

ANNUAL REPORT 2021

Staying Strong



College of
Midwives
of Alberta

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OUR MANDATE

The College of Midwives of Alberta (CMA) ensures public safety and enhances public trust and confidence in midwives by regulating the practice of midwifery in accordance with the *Health Professions Act, Midwives Profession Regulations*, the CMA's Standards of Practice and Competence, Code of Ethics and Bylaws. The CMA upholds the minimum standard of practice and competencies expected of all midwives registered to practice in Alberta.

OUR VISION

Through regulatory excellence, we will inspire trust and confidence in Midwifery Care for all childbearing families in Alberta.

OUR MISSION

The CMA supports Registered Midwives in their unique role as they provide safe, competent, ethical, compassionate and evidence-informed midwifery care to diverse populations in any practice setting (community, hospital and home).

HOW ARE WE...

Staying Strong

This 2021 annual report is dedicated to our CMA Registrants – all of them doing a very unique job in challenging environmental circumstances. Our gratitude goes out to you.

Your CMA Council & Staff

Staying Strong

Learning About and Addressing Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Access (IDEA)

Sometimes it takes a HUGE jolt to create changes in perception and the EDI Movement proved to be just the jolt needed for the CMA. CMA Staff and Council spent 2021 learning a great deal about EDI in order to address key issues of change within the organization.

Integrating Legislative Changes

All CMA registrants, Council, Committees and Staff completed the Protection of Persons in Care Modules. Council also welcomed two more Public Members, bringing our total to four. CMA did a deep dive into organizational documents and processes to find that some legacy association references exist. The new Standards of Practice have taken centre stage this year in terms of important documents to move forward. CMA also built in Fairness for Newcomers Legislation into our current processes.

Strengthening Midwifery Practice

The CMA New Registrant Program became more formal with policy changes and a New Registrant's Handbook launch. The Alberta Competencies for Midwives were updated for more understanding of midwifery practice in anticipation of the new Canadian Competencies roll out for next year. Formal legislative action was launched against individuals using the Midwife title. These individuals do not have the achievements to gain registration with the CMA, therefore cannot use the name, nor can they legally practice midwifery. Alberta Laboratory and Diagnostics systems collaboration affirmed that Midwives can order these items.

Building the CMA Continuing Competence Program

The CMA Competence Committee is proud of the strides they have made related to designing and setting up the Program. This hardworking group built the program from the ground up.



Learning About and Addressing Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Access (IDEA)

These are the messages to the public and to our registrants, and we reinforce them at every opportunity:

We care about Albertans who are experiencing issues of Inequity, antiracism, discrimination that are entrenched in our society and health care system. We also care about our Registered Midwives who are experiencing issues of inequity, discrimination and racism by the public and by other health care providers in our system. We recognize that this inflicts profound emotional, physical and psychological injury to our clients, families and our own midwives. We want to take responsibility for what we can within our sphere of knowing and control. The CMA is committed to examining our role in this system and to educating ourselves and our registrants about dismantling individual biases, and deconstructing racist and discriminatory beliefs, assumptions and practices. We know that the road ahead is long and mistakes will be made, however we firmly believe in the importance of equity for all people and are committed to action.

The first step that Council took was to learn. We learned about the concepts of Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Access, and then started out addressing them from an Indigenous point of view. At each of the eleven Council meetings this year, we started out with an Indigenous Reflective time where Council and staff by turn shared an aspect of Colonialism that we had researched. The presentations were powerful and contributed positively to the council education as a whole. The discussion after the sharing were also profound.

As the year progressed, Council had a great opportunities to participate in other EDI activities: a workshop hosted by the Alberta Association of Midwives, sharing and support of the NACM (National Aboriginal Council of Midwives) position statements related to indigenous oppression and NACM goals, and situations of anti-inclusion currently unfolding in Alberta communities.

CMA wrote a statement that now appears on our website front page. We examined our Standards of Practice and Code of Ethics and identified that we needed stronger statements. We reached out to other organizations to build on efforts to improve Reconciliation actions through supporting Indigenous midwifery, we included an item at Renewal time where registrants could choose to self-identify as Indigenous or not.

