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State of Vermont
Office of the Secretary of State
Office of Professional Regulation
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Sarah Copeland Hanzas, Secretary of State
S. Lauren Hibbert, Deputy Secretary

Jennifer B. Colin, Director

January 6, 2026

To: Hon. Matt Birong, Chair
House Committee on Government Operations & Military Affairs

From: S. Lauren Hibbert, Deputy Secretary of State
Jennifer B. Colin, Director, Office of Professional Regulation

Re: 2026 OPR Legislative Overview

Dear Chair Birong and Committee Members:

Thank you for the opportunity to share an overview of the Office of Professional Regulation's legislative agenda for the 2026 session.

As you know, OPR regulates over 50 professions in Vermont. The agency's mission is public protection. This session, we are excited to move forward a legislative agenda focused on three themes:

- Creating New Professional Pathways;
- Removing Unnecessary Regulatory Barriers; and
- Strengthening Public Protection.

Creating New Professional Pathways

Early Childhood Education

- Individual licensure credentials for Early Childhood Educators working in non-public settings regulated by the Department for Children and Families, Child Development Division.
- New standalone bill starting in the Senate.

Dentists

- New, limited-scope academic dental license for dental faculty
- Part of the OPR bill, starting in the House.



Psychology

- New specialty expanding the scope of practice for licensed doctorate-level psychologists with significant training, education, and experience to prescribe medications for mental health treatment.
- Standalone bill, passed the House last year and starting in the Senate.

Optometry

- New specialty expanding the scope of practice for licensed optometrists with advanced training, education, and experience to perform advanced therapeutic procedures including specified surgical and injection procedures.
- Standalone bill, introduced last year in the Senate.

Removing Unnecessary Regulatory Barriers

Pharmacy

- Remove the requirement that vaccines prescribed by pharmacists and administered by pharmacy professionals are limited to vaccines recommended by the CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP).

Funeral Services

- Include additional services such as cremation and natural organic reduction in the definition of the practice of funeral services.

Midwives

- Provide OPR authority to reduce current practice data reporting requirements for every birth

Strengthening Public Protection

Massage Establishments

- Regulate massage establishments through a registration credential that allows for inspection and requires the display of the credentials of individuals working in the establishment.
- Sole practitioners would be exempt.

Unprofessional Conduct of Health Care Licensees

- Clarify unprofessional conduct reporting requirements of hospitals, clinics, and other health care institutions

Voluntary Alternative to Discipline Program

- Authorize OPR to establish for all professions a voluntary alternative to discipline program for issues that, if not remediated, could lead to unsafe practice, including:
 - Practice deficiencies that are minor and can be remediated by additional training; and/or
 - Substance use disorder that is not part of a disciplinary complaint.