



College of Occupational Therapists of Ontario
Ordre des ergothérapeutes de l'Ontario



2020 Annual Report



Our Mission, Vision and Values

Our Mission

The College of Occupational Therapists of Ontario protects the public through effective regulation and instills confidence and trust by ensuring that occupational therapists are competent, ethical and accountable.

Our Vision

Excellence in regulatory leadership.

Our Values and Commitments

Partnering for quality

We work together to ensure quality occupational therapy services across the province.

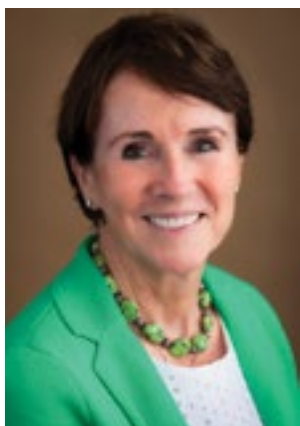
Maintaining trust and confidence

We are fair, open and responsive. We are proactive. We hold ourselves accountable for our decisions and actions.

Treating everyone with dignity and respect

We listen. We consider the uniqueness of each situation. We respond respectfully and sensitively. We respect and support equity, diversity and inclusion.

The President's Message



“Trust is essential in health care. Patients need to have faith in the individuals providing services to them.

As occupational therapists, you live up to that expectation by performing to competent, safe and ethical standards.

The College adds to that trust by regulating the profession in the public interest...”

Trust is essential in health care. Patients need to have faith in the individuals providing services to them. As occupational therapists, you live up to that expectation by performing to competent, safe and ethical standards. The College adds to that trust by regulating the profession in the public interest thereby enhancing confidence in occupational therapists. For the past six years, I have seen how all Council members — professional, public and academic — are committed to that mandate. I am grateful to my Council colleagues for entrusting me to help drive continued regulatory excellence for the profession by electing me as only the second public member to become President. You have my word that I will work tirelessly to support the College mandate.

Last year the Council and College embarked on a review of our governance structure. This extremely important and ongoing review will ensure that all College procedures and processes remain current and meet the objectives and needs of a changing regulatory environment. A new structured governance will be a significant enabler in assisting the College to remain squarely focused on our public protection mandate.

The College is also embarking on a new three-year strategic plan. Strategic planning is important in all organizations as it establishes the direction or the roadmap for the duration of the strategic plan, in this case three years. A strategic plan provides a framework for decision making and resource allocation to support the direction of the strategic plan. The focus of the strategic plan for the next three years is reflective of our public protection role in an evolving health care system. Learn more about the direction on coto.org.

It is also important to acknowledge the ways in which the College supports occupational therapy practice and how these programs are also revised periodically. The College's Quality Assurance program is a good example. The program has been developing a new, risk-based competency assessment process to help ensure we are identifying registrants who may require support or remediation to ensure quality practice. Further details about this innovative project are available on [page 27](#).

No message in 2020 can miss discussing the serious impact of COVID-19 on each and every one of us in all aspects of our life. We have all been profoundly challenged professionally and personally. We continue to be grateful for the tremendous efforts of occupational therapists to ensure public health and safety during this unprecedented time. The College recognizes some registrants have faced professional, financial, and personal challenges associated with the COVID-19 pandemic. Council carefully considered requests for financial relief and made adjustments to address those concerns and needs. Further information appears on [page 16](#) or coto.org.

The College is a well-respected organization thanks to the dedication and efforts of the Registrar, her staff and my fellow Council members but also thanks to you who deliver high quality competent and ethical care to the people of Ontario.

Jeannine Girard-Pearlman, PhD
President

The Registrar's Message

This has been a notable year for the College, for reasons both expected and unplanned. Start with the highly anticipated. We've reached the end of our three-year strategic plan. This year, and looking back at the span, we can point to major progress in our four priority areas: confidence in occupational therapy regulation; quality practice; system impact through collaboration; and effective financial, organizational and governance practices.

Just to highlight a few, we had a strong focus on outreach and public education. From our website to social media channels, we increased the understanding of what people should expect from their occupational therapist. Those expectations can be met as registrants continue to advance their competence and apply their high professional standards.

We reached a milestone in late 2019 with the government's approval of the controlled act of psychotherapy. This marks a first for occupational therapists, and required much collaboration with the Ministry, the profession, and other Colleges who have this act. We'll work to ensure there is an ongoing understanding of expectations for this practice area.

On the governance side, our objective is to be responsive, efficient, effective and accountable. That was tested during the unexpected challenge that we and everyone faced this year — COVID-19.

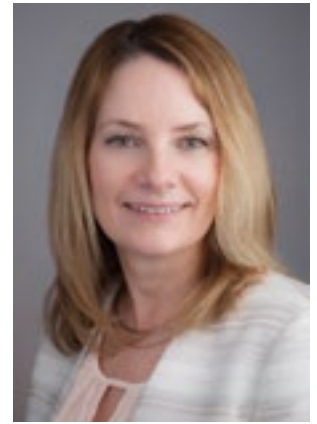
Occupational therapists help people to adapt, and that's what our College had to do too. Regulatory work can't be paused, and we pivoted quickly. Staff worked diligently from home, Council met virtually, and we provided key guidance to registrants.

Our team worked harder than ever. I thank them for their dedication. The province's occupational therapists also demonstrated their concern for the wellbeing of their patients. All health professionals were all trying to do the right thing, in a safe way within the rules that were set. I appreciate the adaptability and commitment of our registrants during the pandemic.

This experience has shown how our investments in the sustainability of the College, including our many systems, has paid off. Everything we spend – in our time, energy, and the fees we collect – goes towards serving the best interests of the public.

Our staff, management and leadership share that singular goal. I know that Ontario's occupational therapists do as well.

Elinor Larney, MHSc, OT Reg. (Ont.)
Registrar



“Occupational therapists help people to adapt, and that’s what our College had to do too.”

Regulatory work can’t be paused, and we pivoted quickly.”

