

Regulating in a Political World

The 2026 Regional Symposia series will bring together regulators and regulatory stakeholders to examine Regulating in a Political World. The Toronto program will explore how political pressures, public expectations, and shifting government priorities influence regulatory decisions. Sessions will highlight key issues including government-regulator dynamics, implementing reform in real-time, Indigenous access and pathways, and other emerging regulatory pressures. The symposium will also examine the broader contexts in which regulators operate, including the unique challenges of the Canadian regulatory landscape. Discussions will address emerging pressures, changing public expectations, and the realities of regulating in a politically dynamic environment. Join fellow regulators and regulatory stakeholders for a day of critical discussions and practical insights into regulating in a political world.

Program Agenda

8:00 – 9:00

Registration & Breakfast

9:00 – 9:15

Welcome and Introductions

Nicole Zwiers | Registrar & CEO, College of Chiropractors of Ontario

9:15 – 10:15

Opening Keynote: Regulating in a Political World: Arm's Length from Government but Not from Accountability

Moderator: *Nicole Zwiers | Registrar & CEO, College of Chiropractors of Ontario*

Frank Denton | Senior Advisor, Counsel Public Affairs

Tim Hudak | Partner, Counsel Public Affairs

Regulators are designed to operate at arm's length from government. But they cannot afford to be arm's length from accountability or public trust.

In this keynote, Tim Hudak, former Ontario Consumer Services Minister and Party Leader and Frank Denton, former CEO of a regulatory authority and Assistant Deputy Minister responsible for 12 regulatory authorities, explore how the environment around regulation is evolving. Political priorities, heightened public expectations, and growing media scrutiny are reshaping how regulatory decisions are understood and judged. At the same time, regulated industries and stakeholders are becoming more organized, strategic, and active in shaping the regulatory conversation.

Drawing on experience from both the political and administrative sides of government, Hudak and Denton offer practical insights into how regulators can navigate the increasingly political dynamic while maintaining independence, credibility, and public confidence.

10:15 – 10:30

Break

10:30 – 11:30

Panel Discussion: Navigating Government–Regulator Relationships in a Politicized Environment

Moderator: *Jessica Harper | Chief Policy Officer, Policy, Standards & External Affairs, Registered Insurance Brokers of Ontario*

Jamie Robertson | College of Teachers

Trevor Lee | CEO, Health and Supportive Care Providers Oversight Authority

Wayne Snow | KWM Consulting Services

Regulators operate within statutory frameworks, but they do so in a political context. This panel will examine how government priorities, public expectations, and shifting policy agendas shape the relationship between regulators and ministries. Drawing on experience from both regulatory and government perspectives, panelists will discuss how reform files move forward, how political urgency affects timelines and expectations, and where tension most often arises.

The conversation will focus on practical insight for regulatory leaders, including managing mandate clarity, communicating with government, and maintaining independence while responding to evolving political direction.

11:30 – 12:15

Regulation of Speech: Practical Considerations for Regulators

Arjang Tavassoli | Manager, Complaints and Investigations, Professional Engineers Ontario

Leah Price | Director of Legal Services, Regulatory Operations, Professional Engineers Ontario

Miko Dubiansky | Director, Intake & Resolution, Law Society of Ontario

Regulators across Ontario are increasingly navigating complex and politically charged issues involving speech of regulated professionals. This session will explore how regulatory bodies approach complaints involving expression, both within and outside the course of practice, and the practical considerations that arise in investigation, decision making, and public communication.

Drawing on recent case experience and lessons learned, panelists will examine how speech related matters differ from more traditional technical or conduct files, how political and public attention can affect regulatory processes, and what operational and communications considerations regulators should anticipate. The session will focus on practical insight for senior leaders responsible for managing risk, maintaining fairness, and protecting the public in a rapidly evolving environment.

12:15 – 1:15

Networking Lunch

1:15 – 2:15

Panel Discussion: Indigenous Access and Regulatory Responsibility: From Intent to Action

Moderator: *Kim Lambert | Associate Registrar, Regulatory Programs, College of Veterinarians of Ontario*

Nancy Tran | Director of Registration, College of Midwives of Ontario

Nicole Zwiars | Registrar & CEO, College of Chiropractors of Ontario

Regulators play a direct role in shaping access to services and participation in regulated professions. This session will examine how regulatory decisions related to scope of practice, registration pathways, and engagement with Indigenous communities can address access gaps while maintaining public protection.

Drawing on Ontario-based examples, panelists will explore how these issues emerge within regulatory mandates, how political and system pressures influence decision making, and what practical steps regulators can take within existing legislative frameworks. The discussion will focus on moving from intent to action, with an emphasis on measurable outcomes and lessons that can inform regulatory practice across sectors.

2:15 – 2:30

Break

2:30 – 3:45

Fireside Chat: From Policy to Practice: Implementing Reform in Real Time

Moderator: Jessica Harper | Chief Policy Officer, Policy, Standards & External Affairs, Registered Insurance Brokers of Ontario

Arthur Lam | Founding Partner, Nexus Strategic Consultants

Gillian Slaughter | Registrar & CEO, College of Occupational Therapists of Ontario

José Vera | Director Licensing, Professional Engineers Ontario

Major legislative and policy reforms often move quickly from announcement to implementation, leaving regulators to operationalize change under compressed timelines and heightened expectations. Using the first 90 days of “As of Right” labor mobility as a case study, this fireside conversation will explore what it looks like to implement politically driven reform in real time.

Panelists will reflect on early lessons, operational pressures, governance considerations, and communications challenges, and will consider what these experiences signal for regulators across sectors. The discussion will focus on practical insight for leaders navigating reform, uncertainty, and evolving government priorities.

3:45 – 4:00

Concluding Remarks

Nicole Zwiers | Registrar & CEO, College of Chiropractors of Ontario