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How Transparent are Ontario Regulators?

Findings from the Ontario Regulatory Website Transparency Index (ORWTI)

May 20, 2026 Webinar

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Why Transparency Matters, Institutionally

- Delegated authority requires visible accountability
- Websites are primary public interface
- Transparency builds trust and credibility
- Demonstrates public interest

Transparency is how regulators demonstrate they are acting in the public interest - not just asserting it



From information to transparency to active transparency

Information

Explains rules, processes, requirements, and where to go.

Transparency

Shows decisions, outcomes, trade-offs, and what happened.

Active transparency

Shows how the regulator communicates, engages, and responds in real time.

Websites are the foundation - but not the whole transparency story.



ORWTI scope and method

Purpose: comparability across regulators and across domains - not false precision

- 42 Ontario profession regulators' websites (March 2026)
- Five ORWTI domains: governance, policy, regulatory activity, performance, accessibility
- 32 transparency criteria scored 0, 1, or 2 and normalized to 100.

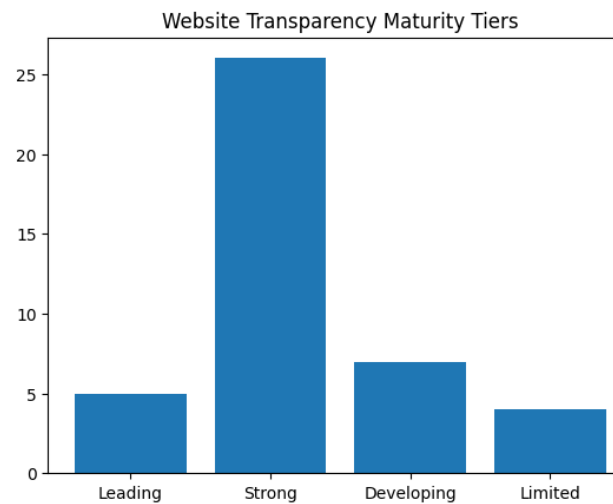
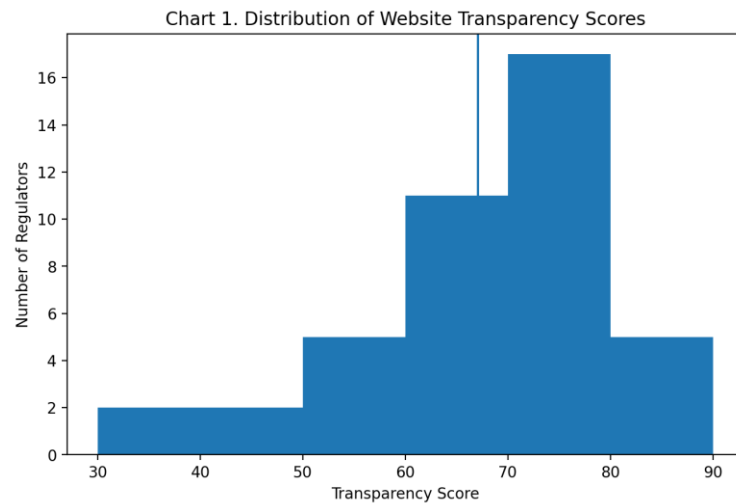
Scoring

