

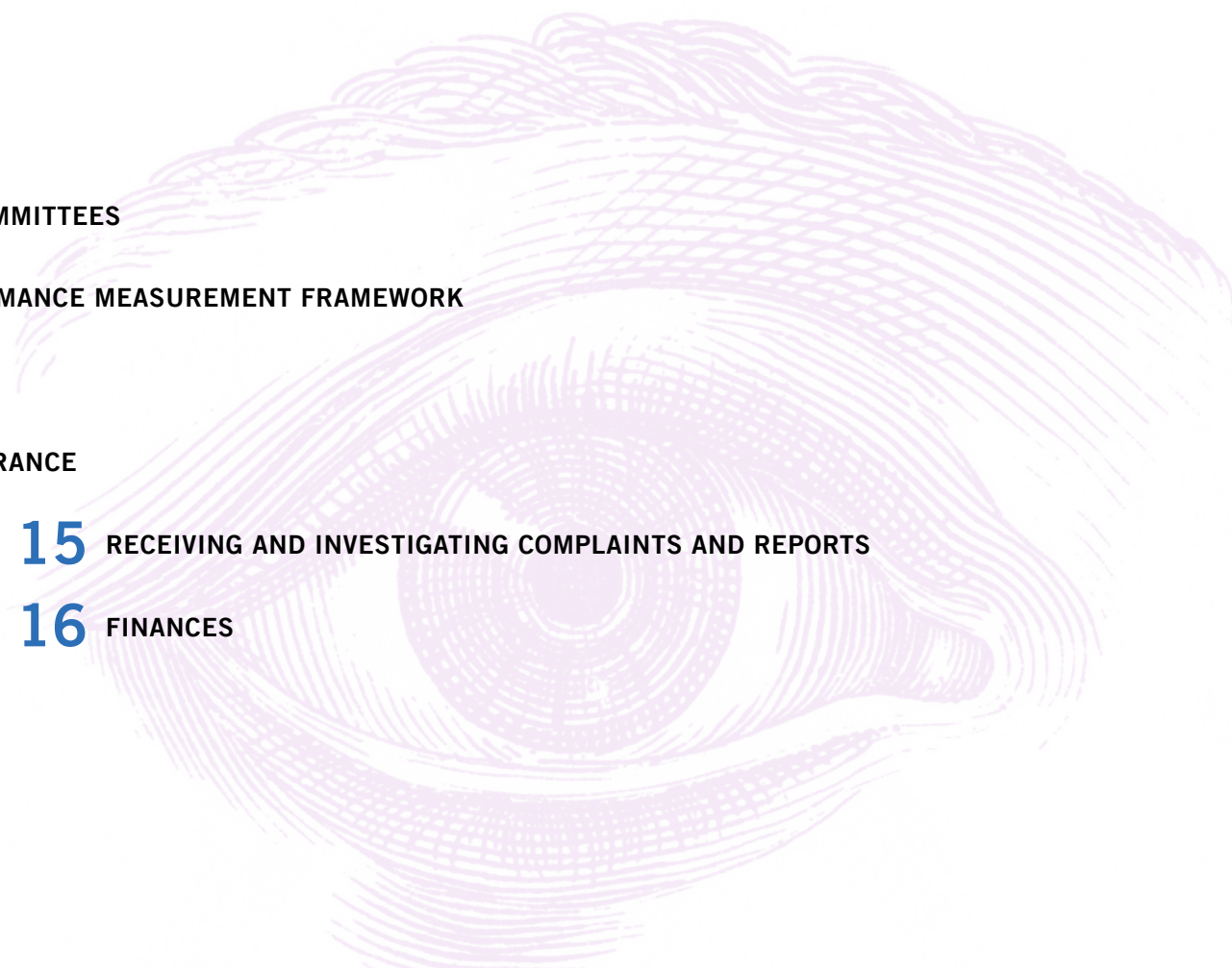


INSPIRING PUBLIC CONFIDENCE IN THE PROFESSION OF OPTOMETRY



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WHO WE ARE

Optometry has been a regulated profession in Ontario since 1919. The College of Optometrists of Ontario is the regulatory body responsible for registering (licensing) and governing optometrists in the province. The College's authority and limitations of its powers can be found in the [*Regulated Health Professions Act*](#) and the [*Optometry Act*](#).

We ensure optometrists are competent and qualified registrants who adhere to best practices and prioritize patient safety. We do this by setting entry-to-practice standards, carrying out a Quality Assurance Program, setting standards for practising eye care, and receiving and investigating complaints from patients across Ontario.

Mission: To regulate Ontario's doctors of optometry in the public interest.

Vision: To ensure that the public understands, trusts, and has confidence in optometrists.