At year's end, Council decided to maintain the Land Acknowledgement for the opening of each Council meeting, and expand our focus to look for tangible actions within the organization around policy review with an IDEA lens.

Integrating Legislative Changes

Once again, we want to take responsibility for what we can within our sphere of knowing and control. January 2021 brought in the completion of the Protection of Persons in Care modules, through the Alberta Federation of Regulated Health Professionals, "The Federation". We are pleased to say that ALL CMA registrants, Council members, standing Committees and staff completed their modules. These modules are now part of the required completion items for all new applicants for registration with the CMA.

Council also welcomed two more Public Members. Cathy Cornfield brings a pharmacist background to the table, and we appreciate her reflective approach to matters and to the decisions she is involved with. Cathy researches and reads all of the materials that come her way around issues before Council, and is diligent with her role on Council. Cathy's responses are always motivated to bringing about positive outcomes, and a number of her contributions have already been operationalized. Our other new Public Member joined us in the Fall of 2021. Melanie is a young mother who was actually a recipient of midwifery care! Melanie was also instrumental in consumer advocacy to bring midwives to Northern Alberta. With her background in policy, business and facilitation of strategic planning, we can hardly wait for our strategic planning process to take place next year. Melanie will no doubt have a positive influence on the relationship that CMA has with Mount Royal University Bachelor of Midwifery Program, as she helped facilitate the development of educational offerings through northern community colleges.

In preparation for key items under Bill 46, CMA did a deep dive into the legacy functions considered to be ones that are more fitting for an association, rather than a regulatory college. Every document, and process was examined by CMA before Alberta Health prepared the Guidance Framework related to Divestment of Association functions. With the help of the Guidance Framework, CMA found additional functions to consider. CMA also held three meetings with the Alberta Association of Midwives to share the data gathered and the concepts that would potentially change for both organizations, with a final review scheduled for early 2022.



Integrating Legislative Changes

The Standards of Practice work that we started before CMA joined the HPA still continues. Despite the delays, revisions, reworking and changing perspectives, we see the end of the project journey finally. With legacy Standards of Practice and Competence from pre-2013 under the Health Disciplines Act, we are really ready for some fresh new Standards to start our journey into the HPA. The CMA Code of Ethics was established earlier, and in June of 2021, the Competencies for Alberta Midwives were revised and approved by Council. This move coincided with a fresh set of Canadian Competencies that were introduced across Canada by the CMRC (Canadian Midwifery Regulator's Council). CMA played a big part in the development of these competencies based on the various roles that midwives perform in their scope of practice across this nation. These competencies will be incorporated into the curriculum programming for all of the Midwifery Education Programs in Canada, as the "Entry to Practice" competencies upon which the national graduating examination will be based. We anticipate that next year will bring about the CMA Standards of Practice to articulate the existing competencies, the level of expected performance, minimum standards for conduct and behaviour and the outcomes that the public can expect from midwifery services in Alberta. CMA also built in Fairness for Newcomers Legislation into our current processes.



Strengthening Midwifery Practice

CMA has had a New Registrants Program for a number of years now, and 2021 was the year to formalize it and strengthen relationships around this vital internship phase.

A New Registrant's Handbook was developed, putting ideas and processes into a formal document. A matching process was initiated between a New Registrant and one or two mentors who formally agree to be available to support, guide, debrief, and assist during the year long program. Legacy policies were deleted or updated to align with current practices and reporting structures were formalized. There is also a check in or interview aspect to evaluate progress and suggest changes to make the program better over time.

The first year cohort of New Registrants using this new program finished over the summer of 2021 with a relatively smooth transition into a General Practice. Updates to the Handbook were made for improvement. The 2021-22 Cohort started their New Registrant Program with the benefit of a solid guiding structure, despite the continuation of COVID - 19 and AHS vaccine mandates.

