



COLLEGE OF
Optometrists
OF ONTARIO

College of Optometrists of Ontario

→ Strategic Plan 2020-2023

Approved: June 25, 2020

Table of Contents

1.0	Context	1
1.1	About the College of Optometrists of Ontario	1
1.2	The Imperatives of Our Changing Environment	1
2.0	Our 2020-2023 Strategic Plan	3
2.1	Strategic Plan on a Page	3
2.2	Mission, Vision, and Values	4
2.2.1	Mission	4
2.2.2	Vision	4
2.2.3	Values	4
2.3	Our Strategic Priorities	5
2.3.1	Quality Professional Care	5
2.3.2	Risk Focus	5
2.3.3	Organizational Excellence	5
2.3.4	Engagement and Partnerships	6
3.0	Conclusion	6
	Appendix: Council Membership	7

1.0 Context

1.1 About the College of Optometrists of Ontario

The College of Optometrists of Ontario (hereafter “the College”) is the professional regulatory authority responsible for registering (licensing) and governing optometrists in Ontario. The College’s authority can be found in legislation including the *Regulated Health Professions Act* and the *Optometry Act*.

The College’s legislated duty is to protect the public interest. There are a number of ways we ensure that optometrists provide quality patient care that meets the standards of practice, including:

- setting the qualifications required to enter practice;
- setting the conditions to maintain registration;
- developing quality assurance programs to promote clinical excellence;
- promoting safe and ethical practice by our members;
- developing professional and ethical standards and guidelines; and
- responding openly, fairly, and with authority when complaints arise.

1.2 The Imperatives of Our Changing Environment

The College performs these duties in a rapidly changing environment.

For a start, Ontarians are aging, and with age comes increased risk of vision loss, often due to comorbid conditions. Ontario is also growing ever more diverse, which accentuates the need to ensure equitable access to safe eye care.

Public expectations are changing as well. The public expects to be a partner in its health care, not a passive recipient. Increasingly, patients expect to access health care, eye care, and their health records virtually and be assured their privacy is respected and protected. Regulators are being asked to demonstrate value and be more transparent about their work.

Service delivery models are changing too, often as a result of technological change. Online markets have emerged for prescription eyewear, consistent with public expectations. Meanwhile, a broad array of technologies and supports enable optometrists to provide more and better diagnoses, treatment, and customer service. They also enable the profession to reach more diverse populations – for instance, via telehealth tools – and spend more time with patients, promoting deeper patient interactions.

Such tools also influence the scale at which optometrists and optometric practices operate. As a result, optometrists increasingly work in a variety of settings, requiring more collaboration with other professionals.

As optometric practice changes, the College will need to ensure it anticipates change and sets expectations for the public and practitioners. For us, the following imperatives stand out:

- The College will need to ensure it anticipates changing service delivery models and technologies, monitoring developments, and setting standards and expectations accordingly.
- Both optometrists and the College will need to move beyond communicating to starting conversations with the public, taking advantage of opportunities to engage the public, and listen to feedback about the role of the College.
- The College will need to enhance its stakeholder relationships with bodies that represent other parts of the health system and other health professionals, among others.

These imperatives inform much of this Strategic Plan.