Values:

1. Approachability	4. Accountability
2. Integrity	5. Collaboration
3. Transparency	6. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion



LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Multiple health regulated Colleges in Ontario are currently reviewing the scope of practice in the profession they govern and are examining where further scope expansion will benefit the public. Optometry is one of the professions currently working through this process. Many optometrists are educated beyond current scope in Ontario. This reality is at the forefront of concern as an essential resource in healthcare that is not being fully accessed.



DR. MARK ELTIS OD
PRESIDENT

With that in mind, the college has worked through the Tripartite Working Group (alongside the OAO and the University of Waterloo School of Optometry and Vision Science) to provide the government with recommendations to expand the current scope of practice in the public interest. The process of regulatory amendment is well prescribed within the various acts and regulations which the College will expediate to the best of our ability. We will keep the public and membership updated on further developments and hope to have more good news in the near future.

Continuing our commitment to public protection, we have embedded the practice of “right touch regulation” from policy decision making through to the receiving, investigating, and resolving of complaints.

Right touch regulation is simply utilizing the minimum regulatory force needed to achieve a maximum positive outcome in the public interest. Right touch regulation is not designed to ignore serious concerns. Rather, it assesses matters on a case-by-case basis and applies

intentional proportionality. In other words, a thoughtful, measured, and reasonable solution is found. In many circumstances, the root of the concern is based on misunderstanding or lack of communication between parties. In such circumstances (where it is appropriate), the College will work with the concerned person and the optometrist directly to clarify any miscommunication and restore proper patient relationships at an early stage. This can promote a quick resolution for all parties involved and, in many cases, avoid a formal complaints process from being initiated.

Our College has been committed to assessing concerns with a first lens of right touch regulation. Such practices not only fulfill our mandate of protecting the public interest, but will hopefully reassure and inspire the confidence of our members.

As the College derives its funding from mandatory membership dues, we are conscious of our responsibility to manage our finances with great care. I am extraordinarily proud to report that in 2023 we achieved a balanced budget (in fact, there was a modest surplus) and new efficiencies were found. This was even more notable considering our fees have not been raised for over a decade despite increased costs of operation and inflation.

Our talented staff provide Council and committees with invaluable support and innovative ideas. They are the foundation that enables the College to operate smoothly and effectively.

Our College has been committed to assessing concerns with a first lens of right touch regulation.

Our committees worked diligently throughout the year to carry out projects, improve by-laws, update policies, and execute the core mandate areas of the College. I would like to thank all our Council and committee members for contributing significant time and effort to the work of the College in 2023.

I look forward to helping Council navigate new challenges and strive for excellence in 2024.

Sincerely,
Dr. Mark Eltis, OD
President



LETTER FROM THE REGISTRAR

As the dedication of staff and Council pave the way for organizational excellence, the College of Optometrists of Ontario continues to be a leader in the field of health regulation. I am proud of how our mission, vision, and values are prevalent and infused in the work we do, and the decisions we make. 2023 was an exciting and successful year for our College as we collaborated with fellow stakeholders and began implementing the priorities of our Strategic Plan.



JOE JAMIESON
M.ED., OCT
REGISTRAR & CEO

This year, the College began collaborating with stakeholders as part of the Scope of Practice Working Group. This working group aims to increase scope of practice for optometrists in Ontario, and as a result, improve eyecare in the province. These discussions have been valuable and effective in streamlining the expansion requests to the most critical areas in scope expansion. We look forward to continuing these discussions with our partners next year.

2023 was the year of mobilization as staff and committees began implementing the College's Strategic Plan. Our 2023-2025 Strategic Plan is centered around our mission to regulate optometrists in the public interest, and our vision of inspiring public confidence in the profession of optometry. The College had a successful first year of implementation thanks to our dedicated staff and Council who put in the required time and energy to move our strategic plan from theory to reality.

One of the strategic priorities we implemented was our Focus Group Project, which fell under the "Broaden Stakeholder Engagement" category.

Throughout 2023, the College travelled to nine cities across Ontario to meet with registrants and members of the public to get their perspectives on both the practice and regulation of optometry. These focus groups provided a valuable opportunity for the exchange of ideas, perspectives, and insights, all of which will be used to help form policies and communication strategies for the College in the future. A special thank you to optometrists in each of the cities who came out to provide their thoughts and feedback. In 2024, staff will begin analyzing the data and writing a paper to summarize our findings.

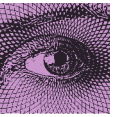
The College had a successful first year of implementation thanks to our dedicated staff and Council

Another implemented strategic priority in the "Broaden Stakeholder Engagement" category included presenting to the students at the University of Waterloo School of Optometry and Vision Science. During a visit to the School, we presented to third-year optometry students on the topics of professional regulation, professional conduct, and jurisprudence. This presentation acted as a great first step in building a working relationship between prospective doctors and the College that will regulate them. Through these presentations, we hope to heighten the awareness of the privilege of professionalism while also emphasizing the importance of right-touch regulation.

