



## SRNA POSITION STATEMENT PUBLIC REPRESENTATION AND PARTICIPATION IN HEALTH REGULATORY DECISION MAKING

The SRNA, established in 1917, is the profession-led<sup>1</sup> regulatory body for the province's RNs and RN(NP)s. *The Registered Nurses Act 1988* describes the SRNA's mandate is to regulate the RN profession, serve and protect the public, preserve the integrity of the RN profession, and maintain public confidence. The SRNA's mission is "Better Health for all through nursing regulation, professional practice and collaboration".

### Regulation

The regulation of health professions in Saskatchewan exists to protect the public and is outlined in the legislation for each regulatory body (association/college). The responsibility for profession-led regulation is a privilege delegated by the provincial government to each (health) regulatory body. In carrying out profession-led regulation, the council of a regulatory body is accountable to apply the legislation and act in the public's interest. To ensure the public's interest is maintained, the provincial government appoints citizens as public representatives to the regulatory body's council. Public representatives are full participants in a council and are there to ensure that the "profession acts fairly, follows the Act and its bylaws and fosters appropriate standards of practice and professional ethics" (Saskatchewan Ministry of Health, 2014, p.4).

### Public participation in profession-led regulation

Participation by the public in profession-led regulation ensures the regulatory body remains responsive and accountable to the people of Saskatchewan. Through the years, regulatory bodies have benefited from the public's participation in regulatory work. Some of the benefits include: maintaining the focus on public protection; increasing an awareness of social change and cultural diversity; raising attention to the health care needs of communities and groups; and suggesting ways to increase the public's awareness of their ability to raise concerns about an individual's professional practice. Research shows an increase in confidence when the public views their participation in regulation is meaningful (Council for Healthcare Regulatory Excellence, 2011).

### Role of public representatives

The role of public representatives in regulation is to advocate for the public by raising citizen concerns and alerting a regulatory body when their actions may not be in the public's interest. They are full and equal participants on a regulatory body's council and are not required to be health care experts. Rather, they are encouraged to bring their own perspectives and a common sense approach to keep the public interest at the forefront of a regulatory body's work (Saskatchewan Ministry of Health, 2014).

<sup>1</sup> The SRNA Council has adopted the term "profession-led regulation" for the term "self-regulation". The term self-regulation is used by the Saskatchewan Ministry of Health (MOH). The intent of the terms used by SRNA Council and Saskatchewan Ministry of Health are similar.

## Public participation in the SRNA's regulatory role

The SRNA views public participation as a fundamental component of profession-led regulation. Like other regulatory bodies, the SRNA is committed to transparency and accountability by including the public in its regulatory responsibilities. Public participation occurs by: obtaining feedback through regular consultation with a variety of social and cultural groups; conducting a bi-annual survey of Saskatchewan citizens for their feedback on profession-led regulation and RN practice; maintaining a public representative on all statutory and advisory committees; and publishing information on its roles and responsibilities in a number of SRNA publications including the SRNA Annual Report. The public's input is used to: improve profession-led regulation, the registered nursing profession, develop policy and programs, and enhance public relations. Information on the annual report, public surveys and a call for public participation on SRNA committees is found at [www.srna.org](http://www.srna.org).

## Selection of public representatives in SRNA activities

The SRNA maintains an open and transparent process for the selection of interested public on its committees. The selection process seeks out participants with diverse backgrounds from within the province. Calls for committee participation are posted on the SRNA website, placed in community newspapers, and invitations are sent to citizen groups. The SRNA Membership Advisory Committee consisting of practicing RNs and a public representative select interested members of the public to participate on SRNA committees. Individuals who are interested in participating on SRNA council must contact the Ministry of Health at [info@health.gov.sk.ca](mailto:info@health.gov.sk.ca).

## References

- Saskatchewan Ministry of Health. (2014). *Orientation manual for public representatives on self-regulation health profession councils*. Retrieved from <http://www.health.gov.sk.ca/public-reps-orientation-manual>
- Council for Healthcare Regulatory Excellence. (2011). *Patient and public participation in health professional regulation*. Retrieved from <http://www.professionalstandards.org.uk/docs/psa-library/patient-and-public-participation-report.pdf?sfvrsn=0>

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