Case study

Right-touch regulation

professional standards authority
for Health and Social Care

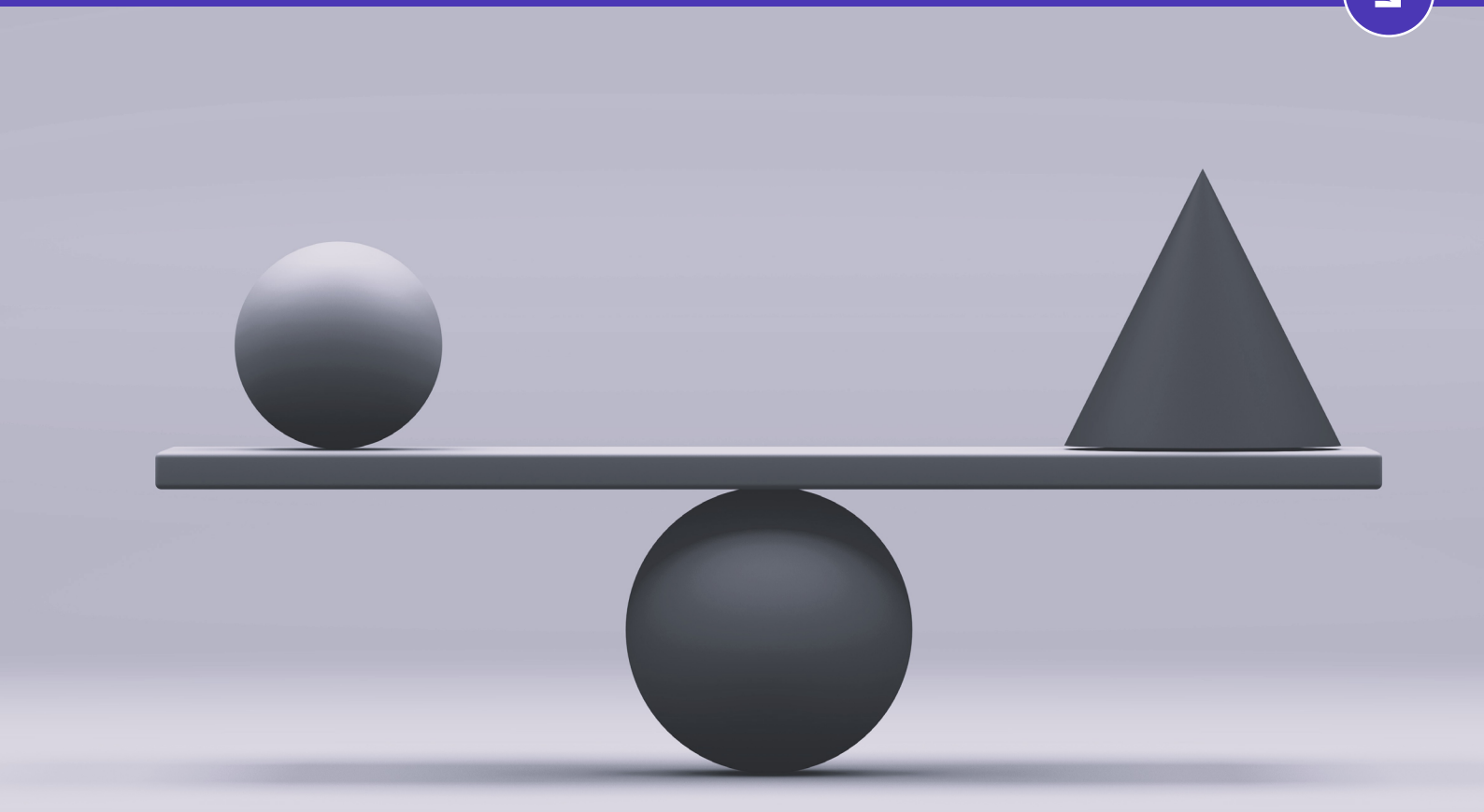
How a right-touch regulation approach helped the CLHA shift to person-centred remedial complaint resolution

Context

In 2024, the College of Licensed Practical Nurses and Health Care Aides of Alberta (CLHA) began shifting toward a person-centred approach to remedial complaint resolution, prioritising harm prevention through registrant learning and behavioural change. While public safety remains paramount, the CLHA sought more supportive remedial options for registrants who demonstrated gaps in knowledge, skill, or judgement.

> "By shifting to a right-touch, person-centred approach, the CLHA has reduced complaint resolution times from 12 months to four – while improving registrant experience and maintaining public safety."

Mistakes are common in healthcare, particularly amid increasing system pressures. While conduct posing a high risk of public harm clearly warrants investigation, responding proportionately to low risk errors during routine practice is less straightforward.



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A right-touch regulation approach

Previously, all complaints were referred to investigation – an approach that was often unnecessarily distressing for registrants and inefficient for the CLHA. Where a registrant accepts accountability and demonstrates a willingness to learn, the full disciplinary process may not always be appropriate.

A new approach based on right-touch principles

The CLHA's revised complaints process is guided by the PSA's principles of right-touch regulation, particularly proportionality. The new process reflects this approach and now offers a range of remedial and rehabilitative options and makes greater use of consent-based resolution outside formal investigations. Registrants involved in a complaint are offered the opportunity to participate in a one-on-one coaching session with a Practice Advisor, who is a subject matter expert in the profession's standards and professional expectations.

The result

Post-coaching surveys indicate registrants report enhanced nursing knowledge and increased confidence in applying learning to practice. The sessions have also increased awareness of available professional support.

Overall, the new approach has reduced average complaint resolution time from 12 months to four months, while lowering costs and improving the experience for registrants.

About the CLHA

On 2 February 2026, the College of Licensed Practical Nurses of Alberta (CLPNA) became the College of Licensed Practical Nurses and Health Care Aides of Alberta (CLHA), regulating two distinct professions. With this change, the CLHA is now the largest healthcare regulatory college in Alberta, Canada, representing approximately 60,000 registrants across the province.

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