At the College of Optometrists of Ontario, we believe right-touch regulation is critical to the role of the modern regulatory body. Right-touch regulation allows us to inspire public confidence in the profession of optometry by regarding our registrants as competent and qualified eye doctors, while using the appropriate amount of regulatory authority to address issues as they arise.

Heading into 2024, I remain confident in our ability to use right-touch regulation to maintain our stance as a leader in health regulation. It continues to be a privilege and an honour to regulate optometrists in the public interest, and I look forward to seeing the positive impact we can have in 2024.

Sincerely,
Joe Jamieson, M.Ed., OCT
Registrar & CEO



STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

BROADEN STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT



- Nurtured public trust and confidence through direct engagement in focus groups with optometrists and members of the public, with ethics approval from University of Waterloo
- College delivered a presentation to third-year students at the School of Optometry and Vision Science, University of Waterloo, in September to increase professional awareness, knowledge of jurisprudence, enhance the relationship with the School, and heighten awareness of the privilege of professionalism.
- Leveraged technology to promote operational excellence:
 - Certificate of Authorization renewals automated with online fee payment capacity
 - Jurisprudence examination enhanced to provide save features and regular reports generated on candidate performance in different areas
- Developed a 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 is optional.

DEVELOP AND CARRY OUT A RESEARCH AGENDA



- Research Steering Group established to oversee research activities and develop a granting program.
- Through the new College Research Grant Program, three regulatory research projects were funded:
 - 1) a project exploring the complexities of being a professional in the context of social media, the internet, and widespread digital culture
 - 2) a project exploring new and emerging model of peer-based quality assurance
 - 3) a project exploring models of optometric telehealth
- Two internal research projects carried forward:
 - 1) an analysis of the health profession regulatory landscape in Ontario, and
 - 2) a focus group project collecting perspectives on optometry and its regulation in Ontario

ENSURE THE PUBLIC'S ACCESS TO CARE



- Work in progress

ENHANCE DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION



- 2 (a), 6 (a, b, c) DEI educational sessions at Council Orientation and 2/4 Council meetings
- 2 (b) Virtual land acknowledgement developed and recited at virtual Council meetings, and virtual committee meetings
- 2 (c) Incorporated DEI into Fall elections
- 4 (a) On Council meeting dates with a DEI speaker, the Council feedback survey includes question (question #7), “How relevant did you find today’s DEI presentation to your work as a Council/Committee member?” where they can provide a rating. There is a section for open feedback.
- 4 (e), 5 (e) DEI Webpage created (includes box for public comments, notation that College can investigate complaints around discrimination), and was shared with ODS
- 5 (b) Staff-focused DEI learning sessions delivered over email or in-person (August to December 2023)
- 5 (g) Case studies or scenarios in the August newsletter and in the October/November newsletter
- 5 (h) Staff participated in a plain language workshop
- 6 (c) Unconscious Bias training provided to the Quality Assurance Committee during orientation and the Inquiries, Complaints, and Reports Committee during initial meetings
- 6 (e) Staff held a potluck with dishes from each person’s culture
- 7 (b) College representative attended the June 21, 2023, HPRO Anti-Racism in Health Regulation Project - Implementation Workshop for EDI Tools

CONSTRUCTIVELY IMPLEMENT GOVERNANCE REFORM



- Being an active and proactive participant in shaping regulatory reform proactively through College participation and representation on Ministry of Health and Health Professions Regulators of Ontario (HPRO) board, workgroups, advisory teams: The College Registrar is a member of the HPRO Management Committee and engages in regular dialogue vis-à-vis modernization
- The Governance-HR Committee is the lead committee for the implementation of legislated reforms and is briefed regularly on reform topics and policies, bylaws, etc., which are designed with modernization in mind.



COUNCIL AND COMMITTEES

2023 COUNCIL



Missing: Ms. Lisa Holland, Dr. Dino Mastronardi, and Dr. Areef Nurani

Dr. Mark Eltis (President)
Dr. Pooya Hemami (Vice President)
Mr. Joe Jamieson (Registrar & CEO)
Ms. Hanan Jibry (Deputy Registrar)
Ms. Suzanne Allen
Dr. Lisa Christian

Dr. Camy Grewal
Ms. Lisa Holland
Ms. Esther Jooda
Mr. Howard Kennedy
Dr. Richard Kniaziew
Dr. Dino Mastronardi

Dr. Kamy Morcos
Dr. Areef Nurani
Mr. Narendra Shah
Mr. Olutoye Soile
Mr. Andre Tilban-Rios
Dr. William Ulakovic
Dr. Abraham Yuen

COMMITTEES

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Dr. Mark Eltis, President
Dr. Pooya Hemami, Vice President

Dr. Lisa Christian
Mr. Howard Kennedy

Mr. Narendra Shah

The Executive Committee works with the Registrar to ensure that College resources are allocated properly, and that staff and committees are advancing College work and supporting Council priorities.

