



COLLEGE OF
OPTOMETRISTS
OF ONTARIO

STRATEGIC & IMPLEMENTATION PLAN 2022-2025



2022 ———
————— 2025

OUR MISSION

**TO REGULATE ONTARIO'S
DOCTORS OF OPTOMETRY IN
THE PUBLIC INTEREST**

OUR VISION

**TO ENSURE THAT THE PUBLIC
UNDERSTANDS, TRUSTS AND HAS
CONFIDENCE IN OPTOMETRISTS.¹**

OUR VALUES

APPROACHABILITY

We create and nurture a welcoming and respectful environment and a safe space for people to be themselves and say what is on their minds without fear.

INTEGRITY

We make decisions that affect others as though the roles were reversed. We keep our word.

TRANSPARENCY

We say what we mean. We mean what we say. We harbour no ulterior motives or hidden agendas.

ACCOUNTABILITY

We work diligently to achieve stated objectives. We take ownership of the quality of our work and of our discussions. We follow through on the commitments we make within a reasonable time.

COLLABORATION

We work together to create Synergy where the results of our combined efforts exceed the sum of our individual contributions.

DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION

We endeavour to prevent and correct unconscious bias, overt discrimination and obstacles to equitable participation and influence. We ask, “In everything we do, does everyone feel welcome, appreciated, safe, heard and fairly treated?” ...

- in regulation – in the design of rules and in the resolution of complaints
- within the College – Council and staff, and
- in Optometry practices.

OUR AREAS FOR STRATEGIC FOCUS

WHERE DO WE PAY ATTENTION TO FULFILL OUR MISSION AND REALIZE VISION



STRATEGIC PLAN IMPLEMENTATION PLAN 2022-2025

FULFILLING OUR MANDATE

The College has the legislated duty to fulfill its mandate in the public interest in areas of certification, ongoing education, providing a mechanism to receive, investigate and resolve complaints and aspiring members to high, ethical standards of practice.

The Strategic Plan supports the fulfilment of the mandate of the College and provides further strategies to promote good governance, risk mitigation, communication with the public and registrants and operational excellence.

The implementation of the strategic priorities is an ongoing exercise of collaboration between College Council, committees, staff, and stakeholders.

MEASUREMENT

The Ministry of Health (MOH) requires all health Colleges to report on the achievement of regulatory goals on a cyclical basis through an in-depth reporting tool called the College Performance Measurement Framework (CPMF). This tool rates the various functions and responsibilities of the College as achieved, partially achieved, or not achieved.

The College will use the CPMF as an indicator of progress and achievement of the Strategic Plan in each CPMF cycle.



OUR STRATEGIES 2022-2025

1

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1

1. BROADEN STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Why? The College’s environmental scanning reveals opportunities to improve stakeholder engagement.

For example:

- many members of **the public** seem to be confused or ill-informed about optometry, including what to expect of a visit to the clinic (standards) and why, when and how to submit their concerns or complaints to the College
- the term “College” may lead many members of **the public** to think that we are an education institution
- **The public** should be aware of and provide feedback on the services that the College provides that include connecting patients to optometrists, the therapy fund through the Patient Relations Committee and, of course, addressing complaints against optometrists
- many **optometrists** seem to interact with the College with a sense of apprehension; there appear to be opportunities for many registrants to develop a more positive view of the value of regulation as relevant, and indeed beneficial, to them and to their practices.

What? The College will enhance:

- **the public’s** understanding of the role and value of optometrists, and
- **optometrists’** recognition of the relevance and value of the regulation of their profession.

How? College staff are in the process of improving and enhancing communications and stakeholder engagement to these ends.

OUR IMPLEMENTATION PLAN FOR THIS STRATEGIC PRIORITY

The College will implement a workplan to:

Provide registrants and applicants with an ongoing series of professional practice advisories on non-clinical topics that affect practice. Advisories from time to time may be released in collaboration with other stakeholders.

Topics may include:

- Compassion fatigue and mental wellness
- DEI progressive clinics
- Use of social media and communication

Provide the public with a twice yearly abridged and modified version of In Focus.

