

1. Record Nr.	UNINA9910828187703321
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Titolo	Health care practitioners : an Ontario case study in policy making / / Patricia O'Reilly
Pubbl/distr/stampa	Toronto, [Ontario] ; ; Buffalo, [New York] ; ; London, [England] : , : University of Toronto Press, , 2000 ©2000
ISBN	1-282-03695-5 9786612036958 1-4426-7565-9
Descrizione fisica	1 online resource (404 p.)
Disciplina	362.1/09713
Soggetti	Medical personnel - Ontario Medical policy - Ontario Medical laws and legislation - Ontario Ontario
Lingua di pubblicazione	Inglese
Formato	Materiale a stampa
Livello bibliografico	Monografia
Note generali	Includes index.
Nota di bibliografia	Includes bibliographical references and index.
Nota di contenuto	ACKNOWLEDGMENTS -- ABBREVIATIONS -- 1 Introduction -- 2 Historical Patterns of Ontario's Health Professions Legislation: The Embedded, Marginalized, and Excluded -- 3 Benefits and Burdens of the New Regulatory Blueprint -- 4 The 1960s and 1970s: The Institutionalization of Delivery and Funding -- 5 Overview of the Legislation Review Process in the 1980s of the Ontario Health Professions -- 6 Expertise Turf Wars -- 7 Continuity and Realignment of the Positions of Connection -- 8 The Regulated Health Professions Act of 1991 -- 9 Conclusions from the Story -- NOTES -- GLOSSARY -- A. B -- C -- D -- E -- H -- I -- K -- M -- N -- O -- P -- R -- S -- V -- Y -- APPENDICES -- 1 Exposure, Documents, and Interviews -- 2 Funding -- 3 Health Professions Legislative Review Words -- 4 The Nine Criteria for Self-regulation -- 5 Events Key in the Health Professions Legislative Review -- 6 The 22 Topics -- 7 The Nine Criteria Not Met -- 8 The New Professional Scopes of Practice -- 9

Sommario/riassunto

This study offers the first comprehensive analysis of the emergence of health care practitioners in Ontario. Patricia O'Reilly considers the whole range of Western health professionals, from medical psychologists to podiatrists, examining their roles and relationships in economic, political, judicial, educational, and interest group contexts. "Health Care Practitioners" takes as its focus the development of a new regulatory model, the Ontario Regulated Health Professions Act of 1991, and the extensive review of health practitioners that preceded it, namely, the Health Professions Legislation Review of 1983-9. This policy process, which highlighted the relationships that practitioners hold with each other, with the state, and with the public, is placed in both ideational and institutional contexts. Using an interpretive methodology, O'Reilly contrasts health-sector principles of self-governance, rationality, science, and technology with ideational principles of democracy, free-market enterprise, and judicial process. She looks at the emergence of various categories of practitioners, showing how legislative forces have worked to include, exclude, or marginalize them. Her narrative follows the evolution of the professions as a whole from a position of control and hierarchy to one of greater public accountability.
