

CRNA College of Registered
Nurses of Alberta

2022-2023

Annual Report

DATA DATED OCT. 1, 2023

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Year in Review



Justin Burkett, MN, RN
Council Chair



Joy Peacock BSN, MSc, RN
CEO & Registrar

A Word From the Council Chair and CEO & Registrar

We are pleased to present the College of Registered Nurses of Alberta's (CRNA) 2022-2023 Annual Report. Throughout the year, the CRNA continued its focus on using a Right-touch approach to resolve challenges, make decisions and regulate the profession in the publics' interest.

This Right-touch approach saw the organization advance ground-breaking changes for qualified internationally educated nurses (IENs) wishing to become registered nurses (RNs) in Alberta. On April 4, 2023, the CRNA implemented new policies with the goals of reducing barriers and giving applicants more options and quicker pathways to apply to become registered nurses in Alberta.

- The pathway for IENs is called substantial equivalence. Substantial equivalence applicants are expected to meet the same ten core registration requirements as new Canadian graduates and Canadian transfers.
- The new processes and options for IENs make applying to become a registered nurse in Alberta more predictable and transparent. The new process is also less costly to applicants and quicker.
- By leveraging our organization's technological expertise, IEN applicants are able to complete and submit their applications online using College Connect, anytime, anywhere and from any device.

The CRNA also furthered its commitment to Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility (IDEA) by starting work on the development of a guiding IDEA strategy, forging strong relationships with health system and community partners, and by enhancing the organization's awareness and skills to be able to use diverse, inclusive and culturally appropriate approaches to deliver on our regulatory mandate and responsibilities.

The CRNA continued to advance its work on the development of a Performance Measurement Program. The program will enable us to better determine the organization's effectiveness and efficiency in regulatory governance and operations in achieving our regulatory mandate.

The CRNA also worked closely with other provincial and territorial regulatory bodies across Canada to commence development on innovative approaches to reduce barriers for RNs and NPs that seek to practice in multiple Canadian jurisdictions. The collaborative efforts with provincial and territorial regulatory bodies underscore the CRNA's dedication to fostering a Right-touch approach to nursing regulation, ensuring that the highest standards of care are accessible across all Canadian jurisdictions.

On behalf of Council and the organization, we are pleased to share the work that has been accomplished and we hope you enjoy learning about the progress we made throughout the year.

About the CRNA's Council and Committees

Council and committee members play an important role in fulfilling the CRNA's mandate of regulating in the public interest. Council appoints members of the public and registrant members to its governance and regulatory committees.

Our governance committees, established through our bylaws and governance policies, include:

- Finance and Audit Committee
- Leadership Review and Governance Committee
- Nominating Committee
- Pension Compliance Committee

Our regulatory committees, established under the HPA, the *Registered Nurses Profession Regulation (Regulation)*, and our bylaws and governance policies, include:

- Appeals Committee
- Competence Committee
- Complaint Review Committees
- Hearing Tribunals
- Registration Committee
- Registration Review Committee

Nursing Education Program Approval Committee

On Sept. 22, 2023, the CRNA's Council made the decision to revise the nursing education program approval framework.

Effective Sept. 29, 2023, the College returned the program approval decision-making authority to Council, authorized under *Section 3(1) of the Health Professions Act*. This change is part of the College's commitment to enhance the effectiveness of the CRNA's mandate as a Right-touch regulator and to improve the public's confidence in regulatory processes.

As a result of this decision, current nursing education approval committee (NEPAC) appointments have been rescinded. We are grateful for the service that NEPAC members have made over many years in the service of nursing education in Alberta.

The CRNA is a regulatory college under the *Health Professions Act (HPA)*.

We regulate professionals using the following titles identified in the HPA:

- Registered nurse (RN)
- Certified graduate nurse (CGN)
- Nurse practitioner (NP)
- Graduate nurse (GN)
- Graduate nurse practitioner (GNP)

Finances

In 2022-2023 the focus on operational and capital spending continued to be on the business transformation and innovation that is necessary to keep pace with the rapidly changing regulatory and economic environments, including:

- Ongoing investment in our information and technology infrastructure, to enable the College to undertake transformative registration practices and provide better service to our registrants and applicants.
- Continued focus on performance, process improvements, risk management and business transformation.
- Responsible planning and allocation of resources to ensure fiscal responsibility to our registrants and for the public interest.