The new Competencies for Alberta Midwives, and the Canadian Competencies, will focus on Cultural Safety and Cultural Humility, as inclusion, diversity, equity and access to and in health services are highlighted. This focus will also address the inequities and discrimination that midwives sometimes face from clients and public, but also from others in the Health Care System.

It is a new world view that will extend far into the future.

This year CMA has also faced challenges from those outside the CMA who either claim to be midwives or who perform registered midwifery activities when they are not registered. The protected title section of the Midwives Profession Regulations has been a focus. CMA has taken a number of steps related to cease and desist letters, and legal action to protect the midwife title and the unique work that midwives do. The lack of public knowledge and education around what a midwife does and what extensive training they undergo has been a particular challenge for the CMA. This whole situation has also increased CMA's understanding of society and health care that serve to undermine the essence of what registered midwifery care is all about.

Staying Strong

Strengthening Midwifery Practice



The need to promote this unique health profession group is as apparent as ever. At every opportunity CMA reinforces the fact that Registered Midwives provide safe, competent, ethical, compassionate and evidence-informed midwifery care to diverse populations in any practice setting. CMA will continue to enhance both internal and external pride and professionalism amongst Registered Midwives, the health care system and society at large.

Strengthening midwifery practice has extended to another area of midwives' scope of practice in the area of ordering laboratory and diagnostic tests. A misinterpreted phrase in the Midwives Profession Regulation has hampered midwives in some areas of the province to order lab and diagnostic tests for postpartum clients and for newborns/infants still in midwifery care. CMA has been gathering data and readying a stance on the negative impact of this legislation.

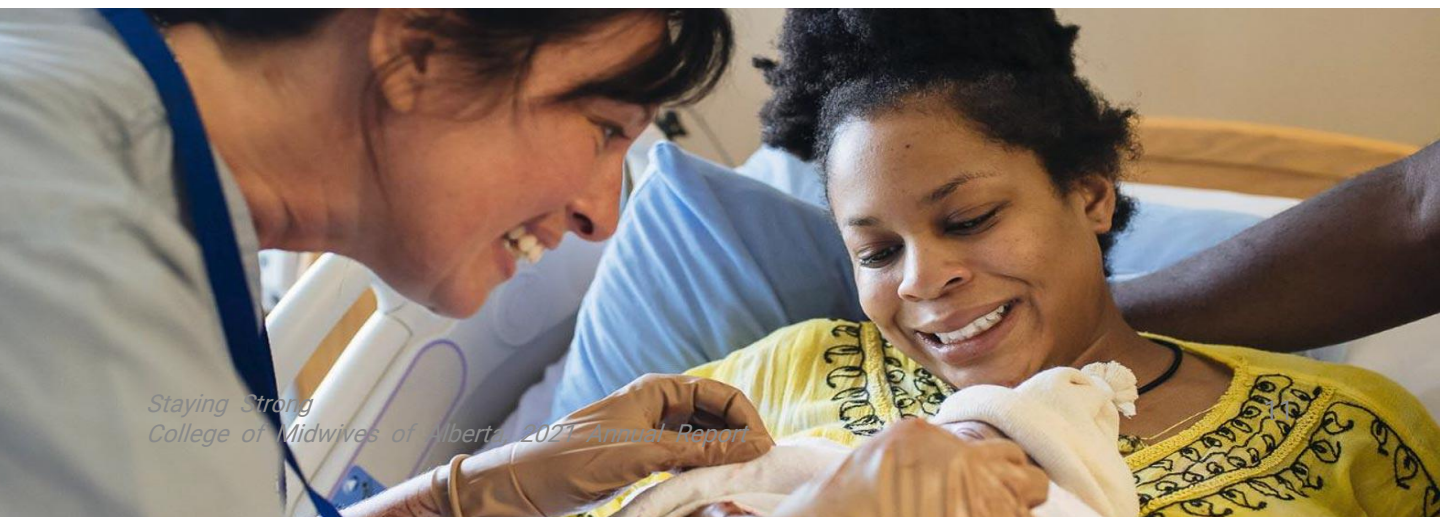
Building the CMA Continuing Competence Program

