

nedic

National Eating Disorder Information Centre

www.nedic.ca

FILING A COMPLAINT ABOUT A HEALTHCARE PROVIDER In Québec

When seeking support for an eating disorder, you deserve to receive care that is appropriate, safe, and professional. If you have a concern about a healthcare provider with whom you have worked or are currently working, it is your right to make a complaint.

There are many different healthcare professionals from whom you may receive support during recovery. Some may be **regulated health professionals**, meaning that they are accountable to one of Québec's many regulatory orders. While some regulated health professionals work in **integrated health and social services centres or non-merged institutions**, others deliver their services through community agencies or private clinics.

There are also individuals providing eating disorder care who are **unregulated**. For example, in Québec, "recovery coach", "counsellor", or "child and youth worker" are not regulated titles or professions, and individuals practising these professions are not accountable to a specific regulatory order.

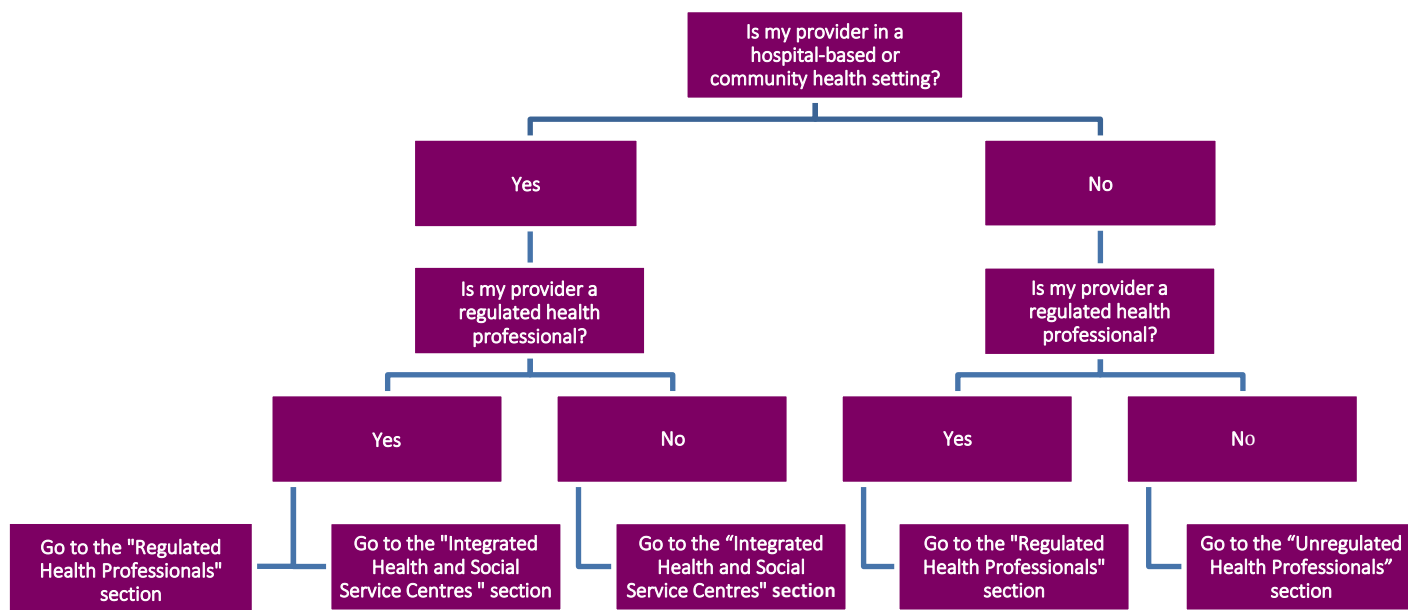
Please note that some regulated professionals may choose to use an unregulated title alongside their regulated one. For example, a social worker may also refer to themselves as a counsellor because it better describes their role to the public. If you are uncertain whether a healthcare provider is regulated, you have the right to ask if they are registered with a regulatory order.

Should I Make a Complaint?

Any eating disorder care provider, regardless of whether or not they are a regulated health professional, should be committed to practising ethically. An ethical care provider prioritizes clients'/patients' safety and strives to avoid causing harm. Some examples of issues that warrant concern are discriminatory attitudes and/or behaviours (e.g., racism, ableism, transphobia, etc.), boundary violations (e.g., inappropriate touch, sexual harassment, sexual assault, etc.), and exploitative fee practices.

How Do I File a Complaint?

Because there are different steps to follow depending on whether your care provider is a regulated health professional, the chart below can help you determine which section of this guide to consult for further information and next steps.



REGULATED HEALTH PROFESSIONALS

Public Registers

Every health professional regulatory order (“order”) is required to maintain a registry of all licensed professionals. If you are receiving services from a regulated health professional, you can use their professional designation to determine which order they belong to, and then search that order’s public register for their name or licence number to review details about their registration. For example, you can learn when they first registered with that order, whether they have any Terms, Conditions, and Limitations (TCLs) on their registration (e.g., if they are required to practise under clinical supervision), and whether they have previously been directed to undergo remedial activities as the result of a disciplinary decision, etc.