The 2022-2023 financial statements support that the College is in, and maintained a healthy financial position as monitored by the College's financial health metrics. The College's financial reporting also indicates that capital spending is in alignment with the capital plan.

Transforming Nursing Regulation in Alberta

Registered nurse applicants to the CRNA apply by following one of three main pathways:

Initial Registration (Canadian Post-secondary Graduates)

Initial registration applications are for registered nurse applicants who are graduates of Canadian nursing programs that have never been registered anywhere.

Equivalent Jurisdiction Registered Nurse (RN) Applicants

Equivalent jurisdiction applications are for registered nurses who are already registered in another Canadian jurisdiction.

Substantial Equivalence Registered Nurse Applicants

Sometimes referred to as IENs, substantial equivalence applications are for registered nurses educated outside of Canada, without prior Canadian registration.

The changes that the CRNA made to the Substantial Equivalence pathway include:

Utilizing the NCLEX-RN as a Benchmark for Competency

The National Council Licensure Examination - Registered Nurse (NCLEX-RN) is an internationally recognized entrance exam that all recent Alberta graduates already need to successfully complete to become a registered nurse.

Applicants can now meet the competence requirement by demonstrating successful completion of the NCLEX-RN if they:

- Have registration in any global jurisdiction and have already passed the NCLEX-RN.
- Have registration in one of nine international jurisdictions and request to write the NCLEX-RN with the CRNA. The nursing jurisdictions are the Philippines, India, the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, Nigeria, Jamaica, New Zealand and Ireland. These jurisdictions represent 94 per cent of IEN applicants from the last five years.
- Verify they have an equivalent education from any jurisdiction and request to write the NCLEX-RN with the CRNA.

Allowing for Alternate Methods of Providing Education Credential Assessments

Applicants can now provide the CRNA with their education credential assessments directly from one of five approved credentialing assessment agencies - the same ones that are used during immigration. This saves applicants time and money by not requiring them to undergo another third-party assessment.

Removing Barriers for Meeting the Currency Requirement

Some applicants may have been in Canada for a period of time and need help to meet the currency of practice requirement or they may not be currently registered. This group can combine their verification of equivalent education with the Alberta Registered Nurses Assessment Program (ARNAP) to meet the requirement. Applicants who complete the ARNAP can apply for a provisional permit until they pass the NCLEX-RN.

Supporting the Nursing Workforce

Building Partnerships

Supervised Practice Program (SPP)

The supervised practice program was launched in July of 2023 to support individuals aspiring to become registered nurses (RNs) in Alberta.

Individuals who meet all the registration requirements except for currency of practice (practice hours) can participate. Participants in the program will receive an RN permit restricted to being under supervision for 150 hours. Once they complete the program and receive successful preceptor sign-off, the CRNA will remove the restriction, and the nurse can work anywhere in Alberta.

By offering this program as an option, the CRNA is making it easier and more affordable for applicants to gain currency of practice when this is the only barrier remaining in their application. This program intends to support competent RNs to enter the workforce quickly.

Helping Applicants

Registrant Navigator Service

Newly introduced in 2023, our registrant navigator service is a free resource for potential applicants of the CRNA. The College's registrant navigators can advise on the most suitable pathways for applicants to apply through and provide information on how to best supply supporting evidence for their applications.

The multilingual registrant navigator team can provide service in English, French, Punjabi, Tagalog, Tagalog-Ilocano, Hindi, Gujarati, Marathi, Marwadi, Konkani and Spanish.

During the 2022-2023 practice year, this service received over 7,800 requests.

Excellence in Customer Service

Leveraging People and Technology

Registrants experienced quicker application processing times and spent less time navigating our online portal than in previous years. Statistics show that over half of the applications (including permit renewals) took less than half an hour to complete.

To accommodate the needs of registrants, the customer service team extended its hours of operation, even opening on strategic weekends and answering a staggering 26,659 phone calls.

There was also a reduction in the number of walk-ins compared to last year, indicating that registrants were more prepared, aware of the renewal process requirements, and more comfortable using College Connect.

Council Members

The CRNA's Council is made up of eight registrant members and eight members of the public.

Registrant members are selected based on a rigorous competency-based assessment. Public members are appointed by the Government of Alberta to help ensure a balanced perspective on Council.