Provide mechanisms to encourage undergraduate / senior secondary students to consider optometry as their chosen profession and provide pathway advice to achieve this goal. Strategies may include:

- Visual and media products containing professional testimonials of current optometrists
- “Become a Doctor” campaign
- Presence at University career fairs

Provide opportunities to interact with registrants regarding professional practice, inspiring public confidence in optometry, the role of the College and services to members. Potential strategy is to collaborate with stakeholder regional meetings.

Nurture public trust and confidence through direct engagement including:

- Public and profession focus groups
- Capitalizing on social media opportunities
- After gathering focus group data, procure a right sized public communication plan including traditional media

Provide College presentations to students at the School(s) of Optometry to increase professional awareness, knowledge of jurisprudence, establish a relationship with the College and heighten awareness of the privilege of professionalism. Target presentations in years 1 and final.

Provide graduating students with *Welcome to the Profession* resources outlining services available to registrants and relevant College information.

To leverage technology to promote operational excellence:

- Automate certificate of authorization applications and renewals, and professional corporation fees with online payment capacity
- Enhance jurisprudence examination to provide save features and generate regular reports on candidate performance in different areas
- Leverage topical call and email data to create a red flag alert system to identify emerging issues and risks proactively
- Survey new registrants six months following registration to assess usefulness and ease of process and monitor their tendency to volunteer with the College in the future
- Enhance and continue hosting townhall meetings with candidates for registration

Create an ongoing survey to provide participants in the complaints process (both the optometrist under investigation and the complainant) the opportunity to provide feedback after the complaint matter has concluded. Completion of the survey will be optional and will be available in web format and hard copy.



2

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2

2. DEVELOP AND CARRY OUT A RESEARCH AGENDA

Why? Data-based policy-making and decision-making, which are fed by research, serves the public interest by enabling better targeting of efforts to improve patient outcomes and the regulation of the profession.

What? The College will advance and fund research that is relevant to the regulatory world and to the profession that it governs.

How? The College is developing a research initiative suitable for a medium-sized regulator. It is advancing its own internal research projects and has established a Research Steering Group that is creating metrics and a process to receive, assess, approve and provide research grants in the public interest with an emphasis on relevant subjects that are unlikely to already have a source of funding. The Steering Group will consider potential research topics that arose during the strategic planning process.

OUR IMPLEMENTATION PLAN FOR THIS STRATEGIC PRIORITY

The College will implement a workplan to:

Utilizing the newly formed *Research Steering Group*, the College will develop a call for proposals specifically focused on projects that explore access to optometric care.

Conceptualize an internal project focused on DEI in relation to the broader health regulatory landscape.

Examine registration, quality assurance and discipline procedures for integration of “right touch regulation” and risk-based regulation and course correct any shortcomings.

Collaborate with key stakeholders on a think tank to generate research and data that examines and provides recommendations to further patient access to eye / vision care in Ontario.

Provide a jurisdictional survey to identify effective practices in investigating complaints throughout Canada and globally. This will involve interviewing investigations departments within optometry regulators in Canadian provinces and abroad.

Provide research that examines the effectiveness of outcomes in the investigation and discipline areas. This research would involve analyzing past cases of the ICRC and Discipline (specifically from 2010 to 2021) in which a remedial or educational outcome was issued (such as remedial agreement, SCERP, Undertaking with educational components, or TCLs with coaching sessions and/or courses), and examining how many, if at all, of those members go on to have another complaint or concern submitted to the College about their practice (either while they are completing their remedial activities or after).

3

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 3

3. ENSURE THE PUBLIC'S ACCESS TO CARE

Why? There are factors that affect the public's access to care such as economic and demographic considerations and how and where optometric services are provided. Good care not only provides the patient with better quality of life. There is evidence that it also enables the person to be a healthier and more productive contributor to society.

What? Support efforts to provide the public with greater access to optometric services.

How? Facilitate and share research to better understand factors that impair access to care. Establish a multidisciplinary, multistakeholder think tank to explore solutions. Provide other forms of cooperation with system partners and with the government of Ontario to improve access to care in the public interest.