AUDIT/FINANCE/RISK

Mr. Narendra Shah, Chair
Ms. Suzanne Allen

Mr. Howard Kennedy
Dr. Pooya Hemami

Mr. Andre Tilban-Rios
Dr. William Ulakovic

The Audit/Finance/Risk (AFR) Committee reviews and advises Council on the College's financial affairs, including the investment strategy, auditor review and financial planning. The Committee also oversees the College's overall risk management framework.

GOVERNANCE/H.R.

Dr. Lisa Christian, Chair
Dr. Camy Grewal

Dr. Abraham Yuen
Ms. Lisa Holland

Mr. Olutoye Soile

The Governance/HR Committee is a standing committee that aids Council in achieving high standards in transparent and ethical self-governance through policy development, recruitment, training, evaluation, and succession planning.

INQUIRIES, COMPLAINTS AND REPORTS

Dr. Dino Mastronardi, Chair
Dr. Jenna Astorino, Panel Chair
Ms. Suzanne Allen
Dr. Mandip Gil

Dr. Ema Hazra
Ms. Lisa Holland
Ms. Esther Jooda
Mr. Howard Kennedy

Dr. Angela Kyveris
Dr. Richard Kniaziew

The Inquiries, Complaints and Reports Committee (ICRC), which sits as two independent panels, investigates, and makes decisions on allegations of professional misconduct, incompetence, or incapacity brought against registrants of the College. These allegations proceed from formal complaints, information brought to the attention of the Registrar, mandatory reports, or referrals from the Quality Assurance Committee.

FITNESS TO PRACTISE

Dr. Jay Mithani, Chair
Ms. Lisa Holland

Mr. Narendra Shah
Dr. Abraham Yuen

The Fitness to Practise Committee receives referrals from the Inquiries, Complaints and Reports Committee and conducts a hearing when there is evidence that an optometrist might be incapacitated due to a mental or physical condition.

DISCIPLINE

Dr. William Ulakovic, Chair
Ms. Suzanne Allen
Dr. Lisa Christian
Dr. William Chisholm
Dr. Mark Eltis
Dr. Camy Grewal
Dr. Vivian Habib

Dr. Pooya Hemami
Ms. Lisa Holland
Ms. Esther Jooda
Mr. Howard Kennedy
Dr. Kamy Morcos
Dr. Areef Nurani
Dr. Patrick Quaid

Mr. Narendra Shah
Dr. Karin Simon
Mr. Olutoye Soile
Mr. Andre Tilban-Rios
Dr. Marta Witer
Dr. Abraham Yuen

The Discipline Committee hears allegations of professional misconduct and/or incompetence made against a College registrant. The Committee considers evidence in each case and decides whether to order a range of penalties, including reprimands, suspensions, fines, or revocation of an optometrist's Certificate of Registration.

PATIENT RELATIONS

Ms. Suzanne Allen, Chair
Dr. Richard Kniaziew

Ms. Esther Jooda
Dr. Lianne Cousineau

Dr. Mike Yang
Dr. Olga Savitska

The Patient Relations Committee oversees a program that promotes awareness of and includes measures to prevent sexual abuse of patients. The Committee also administers a fund for therapy and counselling for patients who have been sexually abused by an optometrist. The Committee reviews issues of an ethical nature that occur in professional practice and develops education and information programs for the public and optometrists.

REGISTRATION

Dr. Abraham Yuen, Chair
Dr. Camy Grewal
Mr. Howard Kennedy

Dr. Richard Kniaziew
Dr. Patrick Quaid
Mr. Olutoye Soile

Dr. William Ulakovic

The Registration Committee is responsible for the College's entry-to-practice process, ensuring that anyone who wishes to practise in Ontario possesses certain skills, knowledge, credentials and is of good character.

QUALITY ASSURANCE COMMITTEE

The Quality Assurance Committee helps optometrists maintain and enhance their knowledge, skill, and judgment to ensure the public continues to access safe, high-quality eye care. Once the Committee is established, it splits into two panels: one panel focuses on practice assessments, while the other focuses on special projects such as the modernization of the Optometric Practice Reference (OPR).