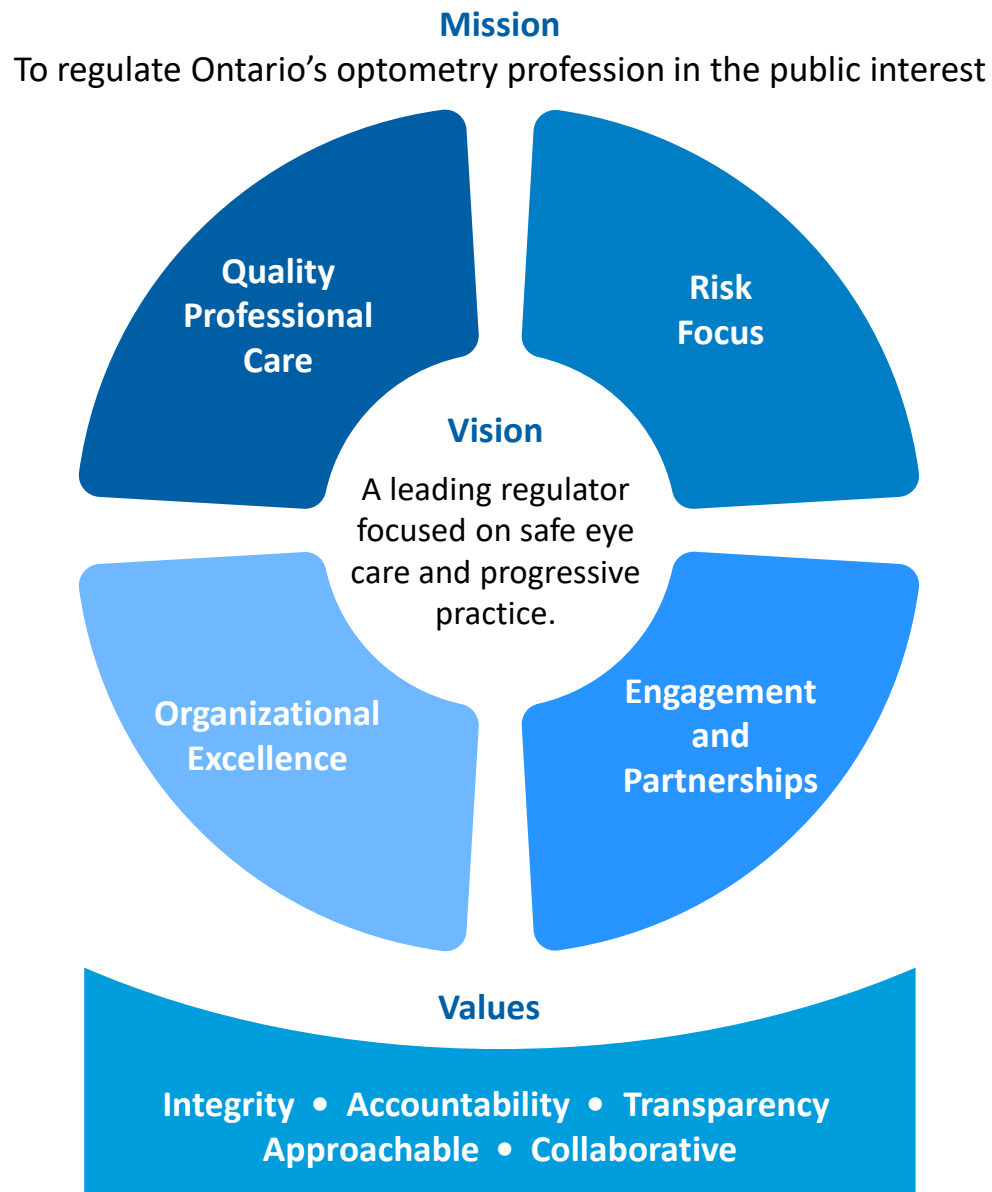
Finally, while monitoring the environment and reevaluating priorities will be critical for eye care in Ontario generally, the COVID-19 pandemic continues as this plan is published and may increase the urgency of these activities over the life of the plan. The pandemic has already taught us lessons that are in line with the direction we have laid out – in particular, that collaboration is key, that we can move quickly when we should, and that regulatory priorities need to be clear, even more so in a crisis.

With the above in mind, we are pleased to present our 2020-2023 Strategic Plan in the pages that follow.

2.0 Our 2020-2023 Strategic Plan

2.1 Strategic Plan on a Page

To respond to the imperatives described above, we have developed our 2020-2023 Strategic Plan summarized below.



The Mission, Vision, and Values outlined above ground us and push us forward. Embedded in them through the four “quadrants” are the strategic priorities that our organization will focus on to fulfill our Mission and achieve our Vision. We discuss each of these in turn below.

2.2 Mission, Vision, and Values

2.2.1 Mission

To regulate Ontario’s optometry profession in the public interest.

Our Mission summarizes our legislated mandate and reflects our commitment to ensuring that the public interest comes first in regulating the profession.

2.2.2 Vision

A leading regulator focused on safe eye care and progressive practice.

Our new Vision reflects our focus today, what our organization aspires to be, and how we want to inspire optometrists for the future.

With the changing delivery and technology landscape, we envision the College being more responsive, gathering more and better data, and taking advantage of the most advanced regulatory tools and techniques to fulfill its mission. Being “a leading regulator” in these and other respects is therefore an aspiration for the College going forward.

At the same time, we recognize that much of our day-to-day role as a regulator concerns safety. This will always remain a focus.

Looking to the future, the same tools that focus our attention on safety – qualification, quality performance, standards, and others – also give us the means to promote progressive practice and excellence in eye care across Ontario.