It is said that a good solid foundation builds a beautiful structure. Over the last two years, the CMA Competence Committee has build a very good foundation for the CMA Continuing Competence Program. The foundation starts with a small but mighty group of dedicated midwives who are committed to the principles of continuing competence. This group took the HPA, the related legislation and CMA documents and started from the ground up. From there an umbrella Continuing Competence Program framework and policy were designed. Work then focused on the major components of the Program. The competence assessment requirements were detailed and organized to report on every Renewal time.

The group chose not to rely on a point system or hours for the Continuing Professional Development portion of the program; instead they designed an extensive flexible list of suggested activities that registrants could engage in, self reflect on and set up learning plans for the subsequent year. 2021 marked the first year in which registrants were required to log and reflect on one such activity, making a learning plan on that activity. The Competence Committee then set up a pilot audit process and function to allow CMA to review the nature of the reporting and depth of understanding of the process required. The audit will take place in 2022.

There is also an ongoing practice component in the form of registrant reporting on birth numbers and midwifery care activities encompassing the scope and model of midwifery care. This area has attracted much attention from registrants and stakeholders alike, as it forms part of the basis for continued safe practice.

With Bill 46, Continuing Competence Standards of Practice took the stage, to align with the overall Standards of Practice drafting that CMA was already doing. With the outline that AB Health set out, this committee crafted Continuing Competence Standards to match the legislation and the spirit of the program previously set out. These statements will be submitted to AB Health at the appropriate time in 2022.

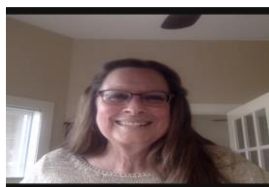


Staying Strong

Building the CMA Continuing Competence Program

Next projects include: implementing a peer case review activity for all registrants, and a client evaluation of care process for quality improvement, and furthering the Continuing Professional development portion after the audit process informs further internal direction.

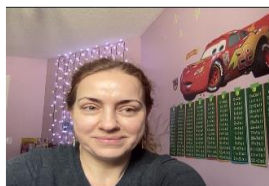
Thank You to all of the members on this committee, for your thoughtfulness, your commitment and ongoing support of this program.



Sharon Prusky



Kayla Blinkhorn



Anna Gimpel



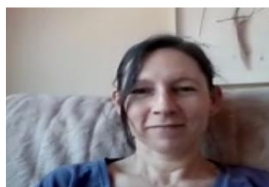
Beth Larsson



Lisa Cowdery



Beverly Sinnema



Marianne King

Messages - CMA Public Members



I am a public board member with extensive experience in health care at the senior level. During my career, I have had responsibilities for the operation of medical facilities and analytical services in both the private and public health sectors and I have previously served as a public member with another health discipline in Alberta. I bring knowledge of board operations, clinical regulation and organizational structure to the CMA board.

David Crocker

I have been a public member in CMA Council now for two terms. I bring a business and financial background to this work. I have also been a practicing pharmacist which guides my involvement and decisions on Council.

Chelsey Cabaj



Messages - CMA Public Members



I was appointed to the College of Midwives of Alberta as a public member in April 2021 for a 3 year term on Council.

As a public member, I have full input into the activities and decisions of Council and because 50% of Council are required to be public members, childbearing families in Alberta are well represented.

I bring experience and insight to Council from my career as a pharmacist. My professional activities were also governed and regulated under a health college, the Alberta College of Pharmacists, in accordance with the Health Professions Act to ensure high quality, safe, and ethical care for Albertans.

Cathy Cornfield

As a Public Member on the CMA Council, I bring a background in strategic planning, policy development and community engagement. Being from northern Alberta, I am able to contribute a northern perspective and speak as someone who was a midwifery client just a few years ago. I've also been active in advocating for the expansion of midwifery services in Alberta since 2013. The Public Members around the table bring rich knowledge from their respective backgrounds, that ultimately, poise the CMA Council to make sound decisions in the best interest of the public.