Dr. Kamy Morcos, Chair
Dr. Lisa Christian
Dr. Jayne Cation
Dr. Nadine Furtado
Ms. Lisa Holland

Dr. Vanesh Kathiravelu
Dr. Sarah MacIver
Dr. Leah Markin
Dr. Mohammed Moussa
Dr. Larry Ng

Dr. Negar Sohbaty
Dr. Nicole Thiess
Mr. Andre Tilban-Rios



COLLEGE PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT FRAMEWORK

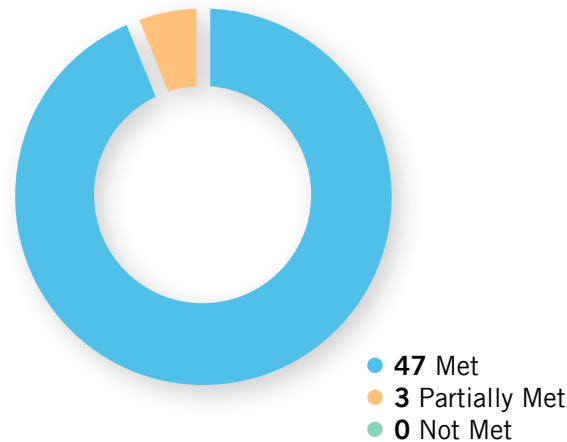
The mandate of regulatory health colleges is to regulate health care professionals in the public interest. The College Performance Measurement Framework (CPMF) is a standardized reporting tool developed by the Ministry of Health in Ontario to ensure colleges are effectively carrying out their mandate and doing so in a transparent manner. The CPMF includes 50 benchmarks that cover the regulatory functions that form the foundation of a regulatory college’s mandate. These topics are sorted into the following 7 domains:

- Governance
- Resources
- System Partner
- Information Management
- Regulatory Policies
- Suitability to Practice
- Measurement, Reporting and Improvement

Colleges must rate themselves on the benchmarks using a rating system of ‘fully met’, ‘partially met’, or ‘not met’. All improvements and regressions, as well as benchmarks with no changes, are noted in the CPMF and provide the grounds for year-to-year comparisons. Each benchmark also requires an explanation that will help provide context for the rating that was given. These written explanations help colleges identify areas for improvement and think proactively about how to remedy any benchmarks that were not rated as ‘fully met’.

Previous CPMF reports can be found on each regulatory college’s website as a means of transparency and accountability. [Click here](#) to read our past CPMF reports.

2023 CPMF RESULTS



SUMMARY OF RESULTS

Our results from 2022 are the same as 2023, with the same three benchmarks rated as ‘partially met’. The College of Optometrists of Ontario takes a conservative approach to the CPMF and only gives a ‘fully met’ rating if there is ample evidence the benchmark has been achieved. Below you will find information on the three benchmarks that have been rated as ‘partially met’, as well as the College’s plans to remedy these ratings for next year:

- 3.3b The College conducts Equity Impact Assessments to ensure that decisions are fair and that a policy, or program, or process is not discriminatory.

While the College has a separate DEI Plan to guide our implementation of DEI initiatives, we do not currently have tools in place to conduct DEI assessments. We are actively supporting the work of HPRO as it develops tools and resources for colleges to advance their work in DEI.

- 10.1a Provide examples of how the College assists registrants in implementing required changes to standards of practice or practice guidelines (beyond communicating the existence of new standard, FAQs, or supporting documents).

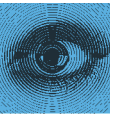
The Quality Assurance Committee is planning on modernizing the Optometric Practice Reference (OPR) in 2024. In early 2023, a survey was sent out to registrants to gather feedback on structure, language, and presentation of the current practice standards. This feedback will guide the QAC as they move forward with the OPR modernization project.

An “At-A-Glance” section was created on the Practice Standards webpage to assist registrants in identifying the most recent changes. Registrants are encouraged to contact the practice advisors if they have any questions regarding the changes to the practice standards. An evaluation on the effectiveness of these supports was not conducted.

A survey will be conducted in the final stages of the OPR modernization project to gather registrant feedback.

- 14.3a – Performance results related to a College’s strategic objectives and regulatory outcomes are made public on the College’s website.

Some performance results related to regulatory outcomes can be found in our annual reports, which are published on our website. This year we began tracking the performance of our strategic objectives, defined in our Strategic Plan, using the Strategic Priorities Tracker. This tracker is available on our website and will be refined and communicated in our annual reports, including the current 2023 report.



REGISTRATION

Registration with the College is the first step candidates take in applying to become a certified optometrist, and it is often the first interaction candidates have with the College. Through the administration of the Jurisprudence exams, and assessing entry-to-practice exams, the Registration committee ensures optometrists entering the profession are competent and qualified.

EMERGENCY CLASS OF REGISTRATION

On April 14, 2022, the Ontario Government passed the *Pandemic and Emergency Preparedness Act, 2022*. As a response to the COVID-19 pandemic, this legislation required all regulatory health colleges to establish an Emergency Class of Registration, which will help the province to respond and recover from future emergency healthcare circumstances.

The Registration department ensures optometrists entering the profession are competent and qualified.

