



Health Professions Act - Public Member Handbook

Alberta Health

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Introduction

This Handbook provides information about the appointment of public members, the administration of their appointments and the honourarium and expenses that a public member may claim.

Public members appointed under the *Health Professions Act* (HPA) should familiarize themselves with the requirements of the HPA. A handbook, developed to provide an overview of the HPA, may be accessed on the Government of Alberta's website at: <https://open.alberta.ca/publications/9781460145791>.

A copy of the HPA can be found at: <https://kings-printer.alberta.ca/documents/Acts/H07.pdf>.

Additional information about agencies, boards and commissions may be found online at: <https://www.alberta.ca/agencies-boards-commissions.aspx>.

Public members can expect to deal with two units within Alberta Health:

- The **Agency Governance Unit** which coordinates the appointment of public members.
 - Email: HEALTH.ABHealthGovernance@gov.ab.ca
 - Phone: 780-427-2838
- The **Health Professional Regulation Unit** which administers the HPA and can answer questions relating to the administration of public members, including questions about honoraria or expense claims, or general questions about the HPA.
 - Email: HEALTH.HPA-Public-Members@gov.ab.ca
 - Phone: 780-427-1419

Appointment as a public member

Public member appointments

There are two types of public member appointments:

- College council
- Tribunal roster

In both cases, public members are appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council for terms varying between **one and three** years. A public member's appointment can be renewed; however, the total duration of a public member's appointment to the tribunal roster or to a particular college council **cannot exceed six consecutive years**. Public members appointed to a college council may continue to hold office after the expiry of their terms until either they are reappointed, their appointment is rescinded or their successor is appointed. This provision does not apply to public members on the tribunal roster.

Public member resignations

Public members who resign before their term expires or who choose not to continue serving after the expiry of their term on council must advise the following groups in writing, preferably by email:

- **College** (for public members appointed as a member of a college council)
- **Agency Governance Unit**, Alberta Health
- **Health Professions Regulation Unit**, Alberta Health

The Agency Governance Unit will complete the paperwork required to rescind or amend the appointment and begin the process of recruiting/appointing a successor.

Orientation to the role of a public member

Public members appointed to a college council may receive an orientation specific to that particular college. Upon appointment, the public member will be put in touch with the college's staff who will then determine orientation needs.

The Alberta Federation of Regulated Health Professions (“Federation”) is an independent body that promotes collaboration among health profession regulators. All colleges established under the HPA have representation on the Federation. For more information on the Federation, please visit: <https://afrhp.org/>.

The Federation has a number of online resources for public members to help them learn more about their role. Public members can contact their college or contact the Federation (<https://afrhp.org/contact-us/>) directly to gain access to these resources.

Public member personal information

Alberta Health collects, uses and discloses public members’ personal information for the purpose of public member administration under the HPA. This includes recruiting, screening and interviewing public members for suitability and eligibility; and then working in cooperation with the health profession colleges to make recommendations for appointments and reappointments, and processing remuneration.

Alberta Health’s information protection responsibilities are described in the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (the FOIP Act) and other legislation. The following information is intended to assist in understanding how personal information is handled.

Collection of information

Information obtained during recruitment: Alberta Health retains covering letters and resumes, information obtained during screening and interviews, as well as information obtained from others when the public member has provided authorization, or as permitted by law.

Information collected after an appointment: Once appointed, public members will receive an email requesting they electronically complete their on-boarding profile for administration and remuneration purposes. Claims for honouraria and expenses cannot be processed until this information is provided. Note: the email request contains a link to a special online tool (the 1GX Wizard) that must be completed within 10 days of the email being received.

Once active in their roles, public members will electronically submit honouraria and expense claim forms to be reimbursed for travel expenses and provided honouraria for performing duties as a public member.

Information about performance as a public member: Alberta Health may also collect information about public member performance from the applicable college(s) to assist in determining whether reappointment is recommended, to update contact information and to verify an expense or honourarium claim.

Release or use of information about public members

Recruitment: When a college council has a public member vacancy, Alberta Health provides copies of candidate resumes for review, in order to aid the college in identifying preferred candidates.

Tribunal roster: Public members appointed to the tribunal roster will have their name, contact information, education and skills, professional background and affiliations, and information about their appointment disclosed to the colleges so that colleges may select and contact them for the purposes of arranging hearings or complaint review committee meetings.

