a majority of professional members said that the Council keeps its focus on the public interest by having public members serve as President and on the Council and that they rely on the appointed public members to remind Council of its obligations and keep public interest at the forefront of discussions. In alignment with best regulatory governance however, it is the role of *all* members of Council, whether professional or public members, to demonstrate a collective clear and unremitting focus on the public and its interests.

There were several instances during my personal observations of Council where I

considered opportunities to highlight an item's alignment to the public and its interests were missed. During the September 2023 meeting, the agenda and by-law changes for example, were noted as being helpful to solidify the governance and operational foundation of the CDO, but there was no mention of how any of the proposed changes might ultimately benefit the public. In the same meeting, a presentation on changes to registration requirements to include an emergency class of registration could have highlighted the fact that registration practices are key in helping CDO mitigate potential risks of harm to the public. In the June 2024 meeting, considerable time and discussion was committed to considering several changes that would impact denturists in their practice. Examples include proposed changes to advertising regulations; the clinic naming policy; and to the removal of unique identifiers for record-keeping. I observed that much discussion was focused on the impact these changes would have on denturists in practice and how the profession might react to the changes and considered that these discussions presented missed opportunities for someone on Council to highlight how and why the public and its interests would benefit from any of the proposed changes. Clearly stating that changes to the advertising regulation, for example will serve to better protect the public from false or misleading information or advertising would go a long way to demonstrate the Council's commitment to the public interest. In the same way, when considering the impact of proposed changes to the current policies on clinic naming and unique identifiers for record-keeping on denturists in practice, asking questions about possible impacts, if any, these changes might have on the public, would also have gone further in publicly demonstrating Council's commitment to its public interest mandate.

Many of the decisions made by regulatory Councils do impact the professionals who are regulated by the College, but intentionally re-visiting the public interest question when discussions become more focused on professional interests can help Council consider the impact(s) of a decision on the public as well as the profession. Regulatory Councils will often find that public and professional interests can and do intersect.

It is a great start to include a proposed 'Public Interest Rationale' in all reports or briefing notes going to Council for consideration or approval. Public confidence and trust could be further enhanced by including in the minutes that capture motions and votes, a few words highlighting how or why Council believes an approved decision/policy position protects or serves the public and its interests.

### **C. Assuring skills and competencies on Council**

The current legislative and regulatory provisions in Ontario require elections of professional members and government appointments of public members onto health regulatory Councils in Ontario; and new members of College Councils, whether they are professional or public members bring to the table significant variances in their respective skills, competencies and governance experiences. A majority of individuals believe Council would benefit collectively from better orientation and onboarding for new Council and committee members but also better board development overall.

It is a commonly held belief amongst most regulated professions that because of the current electoral and appointment processes mandated in Ontario, the Colleges lack any control in 'assuring skills and competence' on their Councils. Some health regulatory Colleges in Ontario, however, have developed a desired competency framework for Council members and have implemented a screening process to highlight for prospective electoral candidates the desired skills, competencies or experiences that the Council has identified as being particularly needed or desirable in the upcoming year.

The CDO Council has committed to approving a framework that includes desired skills, experiences and competencies for Council and committee members that will eventually form the basis for a Council skills map and evaluation processes. In June, Council received for their consideration and approval preliminary drafts of skills, competencies and experiences that align with examples of best practices identified in other regulators, across professions and jurisdictions.

Going forward, the Council could consider further strengthening its election eligibility criteria for professional members to include a defined and accountable competency-based process for recruiting, and screening interested candidates before they run for an elected position. Implementing such processes can help to better assure a desired blend of skills, competencies and diversity of elected Council members going forward.

#### **D. A sound process for identifying and reviewing risk(s)**

Most respondents struggled to answer my question about risk as it relates to Council's role in reviewing risk and overseeing the management of risks. A few respondents spoke about the risk-based decision-making framework that helps guide the ICRC in consistent and sound decision-making, but the majority did not seem to know what process the Council currently has for identifying and reviewing risks, or whether it has one at all.

The College does not currently have a formal risk register; several respondents thought this was directly related to the current staff complement at the CDO which is small and already carrying large workloads. In discussions I was told that the Council generally relies on the Registrar for bringing any identified or potential risks, to the Council for its attention. Indeed, I did observe the Registrar reporting on attestations that were signed at the request of the external fiscal auditors confirming no concerns about any potential risks of fraud or fraudulent activities at the College.

