

Conference Update

Our 2009 conference was a great success. 130 Ontario members, guests and exhibitors were treated to an informative and insightful event. Our day started with a very lively panel discussion regarding the strategic tools required to advance the rehab profession. The panel included experts from key stakeholder groups. These included: government, law, agencies, the public, educators and the insurance industry. There were very different and constructive points of view presented from this diverse stakeholder group.

What seemed to be quite striking was the difference between services and funding available for vocational rehabilitation versus what is provided by the insurance industry.

Louise Russo, a victim of a violent crime, presented a very different and shocking account of how little help and resources were made available to her in her efforts to return to a life with potential and normalcy. This was most definitely an eye-opener not only to those who do not work in the vocational rehabilitation field, but also, even more so, for those of us who do.

The breakout sessions were equally as interesting, with a wide variety of speakers delivering informative and educational lectures.

AGM: A Year in Review

Evie Cowitz presented the various committee reports outlining their goals and accomplishments for the year. Overall there had been success in all the major endeavors. Ontario completed and launched its new website, offered and delivered two successful education seminars, and made significant

advancements in its regulatory efforts.

The Regulation Committee has worked hard to build awareness for vocational rehabilitation and the need for accredited professionals. They have become reacquainted with old friends and have established new relationships to build awareness and to advance the goals of the Society. We were very pleased to have many of these new acquaintances in attendance at our conference. We look forward to the continued advancement of these relationships and the potential they will bring to our membership.



The College

All regulated professionals have a College, which provides accreditation and ensures the consistency and competency of its professionals. When we originally presented this recommendation to our Board of Advisors they felt that it would be a strategic advantage if we had our College established and, if possible, up and running, as we progressed in our regulatory efforts. The recommendation of forming a College also received resounding support from members and non-member groups.

The primary goal in establishing the College is to protect the public interest from unqualified, incompetent or unfit practitioners. This will ensure

consistency and quality of professional standards, define the scope of practice and establish educational opportunities for professional advancement.

The Ontario College of Vocational Rehabilitation Professionals (CVRP) is self-regulating, which means that the profession governs itself through the College. It also means that every member is responsible for practicing in accordance with the standards of the profession and for ensuring they are current and competent throughout their career.

A framework has been developed to identify and organize the competencies the CVRP should assess. The framework and definitions of the four certificate (competency) categories are presented below. A detailed outline of the associated competencies for each certificate level will be provided at a later date.

- **Masters Certificate, Vocational Rehabilitation Professional**
- **Certified Rehabilitation Professional**
- **Certified Vocational Professional**
- **Certified Vocational and Claims Counsellor**

Establishing a set of professional standards, ongoing quality education and providing opportunities for each member to enhance and elevate their skills is key to the evolution of our profession. The College will facilitate access to educational activities and programs that will ensure that members' competency is current, and will provide additional educational opportunities to expand and enhance their levels of Practice. VRA Ontario is working with various educational institutions to establish educational opportunities and to provide a grid that will outline associated competencies.

Standards of Practice

The *Standards of Practice for the CVRP* provides a framework of principles that describes the knowledge, skills, and values inherent in Ontario's vocational rehab profession. They provide the guidelines for professional performance and are the rules or definition of what it means to provide competent services and high quality care consistent with established standards. These standards articulate the goals and aspirations of the profession and convey a collective vision of professionalism that guides the daily practices of members of the College. Some of these standards include but are not limited to: practicing in a manner consistent with the Code of Ethics, practicing in a manner consistent with common law and legislative requirements, maintaining clear, concise, accurate and timely documentation of the person's care, and recognizing limitations of one's own competence and seeking assistance when necessary.

Scope of Practice

The Scope of Practice identifies knowledge and skill required for the provision of effective Vocational Rehabilitation services to individuals with physical, mental, developmental, cognitive or other barriers that impede them from participating fully within society and the workplace.

The process of Vocational Rehabilitation involves communication, setting goals, advocacy, analytics, appraisals and evaluations, counselling and facilitation. The Scope of Practice includes a solid understanding of History and related Human Science.

Specialized Programs

CVRP is working hard to establish relationships with many educational institutions that will offer new and exciting programs. This will enable skill enhancement, development, and will elevate the quality of professional development.

By engaging in professional development, vocational rehabilitation professionals will see an immediate impact on the way they perform in the workplace. It is absolutely imperative for every professional to better him or herself. That is why the CVRP will offer courses and certificates to help vocational rehabilitation professionals perform at the highest level possible.

Veterans Affairs



On November 4, 2009, a team from our Regulation Committee, Naireen Lowe, Roselle Piccininni and Janice Ray, headed to Ottawa to meet with the Deputy Minister of Veterans

Affairs, Mme Suzanne Tining. Program Managers Chantal Basque and Bernard Butler attended via teleconference. The goal of the meeting was to discuss the regulatory efforts of the VRA Ontario Society and the establishment of our professional College. All the parties were extremely thrilled to hear about our efforts. They definitely support what we are doing and feel that the establishment of the College will provide them with a higher level of assurance with respect to the competency of the vocational rehabilitation professionals who will be working with Canadian veterans. Veterans Affairs will also provide supporting research to VRA. This is a vital component in all VRA efforts as it supports the work we do and our position and contribution in the overall rehabilitation of individuals who require help from a vocational rehabilitation professional.

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VRA Contact Information:

Tel: 613.507.5530
Toll-Free: 1.888.876.9992
Fax: 613.531.0626
Email: info@vracanada.com
Web: www.vracanada.com