OUR IMPLEMENTATION PLAN FOR THIS STRATEGIC PRIORITY

The College will implement a workplan to:

Collaborate with key stakeholders on a think tank to generate research and data that examines and provides recommendations to further patient access to eye / vision care in Ontario. This can address/provide:

- An environmental scan of optometric scope of practice globally and how it connects to better patient outcomes and access to care
- Connect College's data with Ontario's publicly available data (e.g., sociodemographic data, vision health outcomes) to understand and analyze the current state of access to vision care and identify gap areas in the province

- Explore areas of “bottlenecks” in vision care regarding wait times and referral ease

Provide the public and profession with up-to-date information regarding government and not for profit funding for eyecare in addition to mechanisms such as OHIP or ODSP.

4

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 4

4. ENHANCE DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION (DEI)

Why? Equitable organizations are especially effective by respecting the unique needs, perspectives and potential of their team members and members of the public. Diverse and inclusive workplaces earn deeper trust and greater commitment.

In the case of **the College**, DEI contributes to the commitment and collaboration among Council members and staff members, between Council and staff and with the general public. It also deepens the public’s and optometrists’ confidence in regulation.

DEI makes the **practice of optometry** more successful as it taps into a broader market for high quality employees, deepens employee loyalty and contributes to the public’s confidence in the optometrists’ services.

DEI serves the **public interest** because it:

- improves patient care
- makes regulation and Optometry representative of Ontario’s population
- enhances the public’s confidence and feeling of inclusion in the College and optometrists
- enhances the public’s confidence in regulation

DEI is an objective that the College has reported in its CPMF as being incomplete.

What? Examples of DEI risks to eradicate in the contexts of regulation and professional practice include unconscious bias, overt discrimination and obstacles to equitable participation and influence. A key question to ask is, *“In everything we do, does everyone feel welcome, safe, heard and fairly treated?”*

The College will add Diversity, Equity and Inclusion to its list of stated Values and promote adherence at Council, in the College's operations and in optometrists' professional practices.

How? In 2022, the College will apply Appreciative Inquiry to creatively design and build ways to pragmatically promote and reflect the principles of diversity, equity and inclusion. The College is considering an independent DEI audit to objectively identify necessary and/or possible ways to improve. The CPMF asks that colleges assess their structures and practices from a DEI perspective, and these measures will be designed to do just that.

The College will consider input from the Strategic Planning process of examples of what DEI looks like in College and Optometry settings.

To achieve DEI, the College will consider:

- policies to support DEI to formalize and achieve DEI
- adequate resourcing
- adoption of clear, inclusive language in all that it does
- encouraging broad representation among those who seek election to Council
- expanding the College's multi-lingual capacity amid its staff
- continual formative/preventative education opportunities to Council, staff and optometrists.

OUR IMPLEMENTATION PLAN FOR THIS STRATEGIC PRIORITY

The College will implement a workplan to:

During the development of the Strategic Plan 2022-2025, Council expressed a commitment to having an in-depth and sustainable plan with the aspiration of true systemic change in the College culture and operations.

An extensive DEI plan has been appended to this document outlining these strategies.



5

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 5

5. CONSTRUCTIVELY IMPLEMENT GOVERNANCE REFORM

Why? The government of Ontario is considering significant governance reform for health sector regulators. It is important to implement reforms in a way that enhances protection of the public interest and the public's confidence in regulation and in the regulated professions. The College is uniquely positioned to contribute to this success.

What? The College will respond and contribute to the successful implementation of governance reforms readily, willingly, constructively and with agility and resilience.

How? The College will proactively collaborate with the government and with other health sector regulators on implementation including in public communication and in the application of research and other information to properly inform the implementation process. The College is also in the process of advancing its own research project that assesses the structures and practices of Ontario's 26 health regulatory colleges. Data from this project will be used to orient future governance reforms in an evidence-based manner.

OUR IMPLEMENTATION PLAN FOR THIS STRATEGIC PRIORITY

The College will implement a workplan to:

Be an active and proactive participant in shaping regulatory reform proactively through College participation and representation on MOH and HPRO boards, workgroups, advisory teams.

Utilize the Governance-HR Committee as the lead committee regarding the implementation of legislated reforms.

Preemptively begin a process of anticipated renewal drafting of bylaws that are anticipated to be affected by governance reform.

Provide resource readiness contingencies to address the associated resource needs and costs that may be required to fulfil modernization requirements.



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