0 = not available

1 = partial

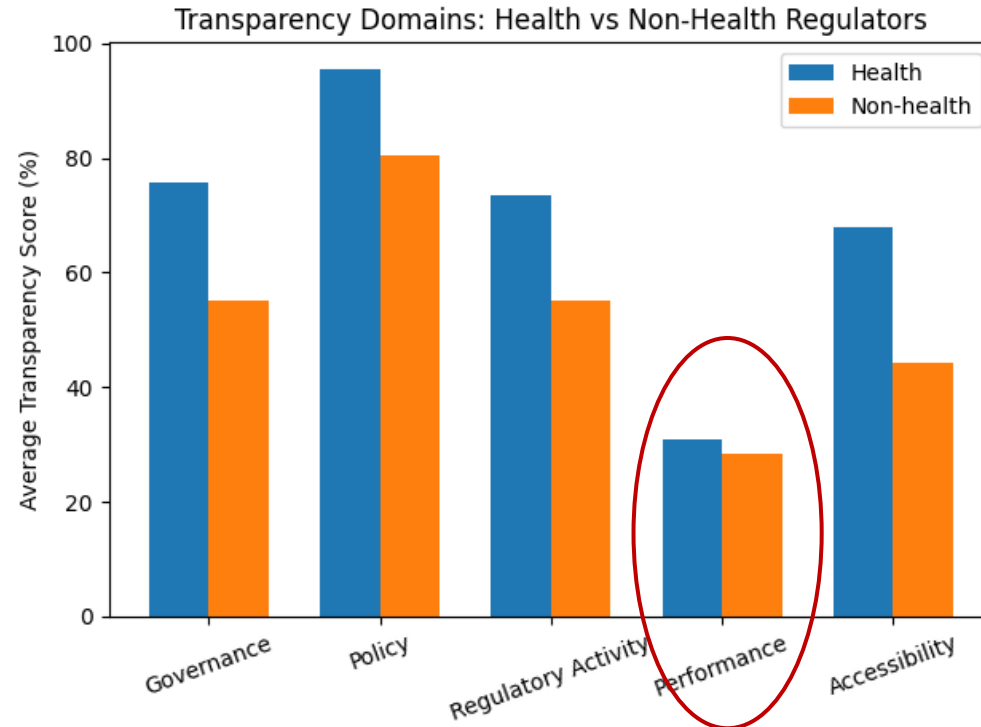
2 = clear

ORWTI findings: Sector moderately transparent, not uniformly strong



- Scores range broadly, but most regulators cluster in the middle
- Only a small number reach the leading tier
- The sector story is variability - not uniform strength

Performance and accountability Gap



Health regulators outperform non-health regulators, but the more important point is where scores fall away: performance, KPIs, service standards, strategic progress, and visible accountability.



Most Transparent Regulators' Websites

Regulator	Score
College of Physiotherapists of Ontario	82.8
College of Nurses of Ontario	81.3
College of Audiologists and Speech-Language Pathologists of Ontario	81.3
College of Midwives of Ontario	79.7
College of Dental Hygienists of Ontario	78.1
College of Pharmacists of Ontario	78.1
College of Massage Therapists of Ontario	76.6
College of Dietitians of Ontario	76.6
College of Registered Psychotherapists of Ontario	76.6
College of Dental Technologists of Ontario	76.6
College of Occupational Therapists of Ontario	75.0
College of Optometrists of Ontario	75.0



What ORWTI misses if you stop at the website

- What is decided but NOT published
- How actively Regulator communicates through newsletters, webinars, podcasts, social media, and town halls
- How easy for public or members to make inquiries and get timely responses
- Whether Board/Council attention is actually focused on regulatory and public-protection matters
- Whether decision materials visibly use evidence, risk, and proportionality

**Website
transparency
is necessary**

**But it is not
sufficient**



How Upstream Can Support

- Individual Transparency scorecards
- Website diagnostics & Roadmap
- Implementation pathways, staged transparency improvements
- KPI and reporting design
- Board briefings



Transparency & Public Interest (TPI) Diagnostic & Roadmap (Part of the Regulatory Capacity System)

Domain 1 Public-facing transparency

What is visible and accessible on the website and in public materials.

Domain 2 Decision Formation & governance transparency

How decisions, rationales, policy development, and accountability structures are made visible.

Domain 3 Regulatory focus, performance & public protection

BAAM, outcomes, evidence, and risk/proportionality signals.

Domain 4 Active transparency & public engagement

How the regulator communicates, reaches, and responds in practice.



What the TPI Diagnostic produces

1

Score the 16 criteria

Website, annual report, strategic plan, Board materials, active communication channels, responsiveness signals.

2

Generate the profile

Domain scores, weighted overall score, maturity level, BAAM auto-score.

3

Interpret the pattern

Where the regulator is strong, where evidence is missing, where trust signals are weak.

4

Translate into action

Roadmap options for website, reporting, Board transparency, and active communication improvements.



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Closing thought

**Transparency is no longer just about being
open**

**It is about being understandable,
measurable, responsive, and visibly focused
on public protection**



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Questions & Contact

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