College Council Members



Donna Barker

Professional Academic Member
Former Member at Large, Education
(until March 26, 2020)



Evelyn Chau

Public Member,
Term began April 24, 2020



Michael Dauncey

Public Member,
Term began May 13, 2020



John-Paul Dowson

Public Member,
Term ended May 1, 2020



Mary Egan

Professional Academic Member



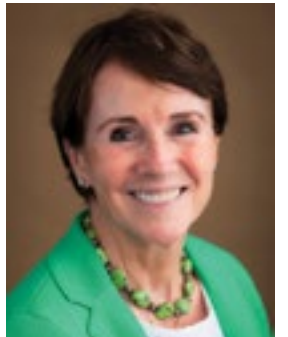
Julie Entwistle

Professional Member,
District 2 - Central West
Former President
(until April 6, 2020)



Allan Freedman

Public Member



Jeannine Girard-Pearlman

Public Member President
(from April 7, 2020)
Former Vice President
(until April 6, 2020)



Debbie Hebert

Professional Member,
District 1 - Central East
(until March 19, 2020)



Jennifer Henderson

Professional Member,
District 2 - Central West
Member at Large, Education
(from March 26, 2020)



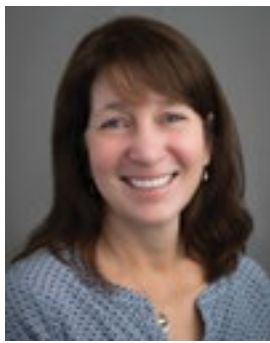
Patrick Hurteau

Professional Member,
District 4 - Eastern
Term ended March 26, 2020



Kurisummoottil Joseph

Public Member,
Term ended June 30, 2019



Heather McFarlane
Professional Member,
District 5 -North East



Carol Mieras
Professional Member,
District 4 -Eastern
Term began March 26, 2020



Aruna Mitra
Professional Member,
District 1 -Central East



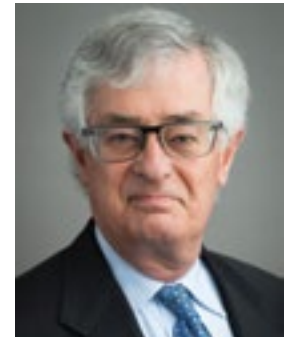
Vincent Samuel
Public Member



Stephanie Schurr
Professional Member,
District 6 -North West
Vice President (from April 7, 2020)



Teri Shackleton
Professional Member,
District 3 -South West



Peter Shenfield
Public Member
Member at Large, Finance



Michelle Stinson
Professional Member,
District 1 -Central East



Sophie Xu
Public Member, *Term
began April 24, 2020*



It is with deep sadness that we note the passing of Debbie Hebert on March 19, 2020. Debbie brought a great deal of knowledge and leadership to her work with the College. She was committed to professional development and best practice, and her insights, experience, and passion will be greatly missed.



Thank you to Julie Entwistle, OT Reg. (Ont.), who served as Council President during the past fiscal year, from June 2019 until April 2020, when she stepped away from the position. Her perspective, guidance and collaborative spirit have served the College well.

College Committee Members

Hunaida Abboud

Fitness to Practise Committee

Leanne Baker

Inquiries, Complaints and Reports Committee

Janet Becker

Practice Issues Subcommittee

Andy Beecroft

Quality Assurance Subcommittee

Elizabeth Bell

Quality Assurance Committee

Sylvia Boddener

Practice Issues Subcommittee, *Term ended June 15, 2019*

Anne Cooper-Worsnop

Quality Assurance Subcommittee, *Term ended April 30, 2020*

Matt Derouin

Practice Issues Subcommittee

Elizabeth Eacrett

Quality Assurance Subcommittee

Frances Eller

Practice Issues Subcommittee

Daniel Fyke

Inquiries, Complaints and Reports Committee

Shannon Honsberger

Practice Issues Subcommittee

Shaheeza Hirji

Inquiries, Complaints and Reports Committee

Zuher Ismail

Discipline Committee

Heather Jones

Quality Assurance Subcommittee

Avelino Maranan

Quality Assurance Committee

Jennifer Nieson

Patient Relations Committee

Leona Pereira

Practice Issues Subcommittee, *Term began June 15, 2019*

Hricha Rakshit

Inquiries, Complaints and Reports Committee

Roxane Siddall

Quality Assurance Subcommittee

Tina Siemens

Patient Relations Committee

Christine Sniatala

Quality Assurance Subcommittee

Julie Sutton

Inquiries, Complaints and Reports Committee

Joshua Theodore

Registration Committee

Strategic Objectives 2017-2020



1 Confidence in Occupational Therapy Regulation

2 Quality Practice by Occupational Therapists

3 System Impact Through Collaboration

4 Effective Financial, Organizational and Governance Practices

Year In Review



The achievements of 2019-2020 are framed by the College's four strategic priorities:

- Confidence in occupational therapy regulation
- Quality practice by occupational therapists
- System impact through collaboration
- Effective financial, organizational and governance practices

This year marks the final year of our three-year plan. Of course, even with the best planning, circumstances can shift priorities. That was the case early in 2020, as COVID-19 re-shaped the College's activities. Throughout this annual report, you will see reference to the College response during this unprecedented time.

Confidence in occupational therapy regulation

Part of trusting occupational therapists is having confidence in the body that regulates them. It's vital for clients, patients, caregivers and others to understand the role of the College and its value. The way we operate, make decisions and engage the public — open and transparently — also shows our own accountability to the public. Over the past three years, we have introduced new processes and evolved existing ones to ensure we continue to deliver on those commitments.

Supporting Indigenous Communities

In 2015, the [Truth and Reconciliation Commission \(TRC\) released its final report](#), which included 94 [Calls to Action](#). These Calls to Action offer direction on where systemic change is needed to further reconciliation between Canadians and Indigenous Peoples.

Of particular relevance to the College of Occupational Therapists of Ontario is the [section on health, including Calls to Action 18-24](#). These parts of the report address the health disparities faced by Indigenous Peoples and acknowledge how poor health outcomes are linked to the history of colonization in Canada. Recommendations for how to begin addressing these gaps include increasing the number of Indigenous professionals working in health care.

One of the steps the College would like to take is to help to increase the number of Indigenous occupational therapists in Ontario. To this end, the College would like to know how many Indigenous occupational therapists are practising in Ontario currently. Registrants were invited to voluntarily self-identify during 2019-2020 annual renewal. This information will help us to monitor progress over time. All information is confidential and data collected will be used in aggregate only.

“Part of trusting occupational therapists is having confidence in the body that regulates them.”



Improving processes

The College’s risk management program has now been fully integrated across the organization. The program informs the College’s strategy, operations and project selection, with quarterly reports to Council. Similarly, with a goal of mitigating risk, the College has streamlined its processes for ensuring all occupational therapists maintain professional liability insurance. Reducing insurance lapses adds to public protection: A November 2019 audit indicated 98.5% compliance with insurance requirements.

To register in Ontario, occupational therapists (OTs) must provide evidence as to whether they’ve been found guilty of any offence (criminal offence, or any offence relating to the practice of occupational therapy). OTs must also have nothing in their previous conduct that will impact their ability to practice occupational therapy safely and ethically. One of the ways that the College learns about this type of information is through a Vulnerable Sector Check. Vulnerable sector screening has been around for three years for new registrants. A planned audit for current registrants this year was pushed to the next fiscal year due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Building awareness and understanding

Sharing information about the role of the College in public protection is critical to our work and an ongoing focus of our communications. Social media has continued to be an effective means of connecting with audiences and was a medium leveraged early in the year with a LinkedIn pilot campaign promoting the College's employer resource page.