The proposed amendments to registration were approved by Council on March 2, 2023, and were then circulated to registrants, stakeholders, and the public for feedback. The College did not receive any major suggestions during this consultation window, which lasted for a period of 60 days. The College submitted our initial Emergency Class of Registration document to the Ministry on May 1, and then the Registrar and

President signed the finalized document on July 31. The proposed Emergency Class of Registration was brought into force on August 31, 2023.

The Emergency Class of Registration will allow, under the circumstances laid out in the Act, optometry students in their final year of an accredited optometry degree program, to provide eye care to the public. These students will only be able to practise using the title 'optometrist (emergency class)' while under supervision of a registrant with the College.

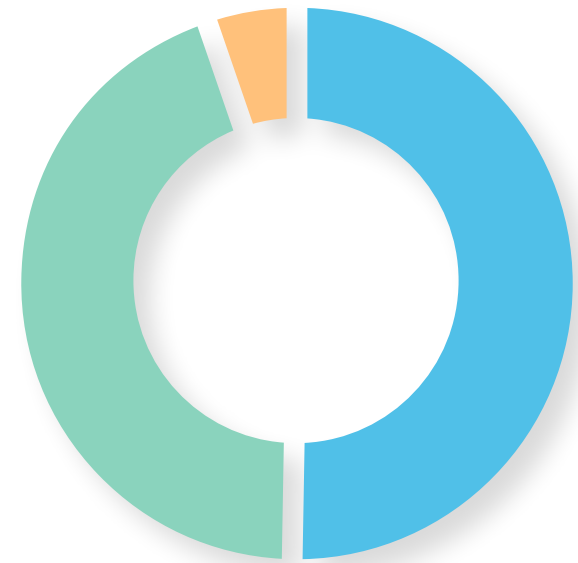
ONLINE APPLICATION/COA

The online application portal that was launched in 2022, has proven to be a beneficial tool for registration applicants. Certificate of Authorization registrants also benefited from renewing and paying for their renewals online. This resulted in expedited renewal processes and reduced cost and resources. In 2023, 134 applications through the online portal and over 1100 certificate of authorization renewals were completed online.

ENTRY-TO-PRACTICE EXAMINATIONS

Along with the Jurisprudence examination, applicants must complete an entry-to-practice examination to become registered with the College as optometrists. The College approved two examinations to serve the purpose of an entry-to-practice exam in 2023: the Optometry Examining Board of Canada (OEBC) exam, and the National Board of Examiners in Optometry exam (NBEO). Both exams continue to be equally sought after by applicants.

TYPE OF EXAM CHALLENGED



- 69 NBEO
- 61 OEBC
- 7 Labour Mobility

The College ensures the entry-to-practice exams adhere to standards through observation and oversight. The Registration Committee plans to observe the OEBC examination in Spring 2024, while the Chair of the Registration Committee has been invited to review changes being made to Part III of the NBEO examination.

INTERNATIONALLY EDUCATED CANDIDATES

A portion of our applicants are internationally educated, and it is the role of the College provide them with a pathway for registration with the College.

International candidates are welcome to challenge the Internationally Graduated Optometrist Evaluating Examination (IGOEE) as a path to pre-registering with the College. In 2020, the College approved the establishment of an IGOEE fund to sustain the examination in case candidate registrations fall below the break-even number. In March 2023, the number of examinees was 16, which fell below Touchstone Institute’s requirement for sustainable exam administration. The College provided Touchstone Institute with the requested funding amount of \$30,000.

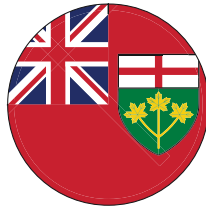
WHERE NEW OPTOMETRISTS WERE EDUCATED



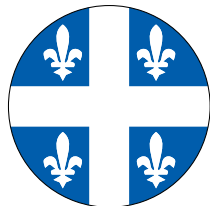
77 U.S.A.