The CRNA expresses gratitude and commends our Council members for their unwavering commitment and dedication to regulating the nursing profession in the public's best interest.

In 2022-2023, the CRNA bade farewell to three registrant Council members whose terms of office expired on Sept. 30, 2023 — Ashley Woytuik, Ashna Rawji and Derrick Cleaver. Council also said good-bye to public member of Council, Jill Taylor, who resigned on Sept. 19, 2023, to explore new opportunities.

The CRNA is grateful for the leadership and dedication they demonstrated during their terms on Council.

Registrant Members



Justin Burkett
Council Chair



Ashley Woytuik
Councillor



Ashna Rawji
Councillor



Derrick Cleaver
Councillor



Graham Newton
Councillor



Jennifer Eyford
Councillor



Nicole Letourneau
Councillor



Suzanna Carl
Councillor

Public Members



Bonnie Sansregret
Councillor



Jill Taylor
Councillor



Kim Ewasechko
Councillor



Peter Obiefuna
Councillor



Scott Garner
Councillor



Steven Armstrong
Councillor



Susan Roskey
Councillor

Commitment to Diversity

The CRNA is committed to countering racism and discrimination and embedding inclusion, diversity, equity and accessibility (IDEA) into all aspects of its work. In 2022-2023, the CRNA actioned a multi-pronged approach to fulfill this commitment.

IDEA

The CRNA is committed to building relationships with external partners and communities to promote inclusion, diversity, equity, and accessibility (IDEA). We have been developing several new relationships with various collaborators, including Indigenous communities, the Canadian Black Nurses Alliance, the Philippine Canadian Nurses Association and 2SLGBTQ+ leaders.

Several CRNA representatives attended an event at Blue Quills University to learn and unlearn from Indigenous experts, Elders and community members about Residential Schools and Indigenous culture. This opportunity also provided the CRNA with information and ideas the College can use to integrate Indigenous practices into the College's complaint investigation processes.

In the last fiscal year, the CRNA also started work on a strategy to guide its IDEA work and focus its efforts to counter racism and discrimination. The College is aiming to have the strategy approved and in effect in the 2023-2024 fiscal year. Investing in our people to develop their knowledge and participate in IDEA learning opportunities remains a priority.

Indigenous Health

We at the CRNA, take health of Indigenous Peoples seriously. The *Truth and Reconciliation: Calls to Action Report* came out in 2015. There are five calls to action regarding health and we have been addressing: 18, 23 iii and 24. We are also addressing the *Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women's Calls to Justice*.

Although the *Calls to Justice* are directly called to the governments, we know we can contribute to changing our methods to provide equity in care provided for Indigenous Peoples.

All people deserve to be treated with respect and dignity when receiving care.

"18. We call upon the federal, provincial, territorial, and Aboriginal governments to acknowledge that the current state of Aboriginal health in Canada is a direct result of previous Canadian government policies, including residential schools, and to recognize and implement the health-care rights of Aboriginal people as identified in international law, constitutional law, and under the Treaties.

23. We call upon all levels of government to:
iii. Provide cultural competency training for all healthcare professionals.