Videos are also an effective means of delivering messages and help to build understanding of expectations for health professionals. Two animated clips, "[What to Expect From Your OT](#)" and "[How to Share a Concern or File a Complaint](#)", were developed in-house and promoted on social media. We worked to ensure the messages were simple and followed plain language principles. Other short videos (*to launch later this year*) feature the College Practice team responding to common questions such as: "Do I Need a Referral?" and "Can an OT Help Me Transition Home From The Hospital?"



While we have embraced social and digital media, we also recognize the importance of community news and face-to-face conversation. A series of articles about the role of occupational therapists and the College were picked up by 39 community papers and the College practice team, along with other regulators, answered questions from the public at the Zoomer trade show in Toronto.



To help people become more aware of health professional regulation overall, the College helped promote OntarioHealthRegulators.ca, a multi-College public-facing website. Promotion happened at the Zoomer trade show noted above, online with Google ads, and through the Canadian Association for Retired Persons and Zoomer publications.

In early 2020, the Communications team worked to support the College's COVID-19 response. Other outreach initiatives were put on hold due to the pandemic.



"Sharing information about the role of the College in public protection is critical to our work..."



 **14** New videos on YouTube
 **123%** increase in subscribers

180 Posts on LinkedIn 
 **72%** increase in followers

 **344** Tweets on Twitter
 **57%** increase in followers

223 Facebook posts 
 **27%** increase in followers



“...the Quality Assurance program gives registrants a chance to reflect on their practice and focus on where they need to learn more.”



Quality practice by occupational therapists

The principles of quality, safety and ethics go together. Quality care meets (or ideally exceeds) professional expectations. Safety has to do with avoiding harm. And ethics is about serving the interests of patients first, in a way that upholds the integrity of the profession. The College continually reinforces these principles, for which occupational therapists are accountable, and engages OTs to advance them.

Advancing quality assurance

The College’s Quality Assurance (QA) program measures knowledge and performance to ensure OTs are meeting the Essential Competencies and the Standards of Practice of the profession. Taking part in the QA program gives registrants a chance to reflect on their practice and focus on where they need to learn more. The program provides support, tools and feedback so registrants continue to enhance their skills.

To ensure continuing competence and quality care, each year the College randomly selects a group of registrants to participate in an assessment of their practice. Peer assessors have now implemented a coaching model, providing immediate feedback to OTs, which allows for real time adjustments to practice. The model improves public protection and service delivery. All QA materials, including assessment documents and website content, were revised to reflect this updated approach. New material was created and promoted to address the “Top 5 Myths About Peer and Practice Assessments”.



Continuing competence

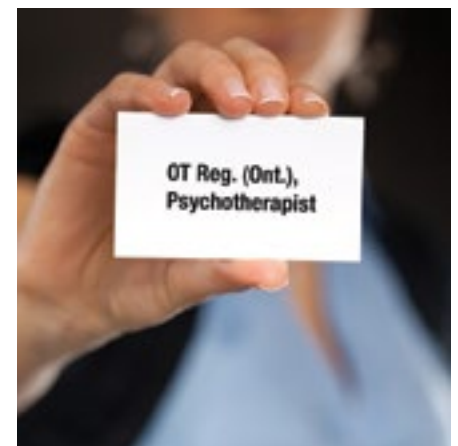
Continuing competency is the process of refining one's skills and knowledge, as there can always be gaps. The College is developing a new, evidence-informed process, and tools, to assess the continuing competence of OTs across practice contexts. This process will trigger when additional assessments are required.

The first phase of the project is focused on developing and piloting the new process and tools, including the selection of OTs that participate each year. The College retained subject matter experts to complete this phase; and work began in September 2019. Future phases of the project will focus on the use of technology within the program and alignment of the new process and tools with other components of College programs.

Occupational therapists are one of six regulated professions that have been granted the authority to perform the controlled act of psychotherapy.

Controlled Act of Psychotherapy

Occupational therapists are one of six regulated professions that have been granted the authority to perform the controlled act of psychotherapy. The controlled act is defined as: *Treating, by means of psychotherapy technique, delivered through a therapeutic relationship, an individual's serious disorder of thought, cognition, mood, emotional regulation, perception or memory that may seriously impair the individual's judgement, insight, behaviour, communication or social functioning.* To prepare for the controlled act of psychotherapy, the College created and delivered education and resources.





Guiding practice

The College Practice team launched the “Conversations with the College” webinar series in November 2019. The inaugural webinar addressed the topic of psychotherapy and practice expectations when the controlled act regulation took effect. Two subsequent webinars addressed service delivery during COVID-19 and return to work guidance as the province reopened. Feedback has been positive with record traffic to recordings posted on the [College YouTube channel](#).

“Professional standards reflect evolving practice.”

Educating stakeholders

The College delivered 23 presentations to audiences ranging from employers to registrants to Ontario university programs over the course of the year, some in collaboration with other regulated health professionals, such as physiotherapists. We also worked with our Ministry and regulatory partners to inform development of the Ministry of Health’s Applied Behavioural Clinicians Framework. Survey response from 388 OTs informed the feedback provided by the College.

Evolving Standards

Professional standards reflect evolving practice. The College reviewed and revised the Standards for Infection Prevention & Control (formerly the Standards for Infection Control) and approved the draft Standards for Acupuncture for public and stakeholder consultation.

The revised Guide to the *Child, Youth and Family Services Act, 2017* was updated to reflect current regulation and was also approved for release.

Practice team Q&As addressed current topics and specific practice issues identified in the interest of public protection, including OCF-18 medical cannabis treatment plans (used in the auto insurance industry), and clients requesting corrections to clinical records. These resources were shared via newsletter and are also available on the website.

System impact through collaboration

The College participates in and serves as a leader of many initiatives, and is recognized and respected for its efforts. These involvements help to share ideas, drive improvements and support quality practice by occupational therapists.

Developing competencies

[CORECOM](#) is a pan-Canadian initiative (across the academic, association and regulatory sectors) to develop one set of national occupational therapy practice competencies. The project marked its mid-point and is due to conclude in March 2021. The College is developing the implementation plan to incorporate the national competencies across all program areas. The end result of the project will be a consistently high standard of what's taught and evaluated across the country. This year, the College Registrar served as Chair of the national CORECOM project.



Effective financial, organizational and governance practices

Following best practices in how we operate is part of serving the public. In our day-to-day operations, the College constantly looks for ways to be responsive, efficient and accountable.

Enhancing technology

The enterprise system project aims to provide a streamlined and efficient system that will build a strong foundation to support the College and its mandate. The College completed phase 1 of the project, which included a request for information and a map of the current and desired state.

Modernizing governance

Modernizing our governance structure will ensure our focus remains on the College's mandate of public protection. Working group recommendations for governance reform evolved around the size, composition and selection of Council; the separation of Council and statutory committees; and the role of the Executive Committee. The recommendations were approved in principle. A three-year implementation plan was also approved.