Public information: As part of the government’s commitment to transparency on appointments, information about public members, including their name, title, and biography will be made available at <https://www.alberta.ca/public-agency-appointees.cfm>. Additionally, expense reimbursement is disclosed online for all individuals appointed to a public agency (<https://www.alberta.ca/travel-expense-disclosure.aspx>). Some colleges may also make select information about all council members available on their website.

Claiming honouraria and expenses

To receive honouraria or be reimbursed for expenses, public members must submit the appropriate forms. These forms are provided along with notification of appointment, or can be requested by emailing: HEALTH.HPA-Public-Members@gov.ab.ca.

Honourarium

Public members receive an honourarium as recognition of their participation as public members. An honourarium is not an hourly wage and is not intended to reflect all the time spent in the role as a public member. Honouraria rates are specified in

the Order in Council that appoints the public member. Public members should not receive or accept remuneration from a college for their time spent on council business. This includes “topping-up” of honouraria rates.

College councils

The main responsibility of a public member appointed to a college council is to attend meetings of that council. Participation in a meeting by video conference or telephone conference qualifies as attending a meeting.

A public member may claim honouraria when attending council meetings, this includes regularly scheduled council meetings, ad hoc council meetings, council training sessions, and meetings of council subcommittees.

Public members appointed to a college council may also attend a college’s annual or general meetings and college conferences. **Public members may not claim registration fees for conferences, except with prior consent of Alberta Health.**

Generally, college working groups would not be considered a council meeting. A council may assemble a working group (consisting of regulated members, college staff, consultants, and others) to develop documents or provide advice to council. As these types of groups report to council, it would not be appropriate for a public member to also participate on the working group. Public members or the college can contact Alberta Health to discuss specific situations as needed. In contrast, a public member may participate in the work of a council subcommittee, such as the executive committee of a council.

Tribunal roster members

Public members appointed to the tribunal roster may claim honouraria for the time spent in a hearing held by a hearing tribunal or a review conducted by a complaint review committee and for time spent in deliberations. A public member who undertakes to write a decision for a hearing tribunal or a complaint review committee may claim up to 4 hours of time spent writing the decision.

Honouraria that cannot be claimed

Public members may not claim honouraria for:

- **Time spent preparing for a meeting, hearing or complaint review committee (for example, reviewing agendas or meeting minutes).**
- **Phone calls or emails to schedule meetings,** follow-up after meetings or for updates on a scheduled meeting that was not attended.
- Brief discussions or consultations on college issues outside of scheduled meetings.
- **Travel time to and from a meeting** (mileage can be claimed as an expense).
- Attending social or political functions.

If these or other ineligible items or time is claimed, Alberta Health will modify the claim and issue payment for the revised amount. Notification may not be given that the claim was modified. For questions about claims or payments contact Alberta Health at HEALTH.HPA-Public-Members@gov.ab.ca.

Prior approval from Alberta Health

If a public member is uncertain whether a particular activity falls within the role and responsibilities of a public member, they should contact Alberta Health. This ensures public members maintain their objective, external perspective, and that they can be appropriately reimbursed and remunerated.

Seek prior approval if:

- The meeting or event is not routine and is not clearly authorized in the section above.
- The public member is asked or has volunteered to attend an event on the college’s behalf or as a representative of the college or representative of the profession.
- There are exceptional travel expenses, **for example flight costs, conference registration, or an unusual hotel cost.**
- Out-of-province travel is required.

Public members approved to attend an event are eligible for an honourarium and can be reimbursed for the registration fee, as well as other eligible expenses at approved rates.

Expenses

Funding for public member expenses is the same amount as what is provided to cover expenses for government employees when conducting government business. These expenses fall under the Travel, Meal and Hospitality Expenses Policy, which can be found at: <https://open.alberta.ca/publications/travel-meal-and-hospitality-expenses-policy-expenses-policy#summary>. The rates quoted below reflect this policy and are subject to change.

Travel and accommodation expenses

Eligible travel costs for public members must be related to legitimate activities as a member of a college council, complaint review committee or hearing tribunal.

Public members are expected to use the most economical mode of travel with due regard for health, safety and security. Given the costs associated with air travel, other modes should be considered.