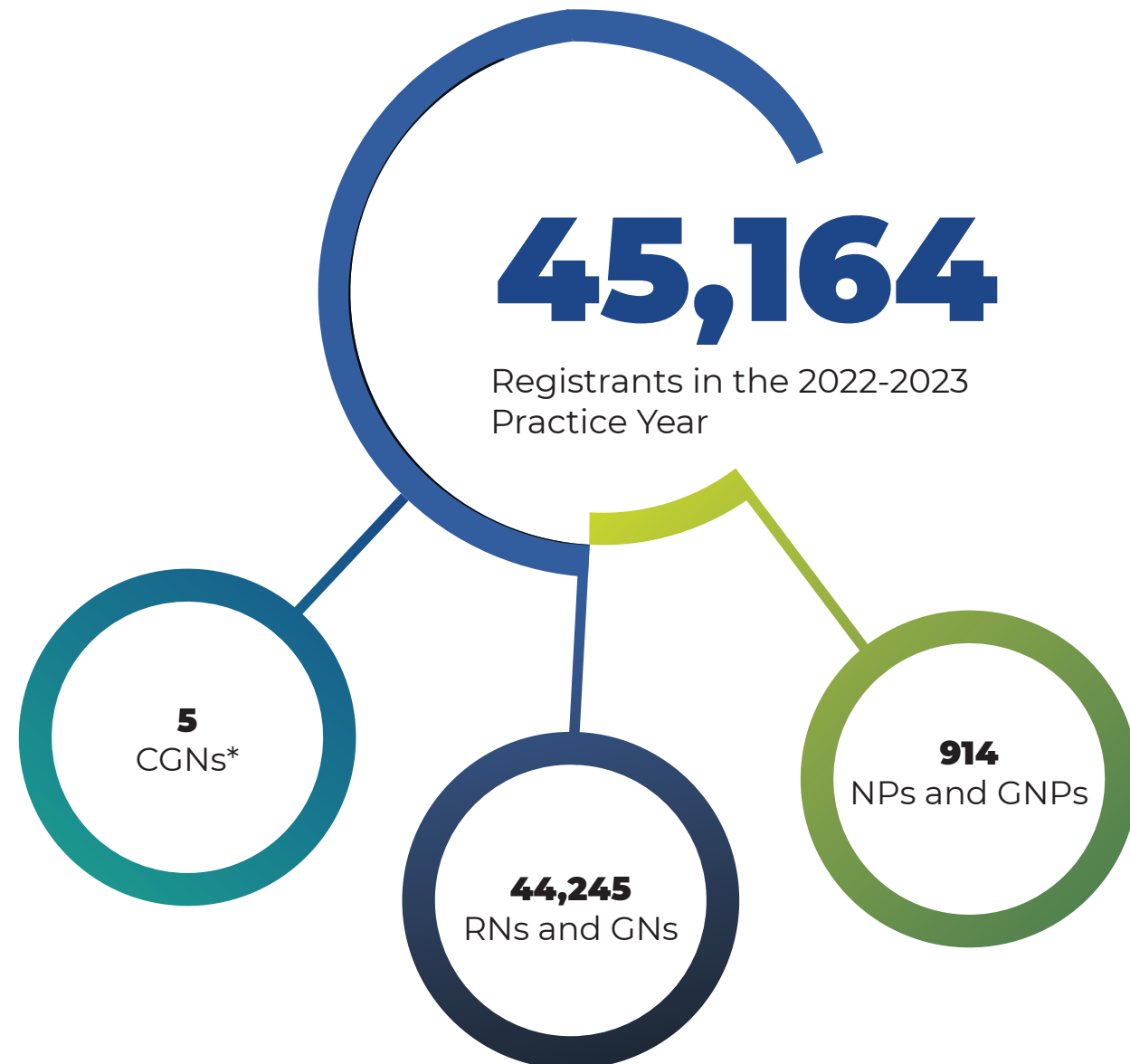
24. We call upon medical and nursing schools in Canada to require all students to take a course dealing with Aboriginal health issues, including the history and legacy of residential schools, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Treaties and Aboriginal rights, and Indigenous teachings and practices. This will require skills-based training in intercultural competency, conflict resolution, human rights, and anti-racism."

—Truth and Reconciliation: Calls to Action

We have updated our *Stronger Together: Learning Through Indigenous Perspectives* course. Chapter 1 now addresses nurses' participation in Canada's history. Although the course is not mandatory for members to take, it is a recommended learning opportunity.

We continue to offer cultural professional development sessions to support and educate staff on historical contexts and contemporary issues.

Registrant Data



-  **38** | courtesy registrants
-  **21** | emergency subcategory
-  **2** | virtual care subcategory
-  **2,146** | non-practising class

* Certified graduate nurse (CGN) is a legacy title for individuals who graduated prior to 1983 and did not write the registration exam after its introduction. No new nurses can be registered in this category as per legislation.

Applications

9,816 | new applications

6,680 | new permits

872 | permits not renewed

849 | permits cancelled for non-renewal*

0 | permits denied

**As per data collected Dec. 1, 2023*

Complaints

In the 2022-2023 practice year, the CRNA received **317** complaints.