Engaging the public

The [Citizen Advisory Group](#) (CAG) is a way to engage the public and bring the patient voice to health regulation. In-person and telephone focus groups with CAG provided public perspective to inform the development of the College's strategic plan for 2020-2023. Informed by this valuable public feedback, we held a Council strategic planning session, and developed the [2020-2023 plan priorities](#). The new strategic plan launched on June 1, 2020.

“Modernizing our governance structure will ensure our focus remains on the College’s mandate of public protection.”

Responding to COVID-19



“The COVID-19 pandemic has affected all of us and every facet of Ontario’s health care system.”

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected all of us and every facet of Ontario’s health care system. From the outset, the College has adapted. We shifted our operations, provided guidance and resources to registrants, showed flexibility as needed, and served the public interest. Together, these efforts ensured that the College and the occupational therapists we regulate are well-positioned to meet evolving needs and challenges.



Health human resource planning

As part of a broader health human resource initiative within the Ministry of Health, the College participated in the process to recruit OTs to voluntarily return to the workforce during the pandemic. This helped address potential health human resource shortages.

The College promoted this initiative directly to current and past registrants and adjusted processes to facilitate rapid registration at no extra cost.

Extended deadlines

Recognizing the impact of the pandemic on the work of many OTs, the annual renewal deadline was extended from May 31 to August 31. This decision allowed time for the health care system and services to reopen. In addition, the Registration program developed a new process to provide affected registrants with the option of renewal fee payment by monthly installment.

In recognition of increased demands on health professionals, the College:

- exempted all registrants from completing the 2019 Professional Development (PD) Plan; and
- extended the deadline to complete the 2020 Prescribed Regulatory Education Program (PREP) and Self-Assessment from October 31 to December 31.

COVID-19 has placed significant additional stress on all health professionals.

Communicating with the profession

COVID-19 has placed significant additional stress on all health professionals. Sharing up-to-the-minute information and responding quickly to inquiries about appropriate practice and College expectations were critical steps to ensure safety.

A dedicated COVID-19 webpage was created to provide access to key resources, directives, and guidance. The webpage continues to be regularly updated as new information and resources becomes available.

Guidance documents for delivery of occupational therapy service were produced and released:

- *Guidance on Occupational Therapy Services During COVID-19*; and
- *COVID-19 Return to Work Guidance for Occupational Therapists* (in collaboration with the rehabilitation Colleges to help achieve consistent reopening guidance).

Through eblasts, social media posts and webinars, the College provided information about relevant policies, practices and developments.



Communicating with the public

On the College's COVID-19 webpage, we highlighted key government and Public Health Ontario resources for the public that addressed, for example, what to do if you're sick, and how to recognize symptoms. The College also provided information on mental health resources and answers to questions about what to expect when receiving virtual care and service in-person.

In partnership with our professional health regulatory partners, the College participated in a Citizen Advisory Group (CAG) focus group on the resumption of regular healthcare services. The feedback received helped ensure the patient/client voice informed the activities and guidance provided on this topic.



Coordination and consultation with outside bodies

Throughout, the College worked with health care system stakeholders and government agencies, including the Emergency Operations Centre, Public Health Ontario and the Ministry of Health, which ensured accurate and timely information was provided to OTs.

The College collaborated on two webinars with the [Ontario Society of Occupational Therapists](#). The goal was to provide guidance to OTs on key COVID-19 related developments in the auto insurance sector and hospital settings.

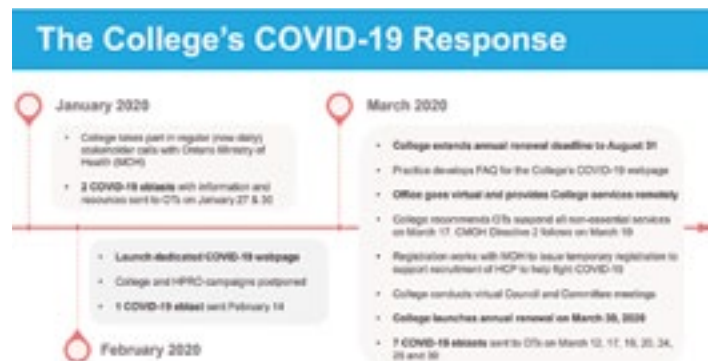
We also communicated with universities about the impact of COVID-19 on student practical experiences and the implications for future registration. This extended to communication with OT regulators from other provinces, as well as the Academic Accreditation Council.

The College was in regular communication with our exam provider, the [Canadian Association of Occupational Therapists](#), regarding the National Occupational Therapy Certification Exam. That assisted with decisions regarding the exam's deployment during the pandemic.



Remote operations

To fulfill health and safety obligations with respect to employees, the College began complete virtual operations on March 16, 2020. College operations were never halted, allowing us to continue to fulfill our public protection responsibilities. Additionally, to prevent the risk of contracting and spreading the virus, the College moved to virtual Council and committee meetings, with electronic meeting packages. An [in-depth timeline of our response](#) is available on our website.



Patient Relations



The **Patient Relations Committee** develops and implements the Patient Relations program at the College.

Between June 1, 2019 and May 31, 2020 the Patient Relations Committee (PRC) undertook the following projects:

- Review and revision of Code of Ethics and the accompanying Guide to the Code of Ethics
- Updating the policy related to Funding for Therapy, Counselling and Related Expenses for Clients Alleging Sexual Abuse by an Occupational Therapist

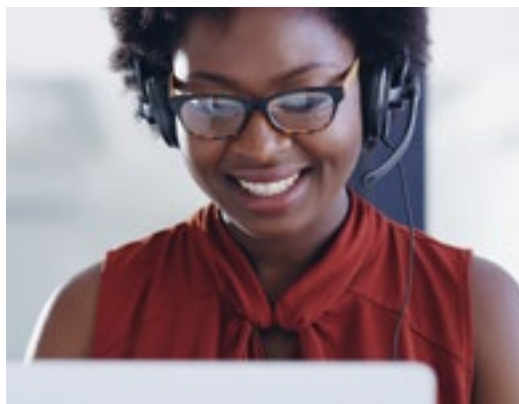
The revised Code of Ethics document was approved by Council for circulation at their

March 26 meeting. It is planned to be circulated to registrants and stakeholders for feedback as soon as appropriate, given the global pandemic. The Guide to the Code of Ethics was approved by the PRC on February 13. The guide does not need to be circulated.

The policy for Funding for Therapy, Counselling and Related Expenses for Clients Alleging Sexual Abuse by an Occupational Therapist, was passed by the PRC at their February 13, 2020 meeting and later approved by Council at the March 26 meeting.

There were no applications to the Committee for the sexual abuse fund in this fiscal year.

Practice Resource Service



A team of occupational therapists at the College make up the **Practice Resource Service**. The team is available to respond to inquiries and offer reliable and timely information about the practice of occupational therapists in Ontario. The public, employers, occupational therapists, and others can contact the confidential service by phone or email.

The service supports the understanding and application of practice standards to promote delivery of safe, ethical, and effective occupational therapy services.

