## Human Resources Legislative Update

# Ontario Reintroduces Healthcare Reform Legislation to Enhance Patient Care, Pharmacy Safety

**Date:** July 23, 2014

On July 22, 2014, the Ontario government introduced Bill 21, the *Safeguarding Health Care Integrity Act, 2014* ("Bill 21"). In part, the amendments outlined in Bill 21 reintroduce healthcare reform measures first proposed in Bill 117, *Enhancing Patient Care and Pharmacy Safety (Statute Law Amendment) Act, 2013*, which had not been passed before the June election.

These include:

- amendments to the *Drug and Pharmacies Regulation Act* to allow premises associated with hospitals and health and custodial institutions to be considered "pharmacies" for the purposes of certain provisions of the Act;
- amendments to the *Public Hospitals Act* that would require a hospital administrator to prepare and forward a detailed report to the College of Physicians and Surgeons where a physician resigns or restricts his or her practice and there is reason to believe the resignation or restriction is related to his or her competence, negligence or conduct;
- amendments to the *Regulated Health Professions Act, 1991* to provide for the appointment of a person as a supervisor of a health profession college, where the Minister considers it to be appropriate or necessary to do so;
- the creation of additional exceptions to the existing duty of confidentiality under subsection 36(1)(d) the *Regulated Health Professions Act, 1991* for the purposes of: (1) administering the *Health Protection and Promotion Act*; (2) where the disclosure is to a public hospital that employs or that provides privileges to a member of a college, where the college is investigating the member, subject to any limitations in the regulations; and (3) disclosure to additional classes of persons as prescribed by regulation; and
- various procedural amendments to the "Complaints and Reports" provisions of the Health Professions Procedural Code.

The proposed legislation comes in response to Dr. Thiessen's recommendations, and is intended to "strengthen the safety of drugs provided to patients in the province's hospitals and expand the oversight of regulated health professionals in Ontario."