Several individuals said that they believed that some kind of 'risk map' would be useful to them in understanding and fulfilling an oversight role related to risk and others told me they think a space should be included in every meeting agenda where risks are intentionally discussed or flagged. Good practice would suggest that, at least twice a year Council receives some intentional risk report categorizing any new or emerging risks identified by the Registrar -these could be sourced from external scans, or from data gathered through the College's statutory programs, including ICRC, Registration



and Quality Assurance. Any updates provided to the Council on categories of risk should also include risks related to actual or potential harm to the public/clients of denturists.

A key purpose of any professional or occupational regulator is to mitigate risks of harm to the public, and in keeping with my suggestion in section B, above, it is my view that public confidence could also be strengthened by including a few words in the minutes about risk where relevant, to reflect how Council believes that an approved decision or policy may help eliminate or mitigate a potential risk of harm to the public. The notice of recent changes, for example which were adopted by all oral health Colleges, rescinding the COVID-19 guidelines and transferring the related responsibility and professional judgement for ensuring effective infection controls back to denturists could have included a statement citing the College's confidence that risks to the public will be mitigated, and the public well protected amidst these changes.

**E. Council Meetings, Processes, Policies and Materials- ensuring sufficient time is committed to the right things, and supporting Council members in effective decision-making**

My last two questions in the interviews sought respondents' reflections on whether, and how, current policies and procedures, Council meetings, and meeting materials help ensure Council's time is spent appropriately on matters aligned with the public interest, and support Council in effective decision-making.

Overall, members of the Council agreed that Council materials are comprehensive in preparing them for discussion and debate, and that they are sent out in enough time to allow for review and preparation. Some challenges associated with technology that make accessing the SharePoint site difficult were noted by a few individuals, but a majority find the use of SharePoint an effective and secure way for them to access and review materials for their upcoming meetings.

Feedback on meetings themselves was somewhat mixed; some individuals told me the meetings are too long, and that they frequently go longer than scheduled because of discussions that exceeded the anticipated timing in the agenda. These respondents said the meetings would be more efficient if Council's discussions were focused more on 'So what?' and less on 'how' decisions might be accepted by the profession. Others, however, said that they think things are working well- that there is a lot of material but for the most part, meetings are well focused and finish on time.

The use of electronic polls to solicit votes from Council members on motions before them during the meetings also garnered mixed responses. Some individuals questioned why polling is necessary in all votes and whether it could be used only for those motions where an accurate count of 'yeas' and 'nays' are required. Other respondents suggested that polling can be more effective and less restrictive, particularly in virtual

meetings- It was my understanding from discussions that no observers can see the results of voting polls, and for this reason the use of polls is especially favored by those who may not want observers to know how they voted; some respondents however believe that all Council members should be accountable for what they do (including how they vote) and that the current polling process does not foster public accountability in this regard.

### **3. Identified Opportunities for Improvement**

1. The Council should continue its move towards modernization changes, including finalization of its Council competency and skills profile to inform better screening processes for Council and committees; to help build more meaningful Council education and training sessions, and to serve as the basis for the evaluation processes that will be used to assess the performance of Council, individually and collectively.
2. The Council should continue its commendable practices aimed at keeping its focus on the public interest and public protection, through the reminders included in the President's introductory remarks to Council, and through the inclusion of a 'Public Interest Rationale' in all briefing notes or reports being put before Council for discussion and decision. Going forward, and particularly when discussion tends toward the profession and its interests, the President/Chair should encourage the Council to dive deeper into considering *how* a particular matter is expected to impact the public or *what* the impact on the public would be, should a decision go forward or not.
3. The Council should further consider including a brief rationale as to why a given decision is believed to best serve the public and its interests in its meeting minutes respecting a respective motion on a matter and the resulting vote.
4. At least twice a year Council should receive a report intentionally focused on risk, categorizing any new or emerging risks identified by the Registrar from external scans, or from data gathered through the College's statutory programs. Any updates provided to the Council on categories of risk should also include risks related to actual or potential harm to the public/clients of denturists.
5. The Council should consider also including, where appropriate or relevant, some words highlighting how it expects that a given decision would reduce or mitigate the potential for risk of harm to the public/clients of denturists.
6. In keeping with best practices relating to demonstrating accountability for individual and collective performance, Council should revisit the purpose of the current polling practices during meetings and determine whether the benefits of anonymity outweigh the risk of diminishing stakeholder trust and confidence in the Council or the College.

