

Committed to Ethical and Professional Care



Lise Betteridge, MSW, RSW

Registrar

Ontario College of Social
Workers and Social Service
Workers

Seniors in long-term care, survivors of trauma and children in foster care - while their needs might be quite different, all benefit when they receive care and services from regulated professionals. The Ontario College of Social Workers and Social Service Workers (the College) ensures those seeking help get what they need.

Established in 2000 after the Province passed the *Social Work and Social Service Work Act*, the College's mandate is to serve and protect the public interest. It does just that, in several ways:

1. With its registration requirements

As a provincial regulatory body, the College sets strict entry-to-practice and academic requirements that applicants must meet to qualify for registration. Individuals cannot use the protected title of "social worker/registered social worker" or "social service worker/

registered social service worker" or present themselves as such without being registered with the College. Registration assures the public that the social workers and social service workers they rely on are professional, qualified and accountable.

2. Through its Online Register

Ontario law mandates that the College maintain an online register listing social workers' and social service workers' registration status, employment information and history of disciplinary action, if any (as well as other relevant information). "The Online Register is an invaluable resource that enables anyone to check the status of an individual who has represented themselves as a social worker or social service worker," explains the College's Registrar, Lise Betteridge.

3. By implementing complaints and discipline processes

As part of its public protection mandate, the College has rigorous complaints and discipline processes. By law, the College is required to have a formal complaints process, which enables members of the public who receive social work or social service work services to submit complaints against members of the College. "The College considers and investigates reports and complaints that we receive about alleged misconduct of our members," notes Betteridge. Disciplinary steps are taken when necessary and posted publicly on the College's website. Betteridge urges employers to check the Online Register before hiring a social worker or social service worker. "By doing so, you are establishing important



safeguards for your organization and for the clients you serve."

4. By requiring ongoing professional development

The College's Continuing Competence Program (CCP) ensures that social workers and social service workers are qualified, continually enhance their knowledge and remain up to date in their practice. The CCP requires members to engage in self-assessment and goal-setting, ensuring they continue to develop their professional expertise

throughout their careers.

Everything the College does comes down to protecting the public from unqualified, incompetent and unfit practitioners. "Most of those who seek the services of social workers and social service workers are at a vulnerable point in their lives and likely dealing with a number of issues," says Betteridge. "They deserve to know they're protected. That's why we're here."

Randi Druzin

WHAT'S IN A NAME? PROTECTION FOR YOU. MAKE SURE YOUR SOCIAL WORKER/SOCIAL SERVICE WORKER'S NAME IS ON THE ONLINE REGISTER.

Registered social workers (RSWs) and registered social service workers (RSSWs) are committed to delivering **professional, ethical, qualified** and **accountable** care and services when you need them. But how can you confirm that they are registered with the College? **Visit the College's website to check: ocswssw.org**



Ontario College of
Social Workers and
Social Service Workers

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MEMBERS CAN USE
THE PROTECTED TITLES
OR HOLD THEMSELVES
OUT AS A SOCIAL
WORKER OR SOCIAL
SERVICE WORKER
IN ONTARIO.

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