6 UK



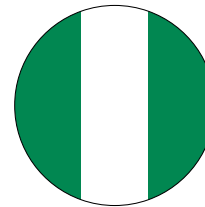
66 Ontario



1 Quebec



1 Iran



2 Nigeria



1 New Zealand



1 India

REGISTRANTS BY THE NUMBERS

Number of Registrants: 2,891

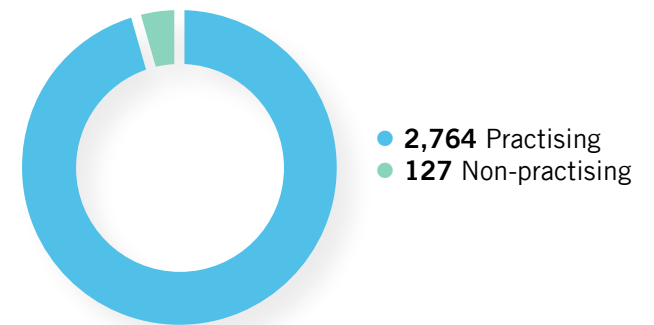
Number of Registrants by Gender

Female: 1,751

Male: 1,139

Other: 1

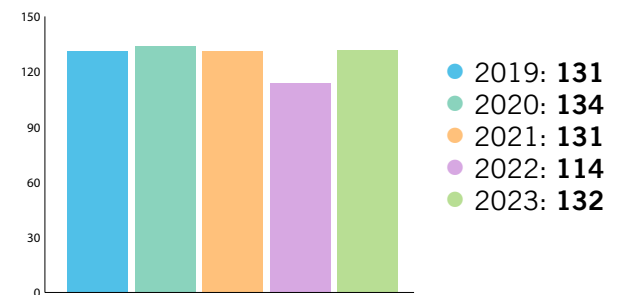
Number of Registrants by Practising Status



Number of Newly Registered Optometrists in 2023

132

Number of New Registrants in Last Five Years





QUALITY ASSURANCE

The Quality Assurance (QA) Program enables us to assess our registrants' competency within eyecare and assist them in continuing their learning and education throughout their career as optometrists.

The QA program includes:

- A mandatory Continuing Education component and subsequent audit process.
- Peer-conducted Practice Assessments to appraise the practice of registrants.
- A Practice Evaluation component to evaluate registrants' clinical ability.
- A Remediation component to assist registrants in correcting deficiencies in practice or clinical ability.

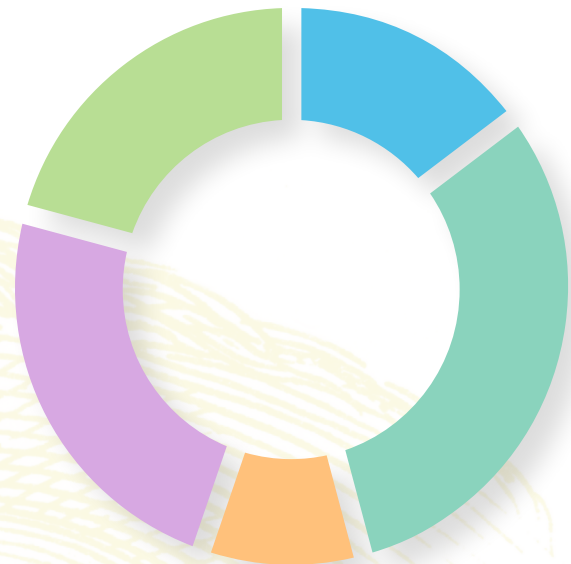
PRACTICE ASSESSMENTS

Practice Assessments are one of the main ways we assess registrants and help them identify areas for improvement. Practice Assessments allow for interaction between various parties, including registrants, quality assurance (QA) assessors, and the QA Panel. Practice assessments require an optometrist to submit 12 clinical records for first-time patients who have received a complete oculo-visual examination. These records are given to a QA assessor to review and provide a summary of the results to the QA Panel, which determines next steps for the registrant. QA assessors are registered optometrists who have received frequent training to ensure consistency across assessments.

141 practice assessments were completed in 2023. 51 of these assessments were started and completed in 2023, while 61 assessments were carried over from previous years and completed this year. The remaining 29 assessments went

through the new practice assessment process (Chart Review Protocol Pre-Testing) and are waiting for results.

PRACTICE ASSESSMENTS RESULTS IN 2023*



- 21 Awaiting decision
 - 9 Discharged from Process (standards being met)
 - 6 Referred for Remediation
 - 5 Discharged with Feedback from QA Panel
 - 5 CRP Pre-testing (awaiting decision in 2024)
- TOTAL: 141**

*These results are based on the assessment of first-time patient records, not returning patients.**

Of the 34 registrants who were discharged with feedback, we found the most common reminder sent to ODs was for recordkeeping (Optometric Practice Reference 5.1).

MOST COMMON REMINDERS SENT TO REGISTRANTS THROUGH PRACTICE ASSESSMENTS

21	Recordkeeping (OPR 5.1)
9	Family ocular health history and use of medication (OPR 4.2, 5.1)
6	Accommodative function when clinically indicated & in school-aged children (OPR 4.2)
5	Further investigation/testing for glaucoma suspect (OPR 4.2, 6.8, 7.2)
5	BV assessment and therapy – (OPR 4.2, 6.7)
12	Other (OPR 4.2, 4.4, 6.1 and 6.2)

UPDATE ON QA REDEVELOPMENT PROJECT: PRACTICE ASSESSMENT

Last year, the Quality Assurance (QA) Committee began work on the QA Redevelopment Project, which involves redesigning the practice assessment process. The new practice assessment will include two parts: a screening tool to help identify deficiencies, and an interview-based assessment, which will be tailored to the individual registrant's area(s) of deficiencies.