Claims may be submitted as follows:

- Mileage and parking for use of a personal vehicle (currently \$0.505 per kilometre travelled). Receipts for parking are not required but if available, should be submitted.
- Air travel, with prior approval of Alberta Health, must not exceed economy rates.
- Automobile rental, with prior Alberta Health approval.
- Inter-municipal bus fares (e.g. Red Arrow) and including airport bus.
- Intra-municipal public transportation.
- A public member who receives a discount, credit or bonus for travel that reduces the original cost may only claim the net expense. This does not apply where a public member receives a rebate, credit or privilege for using a personal credit card for which a fee has been paid.
- Hotel accommodation for the actual cost of room rates. While public members are not expected to find the cheapest accommodation, they are expected to consider costs with due regard for health, safety and security. If hotel costs are high (more than \$200 before taxes and fees), they will need prior approval before booking the hotel room, as set out above.
- If a public member stays in a private residence they may claim \$20.15.
- If meals are not provided by the regulatory college, a public member may claim for meals as follows:
 - Breakfast: \$9.20
 - Lunch: \$11.60
 - Dinner: \$20.75

Note that Treasury Board policy recently changed. Public members may no longer claim for meals with a receipt in excess of the allotted amount.

- When charged Goods and Services Tax (GST) on an allowable expense, a public member may be reimbursed either the total amount shown on the receipt, including the GST, or the maximum amount allowed for the expense, whichever is less. GST and other taxes cannot be claimed on allowances such as personal expenses.

Expenses that are not eligible for reimbursement include alcoholic beverages, meals for family members who may be accompanying a public member on a trip, or activities undertaken for entertainment purposes such as going to a movie. A public member who is uncertain if an expense is eligible for reimbursement should contact Alberta Health.

A detailed listing of eligible expenses for travel can be found in the Travel, Meal and Hospitality Expenses Policy, which can be found at: <https://open.alberta.ca/publications/travel-meal-and-hospitality-expenses-policy-expenses-policy#summary>.

Out-of-province/country travel expenses

Payment of honoraria and expenses for out-of-province or out-of-country travel is at the discretion of Alberta Health. Approval and authorization for such travel must be obtained from the Deputy Minister at least six weeks prior to the event.

Requests must be detailed, including all honoraria and expenses, and provide an explanation of the nature of the event and how it aligns with the goals and objectives of Alberta Health and is related to the role of the public member.

The college may submit a travel request on the public member's behalf, but it is the public member, and not the college, who is reimbursed if the request is approved.

Before investing the time to submit a formal request for out-of-province or out-of-country travel, public members and colleges are encouraged to discuss the event with Alberta Health. It is uncommon for public members to attend events outside of Alberta.

Standard government rates are listed in the Travel, Meal and Hospitality Expenses Policy, which can be found at: <https://open.alberta.ca/publications/travel-meal-and-hospitality-expenses-policy-expenses-policy#summary>.

Other expenses

Other than travel costs, it is uncommon for public members to incur other expenses. Colleges are responsible for providing public members with the materials required to participate in council meetings, hearing tribunals or complaint review committees. This includes providing printed meeting materials and other costs to host the event.

For virtual meetings, it is common practice for colleges to provide electronic meeting materials. However, the college must also provide the public member with printed packages, if requested. The cost for printing meeting packages cannot be claimed as an expense.

Home office expenses, such as computer equipment or internet charges, cannot be claimed. If the public member does not wish to attend a virtual meeting from their home, they should advise the college. All colleges have offices and should be able to provide office space to prepare for meetings, attend council meetings or hearing tribunals.

Completing and submitting a claim

To receive honouraria or be reimbursed for expenses, public members must submit the appropriate forms. These forms are provided along with notification of appointment, or can be requested by emailing: HEALTH.HPA-Public-Members@gov.ab.ca.

Honourarium claims

Public members must use the Board Member Honourarium Claim form when submitting a claim for an honorarium.

The claim must include the start and finish times of the meeting and be signed by the chair of the council, hearing tribunal or complaints review committee or by another appropriate representative of the college. This may include the Registrar or Hearings Director. **A copy of the agenda for the meeting should also be attached.**

Personal expense claims

Expense claims must be submitted on a Personal Expense Claim form. If submitted by mail, original receipts must be included. If submitting by email, a copy of the receipt should be attached and the original receipt retained in the public member's files for audit purposes.

Submitting a claim

- Mail or email the Personal Expense Claim with attached (or copied) receipts to Alberta Health at:

Administrative Assistant for Public Members
Health Professional Regulation Unit
10th Floor, ATB Place
10025 Jasper Avenue
Edmonton, AB, T5J 1S6
Email: HEALTH.HPA-Public-Members@gov.ab.ca

Payments by Alberta Health

Payments for honouraria and expenses will be made by direct deposit into the public member's bank account. Setting up the direct deposit occurs in 1GX as part of the onboarding of a public member.