Practice Inquiries



Calls and emails
in 2019/2020

Who's using the Practice Resource Service?

It's not just occupational therapists. We receive calls and inquiries from the public, clients and family members, students, employers and more.

Information gathered from the *Practice Resource Service* data enables the College to be *responsive to evolving practice and develop resources* to support quality, safe, and ethical practice by occupational therapists.

Top 5 Topics from the Public



Finding an OT
(Using the Public Register)



Scope of practice
What's normal? What should I expect when working with an OT?



Billing/Fees

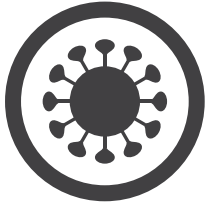


Record keeping
(Privacy and Access)



Other

Top 5 Topics from Occupational Therapists



COVID-19



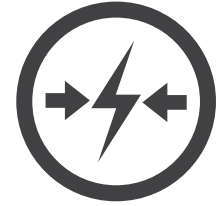
Record keeping



Consent



Telepractice
and jurisdiction



Conflict of
interest

Standards and Resources

In 2019-2020 the following College Standards and resources were updated:

- Standards for Infection Prevention and Control
- Guide: *Child, Youth and Family Services Act*
- Standards for Acupuncture
- Guide to the Controlled Acts and Delegation

Consultations

Public consultations were held to inform revisions to these two Standards:

- Standards for Infection Prevention and Control
- Standards for Acupuncture

Outreach

- Outreach to Ontario occupational therapy university programs and two OTA College Programs (Mohawk and Niagara) – Topics include: Conscious Decision Making, Record Keeping, Role of the College, Professional Boundaries and Professionalism, Controlled Acts, Scope of Practice, and Conflict of Interest
- Joint presentation with College of Physiotherapists at Michael Garron Hospital to OTs, PTs and OTA/PTAs. Topic: Standards for Supervision of OTAs and Physiotherapists Working with PTAs
- Joint presentation with Colleges of Registered Psychotherapists, Social Workers, Nurses and Physiotherapists at Cornwall Hospital. Topic: Record Keeping and Mental Health

We're here
to help!



Anyone can contact the
Practice Resource Service at
practice@coto.org or
416.214.1177/1.800.890.6570 x240.
Service is free and confidential.



General Questions
& Inquiries



1.800.890.6570

Call the College:

Press 0 or email info@coto.org and
you'll connect with our Information
and Resource Associate.

Adapting to Change

Controlled Act of Psychotherapy

The controlled act of psychotherapy was proclaimed on December 31, 2019. The College is one of six regulatory Colleges whose members are legally allowed to practise the controlled act of psychotherapy.

In November, the Practice team hosted a **“Conversations with the College”** [webinar on psychotherapy](#) to discuss expectations for practice. More than 400+ participants joined in. An [FAQ document](#) addressing supervision, competence, and the controlled act was released following the webinar.

Student Placement

Four student placements were offered in 2019-2020: the focus included revising practice guidelines, developing practice resources, improving the way we collect and analyze practice data, and making suggestions to inform future educational opportunities for registrants.

COVID-19 Response

Starting in March 2020 the practice resource service was largely devoted to addressing issues relating to COVID-19 and occupational therapy practice. Between mid-March and May 31st, 2020, the practice service fielded over 500+ inquiries related to COVID-19.

Two **“Conversations with the College”** webinars were developed and released:

- COVID-19 and Occupational Therapy on COVID-19 (1500+ views)
- Gradual Reopening: COVID-19 and Occupational Therapy (1,200+ views).

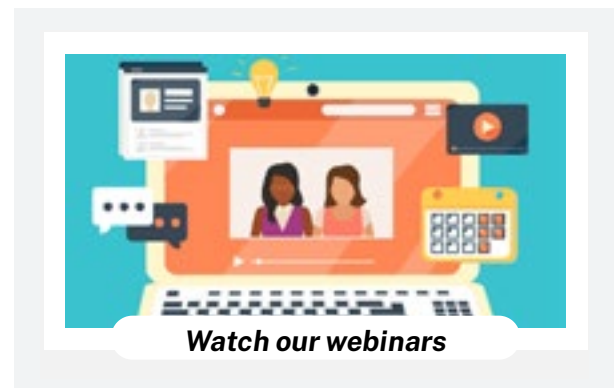
The team also collaborated with the Ontario Society of Occupational Therapists to deliver joint webinars during COVID-19 pertaining to Auto Insurance Sector Practice and Hospital Sector.

Practice Issues Subcommittee

The Practice Issues Subcommittee is a nonstatutory committee that functions as an advisory committee on occupational therapy practice.

This Subcommittee plays a pivotal role in the development and review of Standards of Practice as directed by Council and provides insight into challenges in various practice areas.

Practice Issues Subcommittee is comprised of occupational therapists from across the province with a variety of backgrounds and experiences.



Registration



The **Registration Committee** establishes and maintains the requirements for registration with the College.

The Committee reviews and makes decisions on all applications that are referred to it by the Registrar, written reasons are issued for each decision made by the Committee.

The Committee approves all policies pertaining to the requirements of registration. This year, the following actions were taken by the Committee to enhance the College's ability to carry its mandate of public protection:

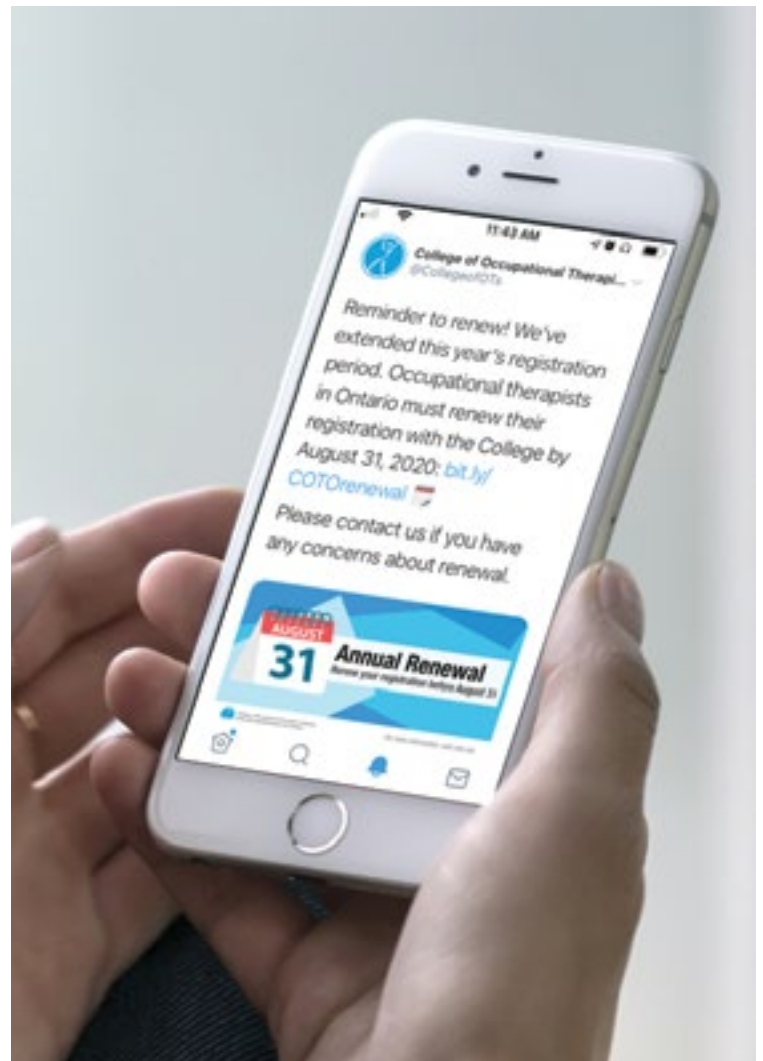
- Affirmed the College's commitment to the calls to action made by the The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) by including an option to voluntarily self identify as Indigenous on the College's annual renewal form.
- Approved plain language revisions to the following registration policies:
 - Alternative Documents for Registration
 - Applicant Access to Application File
 - Authorization to work in Canada
 - Currency Requirement for Annual Renewal
 - Language Fluency Requirement
 - Practicing without Authority
 - Vulnerable Sector Screening
- Reviewed 11 applications referred to the Committee by the Registrar