Below, you can read more about the professional designations for each Québec order*. Click on the name of an order to find its corresponding public register:

Regulatory Order	Regulated Title(s)	Other Commonly Used Titles
Ordre des Dentistes du Québec (ODQ)	- Dentist - Dental Surgeon	
Ordre des Hygiénistes Dentaires du Québec (OHdq)	- Dental Hygienist	
Ordre des diététistes-nutritionnistes du Québec (ODNQ)	- Dietitian-Nutritionist - Registered Dietitian (RD) - Registered Nutritionist	

	- Professional Dietitian (P.Dt.) - Dietitian - Nutritionist	
Ordre des conseillers et conseillères d'orientation du Québec (OCCOQ)	- Guidance Counsellor (c.o)	- Psychotherapist**
Ordre des Infirmières et Infirmiers du Québec (OIIQ)	- Registered Nurse (RN) - Specialized Nurse Practitioner (SNP) - Nurse	- Psychotherapist**
Ordre des Infirmières et Infirmiers Auxiliaires du Québec (OIIAQ)	- Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN) - Auxiliary Nurse - Nurse	
Ordre des Ergothérapeutes du Québec (OEQ)	- Occupational Therapist (OT)	- Psychotherapist**
Collège des Médecins du Québec	- Physician - Surgeon - Psychiatrist	- Doctor - Medical Doctor
Ordre des Psychoéducateurs et Psychoéducatrices du Québec (OPPQ)	- Psychoeducator	- Psychotherapist**
Ordre des Psychologues du Québec	- Psychologist - Registered Psychotherapist (RP) - Psychotherapist	- Psychotherapist**
Ordre des Travailleurs Sociaux et des Thérapeutes Conjugaux et Familiaux du Québec (OTSTCFQ)	- Registered Social Worker (RSW) - Social Worker	- Family Therapist - Marriage Therapist - Psychotherapist**

*Please note that this table includes only the most common providers serving the eating disorders community and their corresponding regulatory orders and does not constitute a complete list of all regulators in Québec. For more information, please consult the [Office of the Professions of Québec](#)

A note about the term “psychotherapist”: while the title “Registered Psychotherapist” is restricted to those registered with the Ordre des Psychologues du Québec, individuals registered with one of seven other regulatory orders in Québec (i.e., physicians, nurses, occupational therapists, guidance counsellors, psychoeducators, psychologists, and social workers) are allowed to perform the controlled act of psychotherapy as defined by the *Code des Professions* **if they have the competence to do so, and present themselves as psychotherapists. For instance, a nurse who provides psychotherapy may present their qualifications as:

Firstname Lastname, RN
Psychotherapist

Importantly, when determining the regulatory order to which an individual belongs, it is their regulated title that matters. For instance, in the example above, the abbreviation “RN” indicates that Firstname Lastname is a nurse, and you could search for their registration on the Ordre des Infirmières et Infirmiers du Québec’s public register.

Filing a Complaint with a Regulatory Order

Under the *Code des Professions*, it is the responsibility of each order to protect the public from unprofessional conduct and hold the registrants of its profession accountable for the care they provide. If you have concerns about a regulated health professional, you may wish to file a complaint with their corresponding order. To do so, you must submit a detailed written account of your concerns to the order’s Syndic (also known as the Trustee). The Syndic will review the complaint to determine if it meets the order’s criteria for admissibility. If the complaint is deemed admissible the order initiates a formal process, adhering to all necessary steps.

The order will contact both the complainant and the healthcare professional under investigation to discuss the matter. During this process, the complainant’s name and statement are shared with the professional to allow them an opportunity to respond. The order listens impartially to both sides and may conduct a formal investigation if deemed necessary. A written decision regarding the complaint’s resolution will be provided, although the timeline may vary based on the complexity of the case. If the Syndic deems the complaint to be non-admissible, the complainant can appeal the decision within 30 days or pursue a private complaint.

As there are slight differences among the regulatory bodies in the process of initiating a complaint, for the most accurate, step-by-step information, please refer to the corresponding order’s website. You can find them linked below.

Resource List

Ordre des Dentistes du Québec (ODQ)

[Homepage](#)

[Public Register](#)

[Complaints](#)

Ordre des Hygiénistes Dentaires du Québec (OHDQ)

[Homepage](#)

[Public Register](#)

[Complaints](#)

Ordre des diététistes-nutritionnistes du Québec (ODNQ)

[Homepage](#)

[Public Register](#)

[Complaints](#)

Ordre des conseillers et conseillères d'orientation du Québec (OCCOQ)

[Homepage](#)

[Public Register](#)

[Complaints](#)

Ordre des Infirmières et Infirmiers du Québec (OIIQ)

[Homepage](#)

[Public Register](#)

[Complaints](#)

Ordre des Infirmières et Infirmiers Auxiliaires du Québec (OIIAQ)

[Homepage](#)

[Public Register](#)

[Complaints](#)

Ordre des Ergothérapeutes du Québec (OEQ)

[Homepage](#)

[Public Register](#)

[Complaints](#)

Collège des Médecins du Québec

[Homepage](#)

[Public Register](#)

[Complaints](#)

Ordre des Psychoéducateurs et Psychoéducatrices du Québec (OPPQ)

[Homepage](#)

[Public Register](#)

[Complaints](#)

Ordre des Psychologues du Québec

[Homepage](#)

[Public Register](#)

[Complaints](#)

Ordre des Travailleurs Sociaux et des Thérapeutes Conjugaux et Familiaux du Québec (OTSTCFQ)

[Homepage](#)

[Public Register](#)

[Complaints](#)

Note: Many of the order's websites are written only in French, however, all services are bilingual.