Melanie Bekevich



Messages

CMA Council President – Tiffany Harrison

As I stepped into the role of Council President in the middle of 2021, I knew I had a sharp learning curve and big shoes to fill following the completion of Cassie Evan's term in June. It has been a privilege to watch our profession and registrants rise to the unique challenges presented throughout the past year to ensure Alberta families continue to receive safe midwifery care. While many aspects of 2021 felt like ground hogs' day of the 2020 pandemic, there were some new hurdles to navigate as well.

The College of Midwives of Alberta continues to develop and strengthen as a health regulator of the midwifery profession. I have seen important steps made this year within this organization. Our Standards of Practice will soon be out for consultation. The Competence Committee has completed an enormous amount of work to prepare a program for registrants. The complaints process is becoming more refined. Work is more intelligently informed through the HPA. Registration Committee is being managed and organized more efficiently and navigation of legislative changes is becoming more adept.

CMA Council welcomed three new council members. Jeannette Page from Calgary and two new Public Members: Cathy Cornfield and Melanie Bekevich. Welcome and thank you for your contributions.

The Council would also like to thank Eileen March for her time spent on Council.

Finally, I would like to express my appreciation to all CMA Council and staff for all you do. I am grateful for the continued opportunity of working with you and contributing to the midwifery profession.

*Sincerely,
Tiffany Harrison*



Messages

CMA Registrar & Executive Director



I have been part of the CMA organization for the last 4.5 years. I joined the CMA first and foremost to help the CMA build on the great work they began in 2013. CMA moved to the HPA on April 1, 2019. In two short years there has been amazing work done at CMA. We are starting to see the fruits of the CMA organization labour. This report highlights some of that work, from integrating new legislative from AB Health, to building a brand new Continuing Competence Program.

I am still excited about the chance to help the CMA and the profession meet new challenges. The CMA is made up of a small but mighty dedicated staff and a cohesive Council and Standing Committees who move the profession forward from a regulatory perspective.

The strength of the midwifery profession comes from the integrity and commitment of every one of our registrants. I believe that the regulation of midwifery is a strength of our publicly funded health system and it helps maintain public confidence by assuring clients their midwife puts their interests first. We depend on the trust of clients and the public and we need to earn that trust every day by serving clients better, in our own practices and with all of our partners.

The profession of Midwifery is unique. CMA is proud to support midwives from a regulatory perspective.

*Sincerely,
Sharon Prusky*

Registration

The CMA Registration Committee is mandated under the *Health Professions Act*, the *Fair Registration Practices Act* and the *Canadian Free Trade Agreement (CFTA)* to determine eligibility of registration for midwives applying with the College of Midwives of Alberta.

The Registration Committee's goal is to ensure public safety through CMA's registration processes. The success of registered midwives through the registration process ensures each midwife has the required credentials and educational background to practice as a primary care provider in Alberta.

CMA has also kept a sharp eye on the evolution of the Fair Registration Practices legislation and the Fairness for Newcomers initiative. We have built this legislation into our current processes, both on the website as well as in our policies and processes, through the standing Registration Committee.

The Committee met five times in 2021 to review applications, implement changes to the registration and renewal processes, and discuss changes in legislation. Registration practices are continuously updated to ensure they accurately reflect contemporary thinking related to fairness, equivalencies and accommodation in foreign qualification recognition.