Registration Committee

Total Decisions	11
<i>Outcomes</i>	
Issue certificate of registration	5
Issue certificate of registration after additional training	5
Deny certificate of registration	0
Reviewed for recommendation only	1
<i>Appeals to the Health Professions Appeal and Review Board</i>	
Upheld	2
Withdrawn	0
In process	0

Other Registration Program Work:

- Completed the College's annual Fair Registration Practices Report to the [Office of the Fairness Commissioner](#) (OFC).



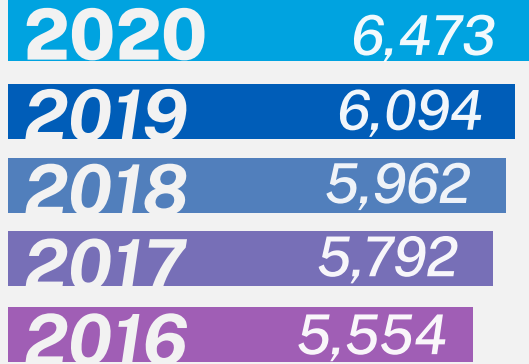
COVID-19 Response

- Assisted and managed health care staffing shortages during the COVID-19 pandemic by: approving a directive allowing the Registrar to exempt certain requirements for a temporary certificate of registration to inactive occupational therapists, and participating in the Ministry of Health's Health Workforce Matching Portal.
- Provided a registration extension to August 31, 2020 and monthly payment options for occupational therapists to help those financially impacted by the pandemic.

Professional Snapshot

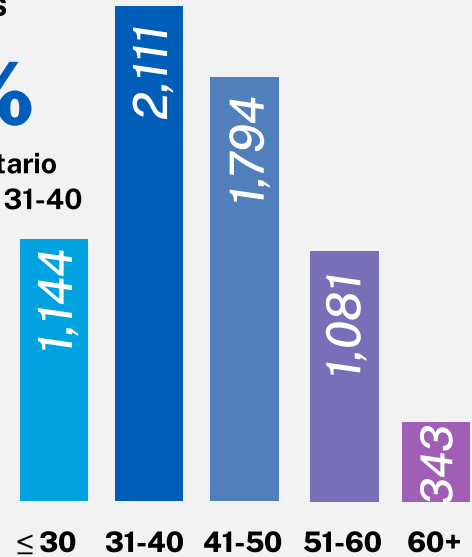
Registrants by the Numbers

6,473 OTs registered in Ontario in 2019/2020



Age of OTs

33% of OTs in Ontario are between 31-40



Certificates of Registration Issued in 2019/2020



522 certificates issued

Where were new registrants educated?

- 83% *Educated in Ontario*
- 10% *Outside of Ontario in Canada*
- 7% *Outside of Canada*

309

New registrants who graduated in 2019/2020

Where were our recently graduated registrants educated?

- 88% *Educated in Ontario*
- 8% *Outside of Ontario in Canada*
- 4% *Outside of Canada*

Top Sources for International Graduates

- | | |
|-------------------|-----------------|
| 1. United States | 5. Hong Kong |
| 2. United Kingdom | 6. South Africa |
| 3. India | 7. Ireland |
| 4. Philippines | 8. Israel |

Where were our OTs educated?



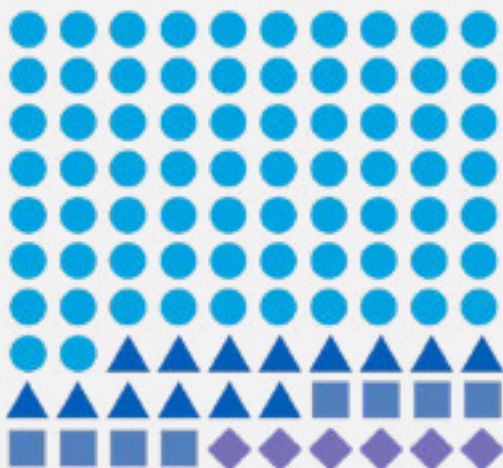
82% of registrants educated here in Ontario

9% of registrants educated outside of Ontario within Canada

9% of registrants educated internationally



Nature of Practice



72%

of registrants work in clinical practice

● Clinical	4,687
▲ Mixed	888
■ Non Clinical	528
◆ Not Stated	370

Who are OTs working with?

38%	of registrants work primarily with adults and seniors
18%	of registrants work primarily with clients of all ages
16%	of registrants work primarily with children and youth (ages 0-17)
14%	of registrants work primarily with adults (ages 18-64)
8%	of registrants work primarily with seniors (ages 65+)
6%	of registrants did not state their client age group or it was not applicable

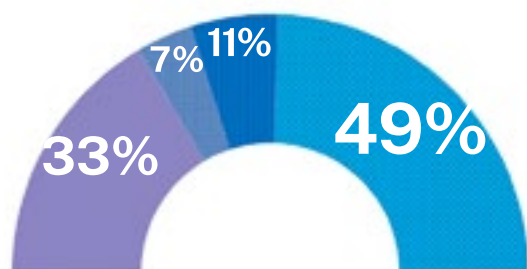
Roles and Areas of Practice

74% of registrants work as direct service providers

Other common roles include:

consultants (5%) and managers (4%)

49% of OTs in Ontario work in physical health



Physical Health	49%	3,087
Other	33%	1,872
Mental Health	11%	682
Administration	7%	453

Quality Assurance

The College is mandated to ensure Ontarians receive safe, effective, ethical care from occupational therapists. Assuring competence is a cornerstone of the College's **Quality Assurance (QA)** program. The program supports occupational therapists to remain competent and engage in ongoing learning through an evaluation of their skills, knowledge, and judgement to promote quality practice. The program identifies occupational therapists who require support and provides that support through education and if needed, remedial action.