Source

of the Complaint



Employer | **144**

Coworker | **60**

Public/Family | **58**

Patient | **36**

Complaints Director | **12**

Self-report | **5**

Other Professional Body | **2**

Hearing Tribunal | **0**

Nature

of the Complaint



Skills/Practice/Knowledge | **179**

Coworker Abuse/Harassment | **41**

Privacy Breaches | **17**

Theft | **16**

Other | **15**

Substance Misuse | **14**

Patient Abuse | **9**

Fitness to Practise | **8**

Sexual Abuse and Misconduct Not Toward Patients | **7**

Boundary /Ethical Issues | **6**

Sexual Abuse and Misconduct Towards Patients | **4**

Attendance/Employer Matters | **1**

Regulatory Response

Cases Resolved in the 2022-2023 Practice Year

Cases included in these counts may have carried over from previous practice years.

Investigations



Dismissed After Investigation | **64**

Investigations in Progress | **52**

Investigations Completed | **35**

Dismissed Prior to Investigation | **4**

Resolutions

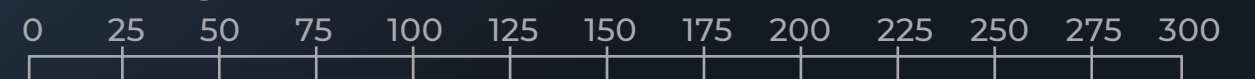


Resolved via expedited/alternative resolution (EAR) | **261**

Cases Sent to Complaint Review Committee | **52**

Withdrawn | **34**

Hearings



Hearings Held | **6**

Referred to Hearing | **2**

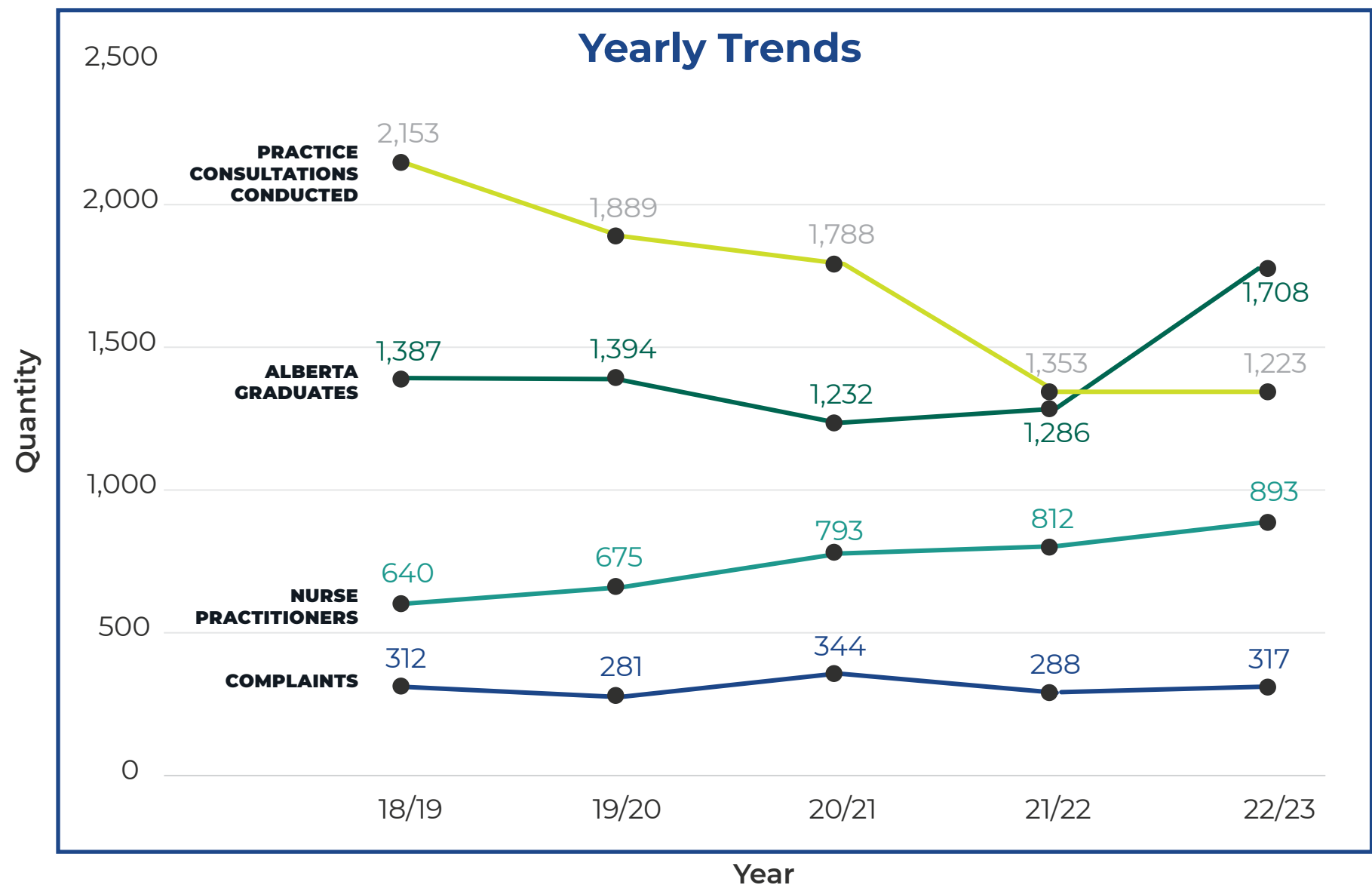
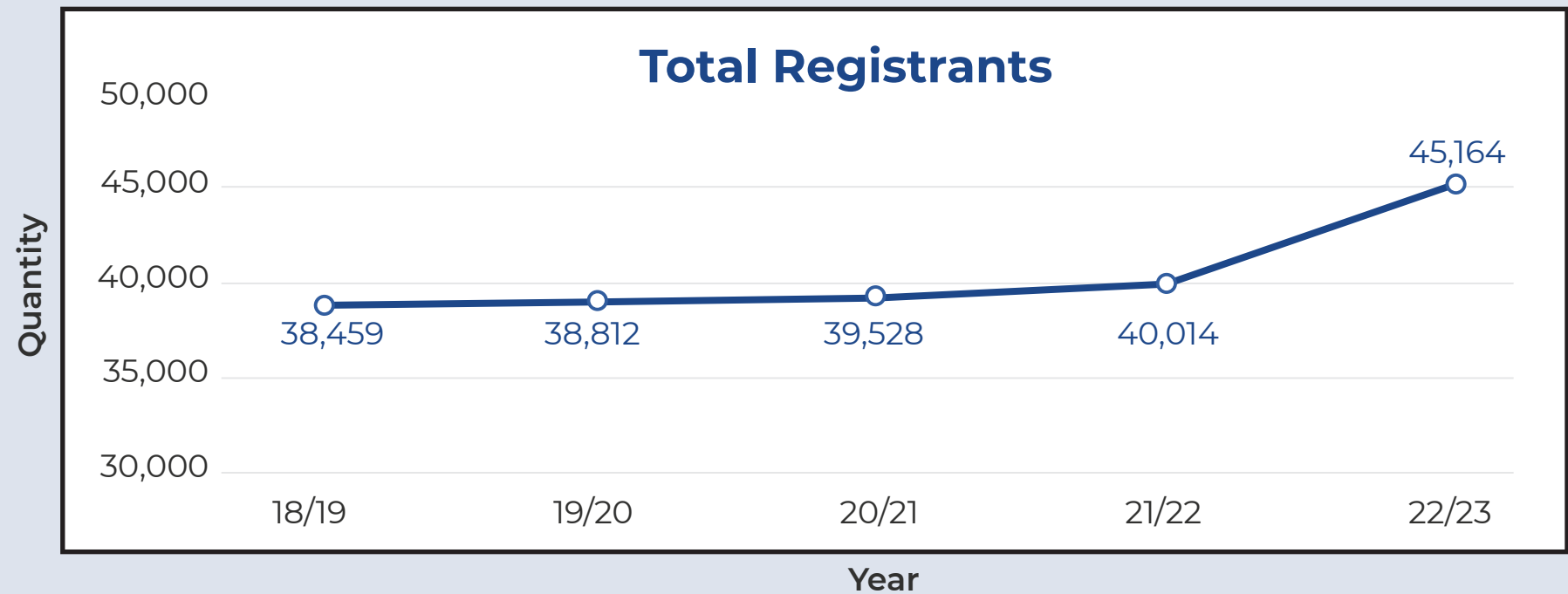
Hearings Closed to the Public | **2**

Appeals | **0**

Yearly Trends

The introduction of the new substantial equivalence pathway resulted in a significant increase in both new applications and permits issued during the 2022-2023 practice year. There was also a notable increase in nurse practitioners and new Alberta graduates registered with the CRNA.