Number of Regulated Midwives



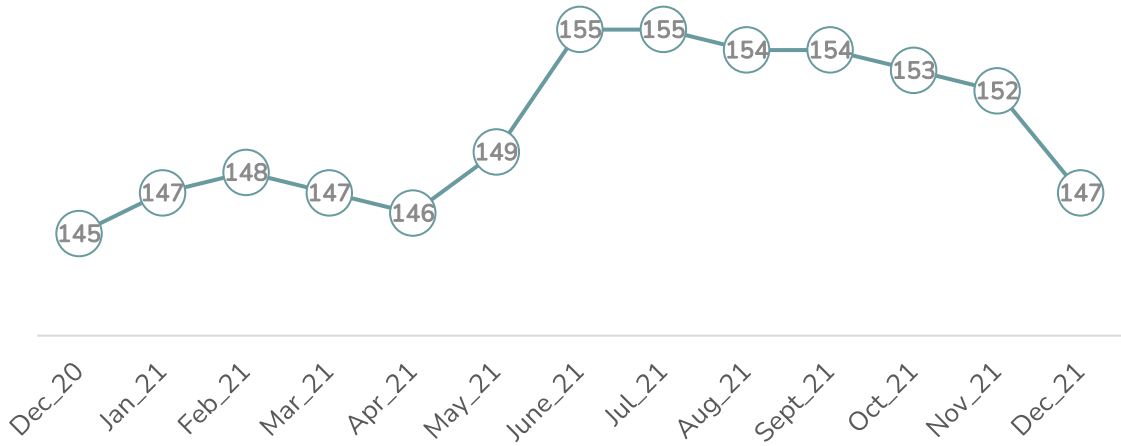
Number of Active Regulated Midwives



Statistics

Registration

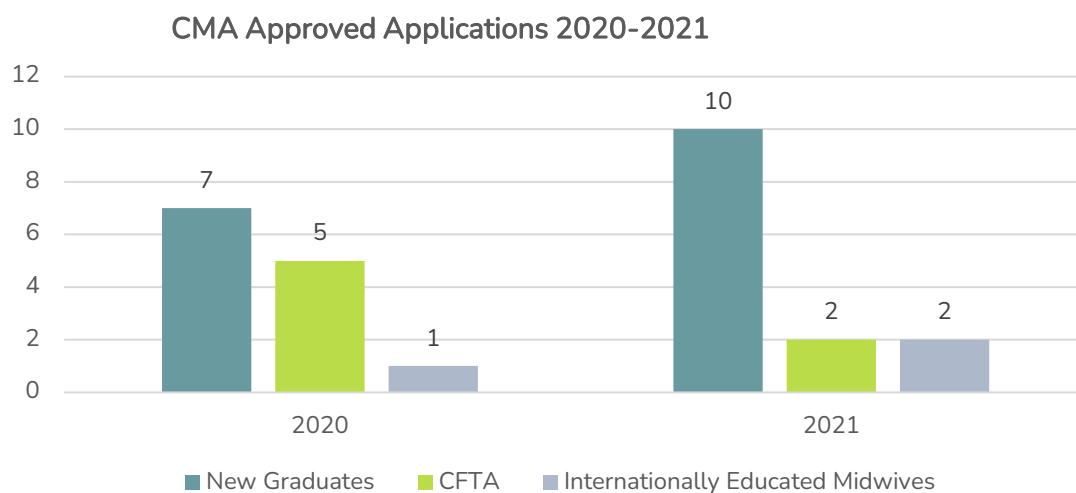
CMA ACTIVE REGISTERED MIDWIVES 2020 - 2021



CMA Registrants 2018 - 2021

	2018	2019	2020	2021
General Registrants	115	122	135	136
General Registrants New Registrants	15	15	8	10
Provisional Registrants	1	2	1	1
Courtesy Registrants	1	0	0	0
Total Active	132	139	144	147
Inactive	11	30	34	28
Students	24	32	35	40
Total Registered	167	201	213	215

Registration



CMA Applications Received for Registration

	2018	2019	2020	2021
New Graduates	13	12	7	11
CFTA	3	4	5	4
Internationally Educated Midwives	4	9	0	5
Total	20	25	12	20

Complaints Investigations & Resolutions

The CMA is committed to protecting the public through managing, investigating and resolving complaints about a Registered Midwife. When a complaint is formally received, the Complaints Director is responsible for reviewing the complaint and following the discipline process outlined in the HPA.

These steps include:

- Dismissal of the complaint.
- Informal resolution.
- Conducting of an investigation.