Over 2019-2020, the Quality Assurance Committee:

1. Guided development of the 2020 Prescribed Regulatory Education Program (PREP): Managing Risks in Occupational Therapy Practice.
2. Recommended Council approve the College's new competency assessment process. The new process assesses the continuing competence of a group of occupational therapists each year as a means of identifying those who may require support or remediation to ensure quality practice

Based on research conducted by the College and the input of experts in competency assessment, a new, innovative, risk-based process for selecting OTs and assessing continuing competency has been developed.

This process includes three steps: selection based on risk factors, screening, and assessment by a College-trained peer assessor for individuals identified as potentially having gaps in their knowledge or skills.

*Note the decision by Council was made in June 2020.

3. As the competency assessment process is in development, this year, registrants were selected to participate in the competency assessment process based on stratified random sampling. Selection criteria included: registrants who had never previously participated and who have been registered with the College for at least five years and are in a clinical practice. Peer assessors were trained in using a coaching model as part of the assessment process to provide real time feedback and support immediate changes in practice to promote safe and quality care of clients.
 - Nine peer and practice assessments were completed
 - Eight deferrals were granted
 - Thirteen assessments have been suspended due to COVID-19 with anticipated completion over 2020-2021
4. Issued decisions on 32 registrant cases (*see table for more information*).

“The College is mandated to ensure Ontarians receive **safe, effective, ethical care from occupational therapists. Assuring competence is a cornerstone of the College’s Quality Assurance program.”**

Annual QA Requirements Compliance

(June 1, 2019 – May 31, 2020)

Each year, occupational therapists are required to complete a Professional Development (PD) Plan and a Prescribed Regulatory Education Program (PREP). Every other year, occupational therapists are also required to complete a Self-Assessment (SA).

Due to COVID-19, all registrants were exempted from completing their 2019 PD Plan.

	Registrants Required to Complete	Completed	Compliance
2019 Self-Assessment			
2019 PREP	3,474	3,422	98.5%
2019 PD Plan	6,056	5,998	99%
	<i>All registrants exempt due to COVID-19</i>	N/A	N/A

* At the October 31, 2019 PREP and SA due date, 274 registrants were new or returning and excluded from mandatory completion of the PREP and SA.



Case Decisions

The College's online quality assurance site, MyQA, provides real-time data about completion of mandatory QA requirements. This information increases accountability and supports identification of registrants who may require support or education.

The Committee issued 32 decisions in 2019-2020:

- 22 decisions regarding non-compliance with QA requirements (17 from 2019-2020; 5 from 2017-2018):

Required to complete outstanding requirements by specified due date.	10
Completed 2019 requirements after October 31, 2019 due date; considered compliant by the College but noted as late.	8
Required to complete outstanding requirements by specified due date and to participate in a Peer and Practice Assessment.	2
Take no action (TNA) as requirements unable to be completed retroactively, however reminder about policy and potential next steps with repeated non-compliance.	2

- 10 decisions regarding Peer and Practice Assessments:

Required to complete a modified Peer and Practice Assessment to support QAC decision making as registrants had completed Peer and Practice Assessments prior to 2019 with decisions that had been deferred.	2
Take no action (TNA).	3
TNA, but recommended to review Standards for Occupational Therapy Assessments.	1
TNA, but required to complete outstanding QA requirements.	1
Specified Continuing Education or Remediation Program (SCERP) issued.	2
Notice of Intent to Issue Terms, Conditions and Limitations on registrant's practice: Registrant not permitted to supervise occupational therapy students or mentor occupational therapists until SCERP requirements met.	1

COVID-19 Response

In response to the pandemic, the following decisions were made and approved by the QA Committee:

- Exempt all occupational therapists from completing the 2019 Professional Development Plan which would have been due by May 31, 2020.
- Extend the due dates for the 2020 QA requirements (the PREP and Self-Assessment) from October to December 2020.

Inquiries, Complaints and Reports Committee (ICRC)

The Inquiries, Complaints and Reports Committee (ICRC) oversees investigations into an occupational therapist's conduct, competence or capacity including all complaints, health inquiries, and Registrar's Investigations that arise from information reported to the College, including from mandatory reports.

Unless frivolous or vexatious, or the Registrar or the ICRC accepts a complainant's request to withdraw their complaint, all complaints received by the College are investigated.

Complaints

In 2019/2020, the College received 15 new complaints.

The ICRC issued decisions in 31 complaint cases in 2019/2020 (some complaints may have been initiated in prior fiscal years). One complaint in 2019/2020 was resolved through alternative dispute resolution.

The outcomes of the ICRC's 31 complaint decisions are detailed in the table (see right).

	Outcomes *	2018/2019	2019/2020
Resolved Complaints		29	31
Take No Action (TNA)		14	21
Specified Continuing Education or Remediation Program (SCERP)		3*	0
Advice/Guidance/Recommendation		7	4
Frivolous and Vexatious		1	2
Caution-in-person		3*	0
Referred to Discipline		0	1
Remedial Agreement (RA)		2	0
Complaint Withdrawn		2	1
Undertaking		0	2

* For some complaint decisions, the ICRC may issue more than one outcome. For instance, in three complaint decisions in 2018/2019, both a SCERP and a caution-in-person were issued by the ICRC.



Appeals to the Health Professions Appeal and Review Board (HPARB)

The Health Professions Appeal and Review Board (HPARB) reviews decisions made by the ICRC in complaint matters. The HPARB determines if the ICRC's investigation was adequate and if the decision was reasonable. Three HPARB reviews were conducted in 2019/2020. Two ICRC decisions were upheld, while HPARB has yet to release its decision for the other review conducted in 2019/2020.

Additionally, an HPARB review requested by a complainant last year was withdrawn in 2019/2020.

Fiscal Year	Reviewable ICRC Decisions Issued	Review Requests by Complainant	Review Requests by OT	HPARB Reviews Conducted	# of HPARB Decisions Upholding ICRC Decision
2018/2019	29	3	0	3	1/3
2019/2020	31	8	0	3	2/2**

Note: The HPARB reviews that are conducted in a fiscal year may relate to review requests from a previous fiscal year.

*** Of the three HPARB reviews that were conducted in 2019/2020, 2 ICRC decisions were upheld and HPARB has yet to release its decision for the other review conducted in 2019/2020.*

Registrar's Investigations

The Office of the Registrar received reports resulting in 29 investigations being opened in the 2019/2020 fiscal year. Information forming the basis of nine of these Registrar's Investigations came to the College's attention through mandatory reports received from occupational therapist employers.

The Registrar administratively closed seven Registrar's Investigations during the 2019/2020 fiscal year.

