

Canadian Osteopathic Association

Osteopathic Practice in Canada

Updated December 2016

Introduction:

Osteopathic Medicine (Osteopathy) has a long history in Canada, with the appearance of the first Canadian DO in 1899. The Ontario Osteopathic Association was chartered in 1901, the Western Canada Osteopathic Association in 1923, and the Canadian Osteopathic Association in 1926.

In Canada, as in the United States, there is no national medical license. Each province is free to establish its own standards for the registration of physicians, and for recognizing the equivalency of foreign-issued diplomas. In November of 2009, the Federation of Medical Regulatory Authorities of Canada approved the 'FMRAC Agreement on National Standards' which recognizes the osteopathic medical degree from a medical school accredited by the American Osteopathic Association Commission on Osteopathic College Accreditation (COCA) as a medical degree recognized by all regulatory authorities in Canada to register for medical practice.

National Medical Organizations of Importance to D.O.'s:

Before reviewing the provincial situation, it is helpful to briefly review those national organizations that are of primary importance to osteopathic physicians in Canada.

1. **Medical Council of Canada (MCC)**
The MCC is primarily responsible for establishing and maintaining a certification process that in theory, should allow inter-provincial reciprocity of accredited physicians. All Canadian medical school graduates complete the two part MCC qualifying examination. In this regard, it has a role similar to the USMLE or COMLEX process. American-trained D.O.'s have had access to the MCC examinations since 1991. MCC certification is a requirement for licensure in many, but not all provinces. Some provinces require that all foreign trained physicians write these examinations, including American trained M.D.'s. However, COMLEX and USMLE may be accepted in lieu of the MCC examinations for medical registration in some provinces.
2. **College of Family Physicians of Canada (CFPC)**
The CFPC is responsible for accrediting family medicine residencies in Canada, and certifying graduates of Canadian family medicine residency programs through an examination process. American-trained D.O.'s have completed family medicine residencies in Canada and achieved CFPC certification (CCFP). Graduates of American osteopathic medical schools are eligible to apply for family medicine residency programs in most jurisdictions in Canada. Additionally, US graduates of ACGME accredited family medicine residency programs who hold ABFM certification are now eligible for CFPC certification through reciprocity without additional examinations.

3. Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada (RCPSC)
The Royal College has the same role for all other specialists that the CFPC has for family physicians. In 2005 the Royal College granted recognition to the American osteopathic medical degree. American trained D.O.'s are now eligible to apply for specialty medical residency programs in most Canada residency programs. The Royal College does not have a role in accrediting non-Canadian residency programs. Whether a specialist applicant requires Royal College certification for practice or other foreign accreditation (eg ACGME or AOA) would be acceptable for registration is a provincial matter as well as a matter of local hospital regulations.

Provincial Review:

In Canada, the role of the State Medical Board is approximated by the provincial "College of Physicians and Surgeons", which is responsible for physician registration and discipline. The standards for physician registration are established by the provincial ministry of health, but with significant influence from the respective provincial College. As mentioned previously, in November of 2009, the Federation of Medical Regulatory Authorities of Canada adopted an 'Agreement on National Standards' which includes the US osteopathic Medical degree conferred by a school accredited by COCA as meeting the medical education standard for full licensure in all provinces of Canada.

From West to East, the provinces are:

British Columbia:

There are two pathways for D.O. registration in British Columbia. The first recognizes the COMLEX and AOA certified post-graduate training. The D.O. has a limited license. This pathway is intended for those with a practice focus in musculoskeletal medicine and OMT, and excludes the practice of obstetrics or surgery. The second pathway requires completion of Canadian or ACGME residency training, and certification with the CFPC or the RCPSC. The D.O. will then receive an unrestricted license. USMLE or COMLEX may be accepted in lieu of the MCC exams.

Alberta:

The D.O. candidate is required to complete the MCC examinations, AOA certified residencies are recognized. USMLE or COMLEX may be accepted as an alternative to the MCC examinations.

Saskatchewan:

As of 2016, US graduates of COCA accredited osteopathic medical schools are eligible for full medical practice.

Manitoba:

As of 2002, American-trained D.O.'s are eligible for medical registration in Manitoba.

Ontario:

Since 2003, the College of Physicians and Surgeons have recognized the American DO degree as equivalent to that of an American MD. Additionally, the COMLEX examinations are recognized if performed after 2004 when the PE component was introduced with part II. The same criteria apply to the USMLE. ACGME accredited

residencies are recognized although AOA accredited residencies are not. Additionally, there is a “Practice Assessment” pathway for applicants with at least five years of clinical practice experience.

Quebec:

American-trained D.O.’s have been eligible for registration in Quebec for approximately 30 years, although the requirement that the candidate pass a French language proficiency examination has had a negative impact. Additionally, the Candidate must complete one year of post-graduate training in the province, although this can be at the fellowship level. MCC certification and Royal college certification are not necessary. Unfortunately, the title protection that exists for M.D.’s does not exist for D.O.’s with the result that the title use is not restricted in that province.

New Brunswick:

D.O.’s are eligible for full registration in New Brunswick. One pathway extends reciprocity to a D.O. with Maine licensure.

Nova Scotia:

As of 2002, full registration for D.O.’s is extended in the same way as for an American trained M.D.

Prince Edward Island:

As of 2016, full registration of D.O.'s is extended in the same way as for an American trained M.D.

Newfoundland:

As of 2011, full registration of D.O.'s is extended in the same way as for an American trained M.D.

Territories (Yukon, Northwest, Nunavut):

In most instances, the Territories will grant registration to any physician that qualifies for licensure in any other province.

Armed Services:

American-trained D.O.’s are eligible for service with the Canadian Armed Services, including scholarship opportunities, recruitment bonuses.

Disclaimer:

The information presented in this summary does not necessarily reflect the details of current registration requirements in any province. These requirements change with time, and full understanding of the current requirements require communication with the office of the Registrar of the College of Physicians and Surgeons for the province(s) of interest.