Following an investigation, a complaint can be:

- Dismissed
- Formal resolution / agreement of the complaint or
- Referred to a Hearing Tribunal

Complaints alleging sexual abuse or sexual misconduct

As of April 1, 2019, all health profession regulators are required to report on complaints alleging sexual abuse or sexual misconduct. CMA has established a patient relations program for patients who come forward with sexual abuse or sexual misconduct complaints by offering counselling support to patients. In 2021 we received one complaint about sexual abuse / sexual misconduct, which is currently in the investigative stage.

Summary of Activities during 2021

The Complaints Director has participated in conferences, workshops, working groups and committees through Zoom and taking online courses focusing on all aspects of the *Health Professions Act* Part 4 – Professional Conduct. Under HPA Part 3.1 no inspections were conducted in 2021.

Number of Complaints Received for 2021

This year the College has received seven additional complaints from Jan 1- Dec 31, 2021, making it 18 complaints since we became part of the HPA. Out of 18 complaints 9 are still active.

Complaints Investigations & Resolutions *Health Disciplines Act (HDA)*

Total Number of Complaints - *HDA*

	2018	2019	2020	2021
Files open Jan 1	10	16	9	5
New Files (Jan 1-Dec 31)	6	0	0	0
Files Closed	3	7	4	1
Files still open Dec 31	16	9	5	4

Status of Complaints - *HDA*

	2018	2019	2020	2021
Dismissed	0	3	0	0
Referred to Practice Review	6	0	3	2
Referred to Investigation	8	5	0	0
Proceeded to Hearing	2	1	3	3
TOTAL	16	9	6	5

Statistics

Complaints Investigations & Resolutions *Health Professions Act (HPA)*

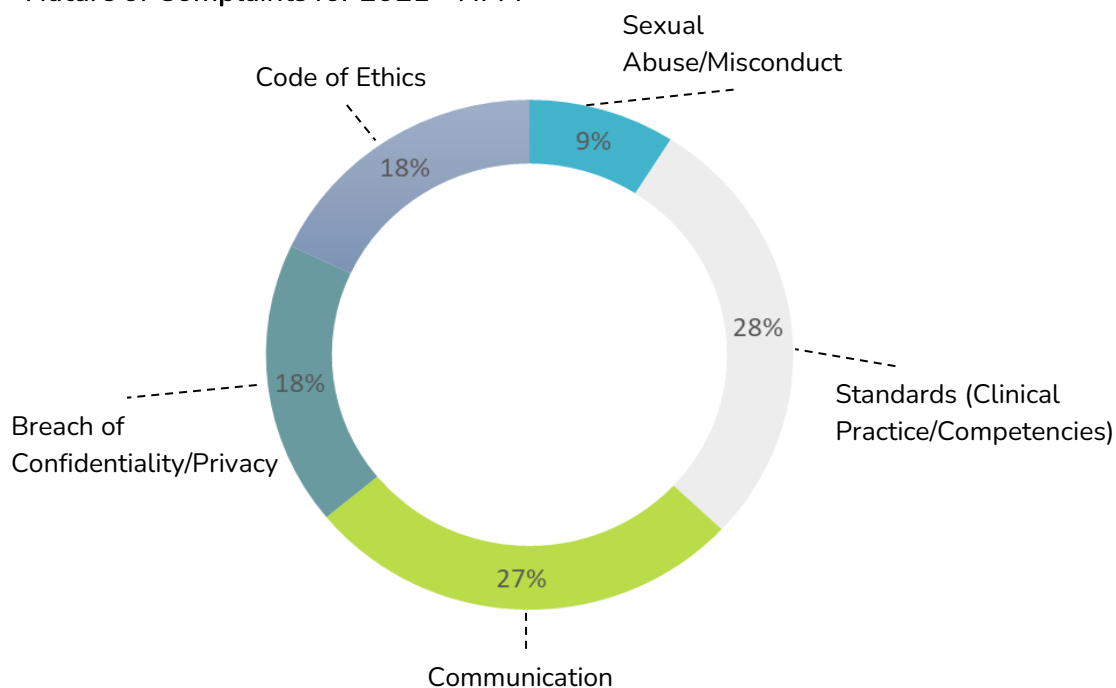
Sources of Complaints Received for 2021 - HPA