#### **4. Concluding Remarks**

As the former Supervisor appointed to work with the College of Denturists of Ontario during its loss of regulatory privileges in 2012 and 2013, I remain much impressed, and so proud at how far this Council, and the College, has come and how much it has accomplished in the past ten years. This is a Council that works effectively together in a respectful and collegial manner, and that I find takes its role and responsibility to govern the Denturist profession very seriously. It is my hope that some of my suggestions will help the Council go further in helping assure that it more effectively demonstrates its mandated commitment to focus first and foremost on the public and its interests.

Council's obligation to focus on public interest and protection are currently made clear through the inclusion of a 'Public Interest Rationale' in most of the Council reports that I reviewed and through occasional verbal reminders offered by the President or the Registrar. Observations from the two meetings in September 2023 and June 2024 revealed an identified opportunity- where discussions start to become focused on denturists- for the President/Chair to engage Council in a deeper dive into how, and why, the matter under discussion would serve or impact the public and its interests, and to ensure this discussion is reflected in the minutes.

The Council is currently working on finalizing a Council Skills and Competency framework which will serve to better educate and inform potential new Board members about their expected roles before they seek an elected seat on CDO Council. There is an opportunity going forward, to use Council's approved competencies and skills as a basis for an enhanced competency-based eligibility screening for elections and for more of a competency and skills-based Council evaluation framework

It has been a pleasure to work with the CDO Council on this external assessment of Council's effectiveness. My thanks to all who took the time to meet with me for one-on-one discussions- all of the comments provided invaluable information and insights that were most helpful to this review, and much appreciated.

Finally, my sincere thanks to the College staff leaders, in particular Rod Tom-Ying and Megan Callaway for your tremendous support to me throughout this assessment. I so appreciated your timeliness in responding to my many questions or requests for additional information or evidence as they arose. Your assistance and support to me throughout this review is acknowledged and much appreciated.

Deanna Williams

**Criteria that guided this assessment**

1. Working well together to support Board effectiveness.
2. Demonstrating a clear focus on the public and public interest.
3. Assuring skills and competencies on the Council
4. A sound process for identifying and reviewing risk(s)
5. Council materials and meetings-supporting good governance and effective decision-making

### **Those I Spoke to in this Review**

My thanks to the following individuals-listed below in alphabetical order- who participated in one-on-one discussions with me to inform my findings for this assessment.

1. Ahangaran, Majid
2. Azouz, Latif
3. Bailey, Kris
4. Bakshy, Michael
5. Callaway, Megan
6. Claire, Lileath
7. Gieger, Norbert
8. Gorham-Matthews, Elizabeth
9. Parada, Franklin
10. Pryce, Garnett
11. Tom-Ying, Roderick
12. Singh, Gaganjot

## Appendix 3

### **About the Reviewer**

*Deanna Williams* BScPhm, R. Ph, CAE, C. Dir is known for her work in professional and occupational regulation. She held leadership positions within the Ontario College of Pharmacists, Canada's largest pharmacy regulatory authority, for almost two decades, retiring as its Registrar in 2011. The Minister of Health and Long-Term Care appointed Deanna as Supervisor to the College of Denturists of Ontario during the loss of its regulatory privileges in 2012 and 2013 and she also served as inaugural Risk Officer, for the Retirement Homes Regulatory Authority (RHRA), from 2014 through 2018.

Since 2011, Deanna has provided consulting services in areas relating to professional and occupational regulation in Canada, the USA and abroad through Dundee Consulting Group Ltd. From 2017-2018 Deanna served as Expert Technical Advisor to Ontario's Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, providing advice on best regulatory practices across professions and international jurisdictions, with a particular focus on processes for complaints, investigations and discipline related to the sexual abuse of patients by regulated health care practitioners.

Deanna has conducted external regulatory performance and governance reviews for both health and non-health regulators, both independently and in collaboration with Harry Cayton.

Deanna was recognized by the international regulatory community in 2010 in receiving the CLEAR International Award for Regulatory Excellence, and again in 2019, when she received the CLEAR Award for Lifetime Achievement. Deanna holds her designation as a Certified Association Executive (CAE) from the Canadian Society of Association Executives (CSAE) and her Corporate Director (C. Dir.) designation from the Chartered Director program, at DeGroote School of Business, McMaster University. She has served on the Finance and Audit Committee of the University of St Michael's College, University of Toronto and in 2019 completed a nine-year term on the Board of Directors of Haldimand War Memorial Hospital, where she also served as the Board Chair from 2014-17. Deanna currently serves as a director on the Board of the Vistana Spas Condominium Association, in Orlando, Florida. She was appointed to the Board of Directors at Joseph Brant Hospital, in Burlington, Ontario, in 2021 and since 2022, has served as the Chair of the JBH Board's Quality Committee. She and her husband reside in Burlington.