



Provincial Dental Board of Nova Scotia

Draft Code of Ethics

Nova Scotia's [Regulated Health Professions Act \(RHPA\)](#) was passed on November 9, 2023. It is anticipated that within the next two years, the RHPA will replace all existing Acts governing health professions in Nova Scotia (including the [Dental Act](#)).

We expect that the existing Acts governing all oral health professions will be repealed and the professions migrated to the RHPA in early January 2025.

As well, we expect that the PDBNS will become the Nova Scotia Regulator of Dentistry and Dental Assisting (NSRDDA). This name will be consistent with the naming convention signaled through consultative discussions with the Department of Health and Wellness.

Currently, the PDBNS Code of Ethics resides within [Regulations](#) under the [Dental Act](#). When the PDBNS is migrated to the RHPA, these regulations will be rescinded. This necessitates the pre-emptive development of a new standalone Code of Ethics document.

The draft document which follows has been developed over recent months and has been approved by the PDBNS Board to be circulated to stakeholders for a period of feedback.

This document aims to be “high-level” in scope, with greater detail residing in bylaws and practice standards.

Those wishing to submit feedback are kindly asked to send it via email by November 8, 2024 to reception.pdbns@eastlink.ca with “Code of Ethics” in the subject line.

Sincerely,

Dr. Doug Mackey, DDS
PDBNS Registrar

Nova Scotia Regulator of Dentistry and Dental Assisting (NSRDDA)

Code of Ethics (Draft 2024-10-07)

This Code of Ethics is a practice standard that applies to all registrants of the Nova Scotia Regulator of Dentistry and Dental Assisting (NSRDDA). Failure to meet this standard represents professional misconduct and risk to the public's trust in dentistry and dental assisting.

The Code of Ethics provides direction for ethical practice and behaviour and serves as a source for education, reflection, remediation and public awareness. It outlines key principles and standards that apply, but are not limited to, professional ethical conduct that align with the NSRDDA mandate and registrants' responsibilities to protect the safety of patients and to maintain the public's trust and confidence in the practices of dentistry and dental assisting. These responsibilities are guided by ethical principles to:

- put patients' needs and interests first (respect for autonomy)
- provide benefit (beneficence)
- do no harm (non-maleficence)
- be fair (justice)
- be truthful (veracity)

RESPONSIBILITIES TO PATIENTS - registrants must:

- act foremost for the well-being and benefit of the patient.
- provide care with respect for human rights and dignity and without discrimination or unjustified personal bias.
- provide fair comment and informed opinion of a patient's oral health.
- enable patients to make meaningful and informed health care choices based on their own understanding of their own best interest.
- provide quality care within the appropriate scope of practice and in accordance with professional standards.
- disclose harm and take appropriate steps to minimize harm resulting from treatment error or clinical misadventure.
- keep professional and clinical knowledge current.
- be responsible for treatment.
- establish and maintain accurate records of medical-dental history, clinical findings, diagnosis, treatment planning, informed consent, and treatment for each patient.
- ensure that artificial intelligence technology use is appropriate, disclosed, and transparent.
- keep patient information in strict confidence.
- acknowledge limitations and refer to others more qualified when appropriate.
- assign duties, procedures and referrals only to persons qualified by skill, training and licensure.
- accept duties, procedures and referrals only if qualified by skill, training and licensure.
- be responsible for maintaining safety and appropriate professional boundaries and demeanor in the workplace.
- make reasonable efforts to arrange for continuity of patient care during practice interruptions.
- make reasonable efforts to provide emergency care for patients of record experiencing pain, bleeding, or infection.
- inform patients of changes in practice ownership and custodianship of records.

RESPONSIBILITIES TO THE PUBLIC – registrants must:

- cooperate with regulatory processes of the NSRDDA as well as those of other health regulators.
- represent personal academic credentials and education within NSRDDA recognized registration, licensing, and permitting parameters.
- respect and support the public's right to a free choice of oral health care professional.
- establish justifiable fees for professional services.
- ensure that service claims to third party insurers and programs reflect accurate and appropriate billing practices.
- maintain personal, professional, clinical and legal responsibilities when engaging in contractual relationships with external organizations or interested parties.
- ensure that research involving patients meets relevant established standards and policy.
- inform the NSRDDA registrar of any injury, dependency, infection or other condition that affects a registrant's ability to practice safely and competently.
- inform the NSRDDA registrar of colleagues who fail to provide treatment in accordance with currently accepted professional standards.
- refrain from unjustifiable disparaging of colleagues.
- conduct promotional activity in accordance with acceptable professional standards.
- avoid inducements and other coercive activities or arrangements in interactions with patients and the public.