

## WHAT IS AN INVESTIGATION?

An investigation is a formal process to determine whether a physician's conduct was unprofessional as defined by the *Health Professions Act* (HPA). An investigation can provide physicians with valuable feedback and an opportunity to make practice improvements, or it may result in discipline.

## WHEN AN INVESTIGATION WORKS BEST

We use investigations for complaints surrounding management of care, including when a complaint:

- extends over a long period of time (multiple visits),
- involves complex medical conditions or serious outcomes
- involves multiple physicians and/or multiple medical records
- is brought forward by a third party (e.g. Workers' Compensation Board, Protection for Persons in Care) OR
- when the complainant is not entitled to receive the patient's medical information, or is not willing to engage in CPSA's Resolve with Consent process.

Investigations are also mandatory for complaints involving serious allegations about competency issues, ethical issues, boundary violations, or disruptive or criminal behavior.

Investigations are  
a formal process  
**available under  
the HPA**

## HOW AN INVESTIGATION WORKS

CPSA's Complaints Director will choose to investigate a complaint when additional information is necessary to determine if there is any evidence of unprofessional conduct as defined by the HPA. Our investigation process is fair, consistent and open, and includes the following steps:

1. CPSA's Complaints Director investigates or appoints an investigator to look into matters further.
2. A CPSA complaint navigator will contact you, when possible, to clarify the issues and to determine your desired outcome.
3. A complaints inquiry coordinator will notify the physician in writing of the complaint, provide them a copy of your complaint letter and ask them to respond in writing. The coordinator will also write to others you identified as possibly having additional information relevant to your complaint.

4. The investigator will review all the collected information and, if necessary, clarify facts by:
  - requesting additional information,
  - meeting with and/or interviewing you
  - meeting with and or interviewing the physician
  - meeting with others who may have supporting information, and/or
  - sending the file out for an expert opinion.
5. The investigator will prepare an Investigation Report for the Complaints Director.
6. The Complaints Director will review the Investigation Report:
  - If there is no or insufficient evidence of unprofessional conduct, no further action is necessary and the complaint file is closed.
  - If the Investigation Report supports the allegation of unprofessional conduct, the Complaints Director will either:
    - a. Get your consent to work collaboratively with the physician to resolve the issues with education and/or assessment and peer review, OR
    - b. Refer the complaint to CPSA's Hearings Director for a hearing.

Our investigation process is **fair, consistent and open.**

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### Will CPSA contact me during the investigation?

- Yes, we will send you progress letters every six weeks.
- Your CPSA complaint navigator may also contact you to obtain clarification or more information concerning your complaint issues.
- The investigator assigned to your file will contact you to get additional information.

### Do I get to see the physician's response to CPSA?

No, information we collect for an investigation is not released to complainants. However, the investigator often quotes the physician's response and includes a summary of it in the Investigation Report.

### How will I know when the investigation is complete?

Your complaint navigator will contact you. We'll also send written confirmation.

### Will I know the outcome of the investigation?

Yes. The Complaints Director will send you a letter explaining the findings, the decision and next steps.

**Still have questions?** See more FAQs on our website at [cpsa.ca](https://cpsa.ca).