The number of practice consultations conducted and complaints received remained consistent with previous reporting periods.



Regulatory Highlights

The CRNA ensures that Albertans are protected and that its registrants meet high standards of competence and professionalism through various initiatives and programs as required by the *Health Professions Act*.

Complaints Disposition

This year's distribution of complaints is consistent with previous years. To expedite complaint resolution, the College has continued to use complaint resolution agreements, including disciplinary ones.

By using complaint resolution agreements, the College can resolve complaints more efficiently and effectively, while ensuring that the public is protected.

Sexual Abuse/Misconduct

During the 2022-2023 reporting period, the College received 11 complaints where the conduct was characterized as sexual abuse or sexual misconduct by complainants who were patients, family of patients or coworkers.

The course *Protecting Patients from Sexual Abuse and Misconduct* continues to be readily available to all registrants.

Patient Relations Program

The patient relations program exists to secure funding for therapy or counseling services to support patients with complaints of sexual abuse or misconduct.

There have been no modifications to our patient relations program.

Registration Practices Innovation

The CRNA continues to leverage Right-touch regulation principles in our registration practices.

Right-touch regulation means understanding the problem before jumping to a solution and making sure the level of regulation is proportionate to the level of risk to the public.

By applying these principles we are ensuring that our registrants receive consistent and appropriate responses from the College.

Continuing Competence Program

The *Continuing Competence Program Manual* was developed in response to requirements outlined in the *Health Statutes Amendment Act, 2020 (No. 2)* (“Bill 46”). This consolidated document contains additional policies and further details related to registrants’ participation in the continuing competence program and is currently available to registrants and the public upon request.

In preparation for the 2023-2024 renewal period, College staff developed additional resources for registrants as part of their efforts to improve the continuing competence program, particularly to support registrants in their self-directed professional development. These resources supported registrants’ collection of constructive feedback and assessment of their nursing practice against the amended practice standards indicators. Additionally, information on College Connect was reviewed and updated to align with the recent *Continuing Competence Standards (2022)*, established in response to Bill 46.

Standards of Practice

Revisions to current CRNA standards included a full review of the *Documentation Standards, Practice Standards for Registrants* and *Scope of Practice for Nurse Practitioners* to ensure currency and relevancy to the needs of the public, health system and the profession.

The CRNA’s standards can be found on our website: nurses.ab.ca

Amendments to the HPA under the *Health Professions (Protecting Women and Girls) Amendment Act, 2022 (Bill 10)* required all health profession regulatory colleges to develop standards of practice respecting female genital mutilation, as a result we revised our *Practice Standards for Registrants* to comply with the legislative requirement. The *Nursing Education Program Approval Standards* were also revised to enhance clarity and alignment with the principles of Right-touch regulation.

Standards of Practice Con’t

To comply with the legislative changes required under the *Health Statutes Amendment Act, 2020 (No. 2) (Bill 46)* revisions were made to existing standards as well as the development of the new *Continuing Competence Standards*.

In 2022-2023, we developed one new standard, revised the content of three existing standards, and updated 14 standards based on legislative changes.

New

- *Continuing Competence Standards*

Revised Content

- *Documentation Standards*
- *Practice Standards for Registrants*
- *Scope of Practice for Nurse Practitioners*

Updated to Align with Bill 46

- *Advertising Standards*
- *Cannabis for Medical Purposes: Standards for Nurse Practitioners*
- *Competencies for Registered Nurse Prescribing Schedule 1 Drugs and Ordering Diagnostic Tests*
- *Complementary and Alternative Health Care and Natural Health Products Standards*
- *Infection Prevention and Control Standards*
- *Nursing Education Program Approval Standards*
- *Prescribing Standards for Nurse Practitioners*
- *Privacy and Management of Health Information Standards*
- *Protection of Patients from Sexual Abuse and Sexual Misconduct Standards*
- *Registered Nurse Prescribing Schedule 1 Drugs and Ordering Diagnostic Tests: Requirements and Standards*
- *Restricted Activities Standards*
- *Scope of Practice for Registered Nurses*
- *Supervision Standards*
- *Use of Title Standards*

No standards of practice were withdrawn.

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