2.2.3 Values

Integrity • Accountability • Transparency

Approachable • Collaborative

Our Values represent the culture, norms, and attitudes we want to see reflected throughout our organization. Our mandate demands that we act with *integrity* and that we hold ourselves and others *accountable* for meeting expectations and duties. *Transparency* helps our stakeholders ensure that we are acting according to these values.

Regulators are given certain powers to act in the public interest. At the same time, they need to be open to feedback from others, whether they be members of the public, optometrists, or other stakeholders. With this in mind, we are committed to being *approachable* and *collaborative* in dealing with our many stakeholders.

2.3 Our Strategic Priorities

While our Mission and Vision guide all the work that we do, the strategic priorities below describe the work that needs to be done over the next three years to accomplish our goals. As our plan suggests, they are interlinked and support one another; the order in which they are presented does not reflect the relative importance of the priorities. Below, we define what they mean in more detail.

2.3.1 Quality Professional Care

Providing a regulatory framework that promotes quality professional care is at the core of what we do. With new delivery models and technologies on the horizon, we will actively monitor developments and ensure that our frameworks, standards, and other activities keep pace.

For the College, **Quality Professional Care** means:

- Actively monitoring developments in and ensuring professional standards appropriately reflect emerging delivery models and technologies
- Confirming the entry-to-practice examination ensures safe and competent practitioners
- Developing a renewed quality assurance program
- Guiding and supporting optometrists to maintain practice requirements in Ontario
- Actively investigating and preparing for specialization to achieve high-quality patient care
- Promoting meaningful continuing education, professionalism, and excellent clinical care

2.3.2 Risk Focus

Leading regulators focus their activities on the areas of highest risk. One of our four strategic priorities is therefore a focus on risk. Although this is already a natural part of what we do, over the next three years we will be focusing on improving the frameworks and data we use to think about risk. This will permit us to take a more data-informed and evidence-based approach in modernizing regulation and day-to-day decision-making.

Our **Risk Focus** means:

- Developing an enterprise risk framework and improving processes to better allocate attention and resources to areas commensurate with the risks they present
- Gathering data to identify and categorize risks
- Making data-informed and evidence-based decisions
- Actively adopting knowledge, techniques and good risk management practices from others

2.3.3 Organizational Excellence

From an operational perspective, we will ensure that internal processes are effective and efficient to support both our daily activities and the execution of our other strategic priorities.

We want to focus on training and empowering our staff and council to create a culture of continuous improvement.

Organizational Excellence means:

- Increasing efficiency of key regulatory and financial processes
- Improving our IT infrastructure
- Enabling Staff and Council with appropriate training and resources
- Fostering a culture of continuous improvement
- Encouraging collaborative decision-making

2.3.4 Engagement and Partnerships

Given that our environment is always changing, we want to proactively adapt to change and build meaningful partnerships with other organizations and regulators to learn from one another. We will also engage effectively with the public, particularly with diverse populations, to continue to understand the public's needs and expectations as they evolve over time.

Engagement and Partnerships means:

- Actively consulting with and informing the public, while considering the needs of diverse populations
- Ensuring optometrists understand what is expected from them
- Developing communications that are clear and accessible to all
- Actively collaborating with local, provincial, national and international partners
- Articulating meaningful relationship plans for new and existing stakeholders
- Communicating, learning from and sharing expertise with others

3.0 Conclusion

The optometry profession is changing quickly. In recognition of this fact, we believe we have put forward a transformative strategic plan to monitor and navigate these changes in the profession for the public's benefit. We look forward to engaging with you as we go on this journey.

Appendix: Council Membership

This Strategic Plan was approved on June 25, 2020 by the College's Council consisting of the following members:

Council Membership Arising From	Name
Eastern Electoral District	Dr. Lindy Mackey
GTA Electoral District	Dr. Linda Chan Dr. Camy Grewal
Northern Electoral District	Dr. William Ulakovic
Western Electoral District	Dr. Richard Kniaziew, Vice-President
Provincial Electoral District	Dr. Annie Micucci Dr. Christopher Nicol Dr. Patrick Quaid, President Dr. Marta Witer
Faculty of University of Waterloo School of Optometry and Vision Science Electoral District	Dr. Lisa Christian
Appointment by Lieutenant Governor in Council	Ms. Suzanne Allen Ms. Kathryn Biondi Mr. Ravnit Dhaliwal Ms. Winona Hutchinson Mr. Howard Kennedy Mr. Bashar Kassir Mr. Hsien Ping (Albert) Liang Mr. Narendra Shah