Public	6
Midwife	1
Total	7

Disposition of Complaints for 2021 - HPA

Completed - Closed	1
Under Investigation	6

Nature of Complaints for 2021 - HPA



Statistics

Complaints Investigations & Resolutions Health Professions Act (HPA)

Total Number of Complaints - HPA

2019	8
2020	3
2021	7

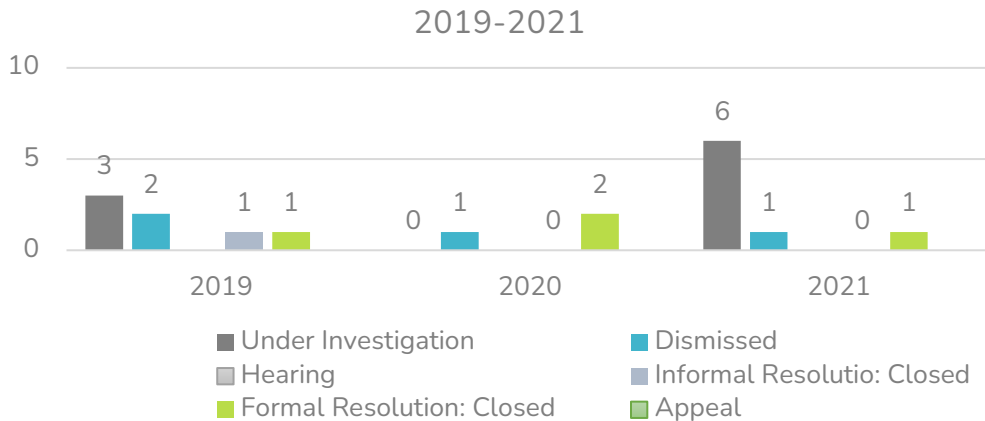
Sources of Complaints - HPA

	Public	AHS *	Other **	Total
2019	4	3	1	8
2020	3	0	0	3
2021	6	0	1	7
Total	13	3	2	18

*AHS – refers to other Health care providers

** Other – refers to Midwives, College Council or Staff

Status of Complaints - HPA



Status of Complaints - HPA

	Under Investigation	Informal Resolution-Closed	Dismissed	Formal Resolution - Closed	Hearing	Appeal	Total
2019	3	1	2	1	0	0	7
2020	0	0	1	2	0	0	3
2021	6	0	1	1	0	0	8
Total	9	1	4	4	0	0	18

Statistics

Complaints Investigations & Resolutions *Health Professions Act (HPA)*

Status – Years of Practice - HPA

	0 – 5 Years	6 – 10 Years	11 – 15 Years	16+ Years	Total
2019	5	0	1	1	7
2020	0	1	1	0	2
2021	8*	0	1	0	9

Most complaints received have been towards midwives with less than 6 years' experience. The college is also looking at strategies to help reduce the amount of complaints. This includes:



SKILL TRAINING



EDUCATION



COURSES/READING



HIROC – REVIEWING RISK AND LOOKING AT REFERENCE SHEETS



INTERPROFESSIONAL vs INTRA-PROFESSIONAL COMMUNICATION

Our Team

CMA Council – Registered Midwives



Cassie Evans
Past President



Tiffany Harrison
President



Marianne King
Vice-President



Kayla Blinkhorn



Jeannette Page



Joy Maxwell

CMA Public Members



David Crocker



Cathy Cornfield



Chelsey Cabaj



Melanie Bekevich

CMA Staff



Sharon Prusky
Registrar/Executive Director



Juliana Cunha
Deputy Registrar/Hearing Dir.



Shireen Mathew
Finance Director/Admin Assist.



Theresa Barrett
Complaints Director



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