	2018/2019	2019/2020
Resolved Registrar's Investigations	71	40
Closed by the Office of the Registrar	37	7*
Take No Action (TNA)	14	13
Advice/Guidance/Recommendation	11	4
Specified Continuing Education or Remediation Program (SCERP)	2	0
SCERP and Caution-in-Person	3	0
Remedial Agreement	3	8
Remedial Agreement & Advice/Guidance	0	2
Undertaking to Resign/Never Reapply	1	1
Referred to a Panel of ICRC for Health Inquiry	0	3
Undertaking	0	2

** The difference in this category from 2018/2019 is due to a streamline in the internal process respecting occupational therapist non-compliance with the College's professional liability insurance requirements.*

Administrative Action Outcomes

Education Letter Sent to OT: 2

Matter administratively closed pending re-registration: 2

Closed with no further action: 3

Administrative action is taken where the Registrar does not have “reasonable and probable” grounds to seek the ICRC’s approval to appoint an investigator and/or where the public is adequately protected without a formal investigation being carried out.

The ICRC made 33 decisions on reports arising out of Registrar’s Investigations in 2019/2020.

Trends from Complaints and Registrar’s Investigations

The majority of complaints received concern occupational therapists working in the auto insurance sector.

33% of complaints confirmed in 2019/2020 relate to occupational therapists working in this sector and all arose out of insurer examinations performed by the occupational therapists.



- Complainants in motor vehicle accidents were most concerned about the accuracy of the occupational therapist’s assessment report, the occupational therapist’s communication with them during the assessment, and that the occupational therapist is biased in favour of the insurer.
- Mandatory reports received from occupational therapist employers primarily raised concerns related to documentation, conflict of interest, clinical reasoning, and issues surrounding privacy, billing, and professionalism.
- For Registrar’s Investigations in which the ICRC issued an outcome aside from Take No Action, the Committee generally had concerns respecting the occupational therapist’s record-keeping responsibilities, their obligation to ensure a client-centred practice and to demonstrate accountability in all their professional interactions.

Discipline and Fitness to Practice Committees

Discipline Committee

The Discipline Committee conducts hearings into allegations of professional misconduct or incompetence that are referred to it by the Inquiries, Complaints and Reports Committee (ICRC).

During the 2019/2020 fiscal year, one referral from the ICRC was received and processing of the matter commenced thereafter. There were no discipline hearings held at the College during the past fiscal year.

Fitness to Practise Committee

The Fitness to Practise Committee holds hearings to determine if an occupational therapist is physically or mentally incapacitated.

There were no Fitness to Practise hearings held at the College during the 2019/2020 fiscal year.

Summary Financial Statements

Report of the Independent Auditor on the Summary Financial Statements

To the Council of the College of Occupational Therapists of Ontario

Opinion

The summary financial statements, which comprise the summary statement of financial position as at May 31, 2020, and the summary statement of operations for the year then ended, and related note, are derived from the audited financial statements of the College of Occupational Therapists of Ontario (the “College”) for the year ended May 31, 2020.

In our opinion, the accompanying summary financial statements are a fair summary of the audited financial statements, in accordance with the criteria described in the note to the summary financial statements.

Summary Financial Statements

The summary financial statements do not contain all the disclosures required by Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations. Reading the summary financial statements and the auditor’s report thereon, therefore, is not a substitute for reading the audited financial statements of the College and the auditor’s report thereon.

The Audited Financial Statements and Our Report Thereon

We expressed an unmodified audit opinion on the audited financial statements in our report dated September 21, 2020.

Management’s Responsibility for the Summary Financial Statements

Management is responsible for the preparation of the summary financial statements in accordance with the criteria described in the note to the summary financial statements.

Auditor’s Responsibility

Our responsibility is to express an opinion on whether the summary financial statements are a fair summary of the audited financial statements based on our procedures, which were conducted in accordance with Canadian Auditing Standard (CAS) 810, Engagements to Report on Summary Financial Statements.



Toronto, Ontario
September 21, 2020

Chartered Professional Accountants
Licensed Public Accountants

COLLEGE OF OCCUPATIONAL THERAPISTS OF ONTARIO

Summary Statement of Financial Position

May 31	2020 \$	2019 \$
ASSETS		
Current assets		
Cash	1,997,651	4,317,873
Investments	605,233	1,538,244
Prepaid expenses	45,147	38,081
	2,648,031	5,894,198
Long-term investments	2,484,488	2,644,379
Capital assets	238,823	104,816
	2,723,311	2,749,195
	5,371,342	8,643,393
LIABILITIES		
Current liabilities		
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	681,577	730,427
Deferred registration fees	714,742	3,977,455
	1,396,319	4,707,882
NET ASSETS		
Invested in capital assets	238,823	104,816
Internally restricted for hearings and independent medical exams	400,000	350,000
Internally restricted for premises	800,000	800,000
Internally restricted for sexual abuse therapy and counselling	25,000	18,000
Internally restricted for contingencies	1,600,000	1,590,000
Internally restricted for enterprise wide IT system	435,000	125,000
Unrestricted	476,200	947,695
	3,975,023	3,935,511
	5,371,342	8,643,393

COLLEGE OF OCCUPATIONAL THERAPISTS OF ONTARIO

Summary Statement of Operations

Year ended May 31	2020 \$	2019 \$
Revenues		
Registration fees	4,320,856	4,187,150
Investment and other income	179,614	163,194
	4,500,470	4,350,344
Expenses		
Salaries and benefits	2,606,565	2,341,589
Quality assurance	92,070	68,796
Investigations and resolutions	329,205	111,999
Communications	68,465	59,433
Council	150,956	148,929
Occupancy cost	292,971	271,472
Operational initiatives	199,903	143,823
Amortization	28,086	50,049
All other operating expenses	692,737	671,086
	4,460,958	3,867,176
Excess of revenues over expenses for year	39,512	483,168

Note to Summary Financial Statements

May 31, 2020

1. **Basis of presentation**

These summary financial statements are derived from the audited financial statements of the College of Occupational Therapists of Ontario (the "College") for the year ended May 31, 2020, which were prepared in accordance with Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations.

Management prepared these summary financial statements using the following criteria:

- (a) the summary financial statements include a statement for each statement included in the audited financial statements, except for the statements of changes in net assets and cash flows;
- (b) information in the summary financial statements agrees with the related information in the audited financial statements; and
- (c) major subtotals, totals and comparative information from the audited financial statements are included.

The audited financial statements of the College are available to members upon request from the College.



Thank You

Has there ever been a time to show more gratitude?

We are so thankful to everyone – clients, caregivers, occupational therapists, students, Council, Committee and Subcommittee members, staff, members of the Citizen Advisory Group, peer assessors, volunteers, and many more – who contributed to ensuring the safe delivery of occupational therapy services to people across Ontario.

Whether shared in-person or virtually, your compassion, guidance, time and expertise have made a difference.

Thank you.



College of Occupational Therapists of Ontario
Ordre des ergothérapeutes de l'Ontario

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