INTEGRATED HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICE CENTRES OR NON-MERGED INSTITUTIONS

There are 22 Integrated Health and Social Service Centres that make up Québec’s health network; they are often referred to by the acronyms CIUSSS (in regions in which there are universities with specific programs) and CISSS. Under the umbrella of CIUSSS/CISSS, there are many settings in which you may receive care, such as hospitals, community service centres or long-term care homes. In Québec, there are also some care settings that operate independently of a CIUSSS/CISSS, these are called non-merged institutions. **To determine which category your care setting falls under please consult this Government of Québec [webpage](#).**

In each of these settings, you may receive care from both regulated and unregulated providers. Regardless of where you receive care, all providers and programs should be committed to providing quality care to all patients. To find contact information for each CIUSSS, CISSS, and non-merged institution, visit the following website: <https://fmsq.org/en/our-profession/health-network>

Filing a Complaint with a Regulatory Order

As the process for filing a complaint varies depending on the setting in which you received care, the chart below can help you determine the possible courses of action.



*Patient Relations may only be available for hospital-based programs.

If you have concerns about a CIUSSS/CISSS or non-merged program itself or providers within the care setting, start by addressing your concern(s) with the program’s manager. They may be able to facilitate discussion between the involved parties and offer a resolution. If you do not reach a satisfactory outcome, you can escalate your concern with Patient Relations (if applicable). In Québec, all hospitals have a complaints process in place. It is a legal requirement that ensures that there is a mechanism for patients, their families, and the public to confidentially voice concerns about their experience or the care they received. This feedback helps hospitals track patient experiences and identify opportunities for quality improvement. Patient Relations teams are responsible for responding to patient inquiries, addressing complaints, and working with patients and families to ensure their needs are met during their hospital stay. Contact information for the Patient Relations department and instructions on how to make a complaint can typically be found on the hospital website.

If you have received care from a CIUSSS/CISSS and have not received a satisfactory resolution after attempting to address your concerns with the program manager and Patient Relations, you may wish to file a complaint with the Office of the Service Quality and Complaints Commissioner. To do so, you are required to provide consent for the Complaints Commissioner to access your personal health information, which may include anything from your name to your medical history. The Complaints Commissioner may share your personal information for the purpose of facilitating a resolution or investigating the complaint, however, they will never do so without your consent. You will be kept informed on the progress of the complaint and the resolution. As CIUSSS/CISSS are divided by geographical region, there are slight differences in the process to file a complaint with the regional Complaints Commissioner. To determine which CIUSSS/CISSS you have received care in please consult the following webpage: <https://sante.gouv.qc.ca/en/repertoire-ressources/>

If you have exhausted all other channels for addressing your complaint and have not been given a satisfactory resolution, you can escalate your complaint to the [Office of the Quebec Ombudsman](#). In order to do so, you are required to provide consent to access your personal health information. The Ombudsperson may share your personal information for the purpose of facilitating a resolution or investigating the complaint, however, they will never do so without your permission.

Note: For regulated providers working within a hospital-based setting, it is not within the scope of the Office of the Ombudsman to investigate as there is other recourse (i.e., the provider's regulatory order) for making a complaint. If you have concerns about an individual regulated provider within a program (rather than the entire program itself), it would be most prudent to be in touch with both Patient Relations *and* the provider's regulatory order.

UNREGULATED CARE PROVIDERS

The term "unregulated" does not mean poor service or low standards. However, in the absence of regulation, anyone can claim to be qualified to provide the services being offered without having to demonstrate a certain level of knowledge, skill, and competence. Without a regulatory order responsible for investigating complaints or reports about these providers, it is more difficult to have concerns about such services addressed.

If the unregulated provider you have concerns about is working within an institutional setting, (e.g., a hospital-based program or a community agency or service) your best option is likely to address the concerns with that institution. If, however, an unregulated provider is operating through a Québec business, you can file a consumer complaint. Please consult the following Québec Consumer Protection webpage for more details: <https://www.opc.gouv.qc.ca/en/consumer/>

Be aware that it is illegal for a care provider to represent themselves as a regulated professional if they are not registered with the relevant order. If a provider falsely claims to be regulated, you may in fact file a report or complaint with the corresponding order. For example, if you have concerns about a

“Social Worker” providing you with psychotherapy but whose name does not appear on OTSTCFQ’s Public Register, you could contact OTSTCFQ to discuss your concerns.

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