The QA Committee made significant progress on part one of the project in 2023 and has taken many steps to develop a high-quality screening tool that will be used by registrants. This year the Committee completed a feasibility study, a cut score study, and two rounds of testing on part one of the new practice assessment. The feasibility study was sent to all registrants in January and included a survey that asked for their feedback on the feasibility of the new practice assessment, such as the number and type of records that are required, as well as the age categories of the patients whose records are submitted. The results of this survey helped guide the QA Committee to be mindful of registrants' time when working on the project, and to ensure the new practice assessment is manageable. A cut score study was also carried out in June 2023 and helped determine the standard passing score for the screening tool. The screening tool then went through its first round of testing in late summer, and after some improvements were made, the screening tool was sent to 29 randomly selected registrants as part of the inter-rater reliability study. The next step in the process is for the reports to go to the QA panel for review, where they will select 12 registrants to go on to the next phase of the assessment.

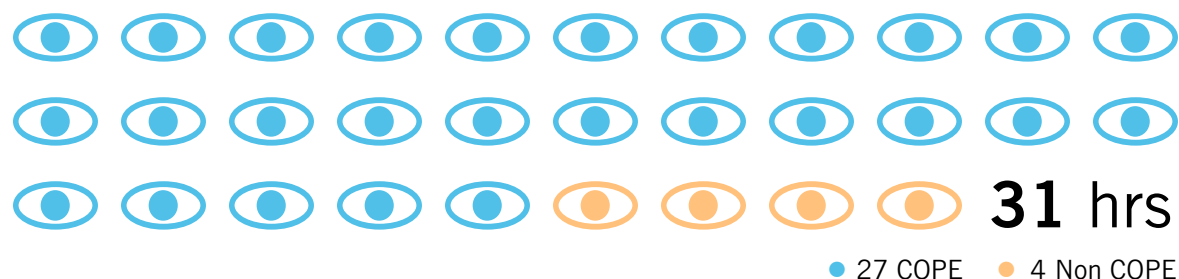
The QA Committee also held four assessor training sessions throughout the latter half of 2023 to ensure the optometrists can confidently assess records using the new practice assessment.

Work on part two of the new practice assessment is set to begin in early 2024.

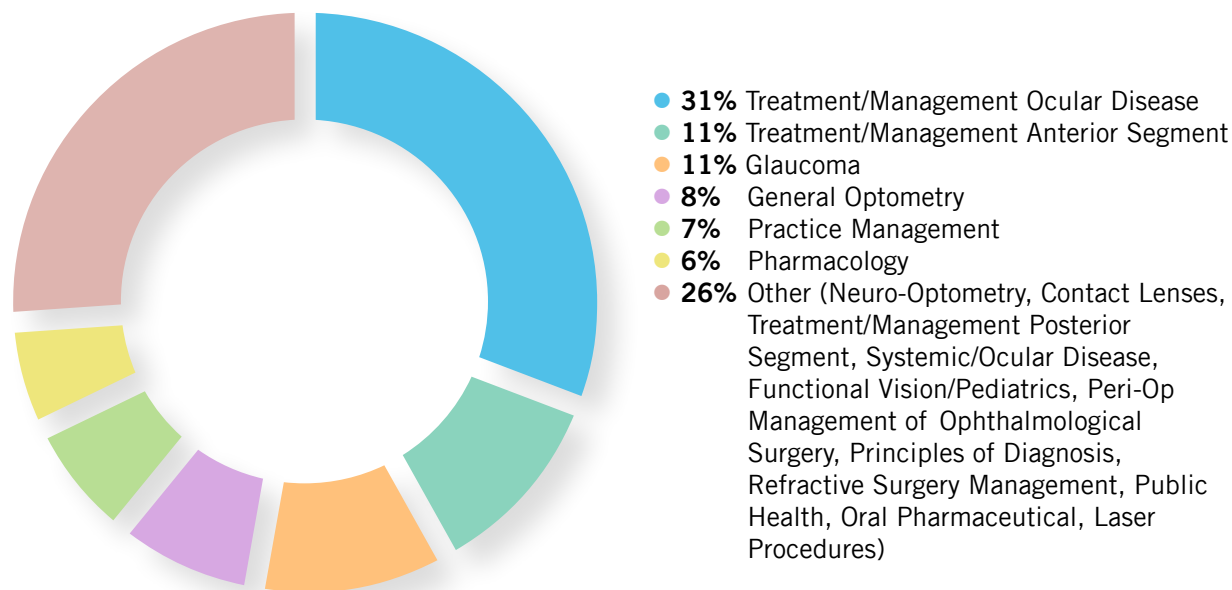
CONTINUING EDUCATION

2023 was the last year of the 2020-2023 Continuing Education Cycle. The new three-year cycle will run from January 1, 2024 – December 31, 2026.

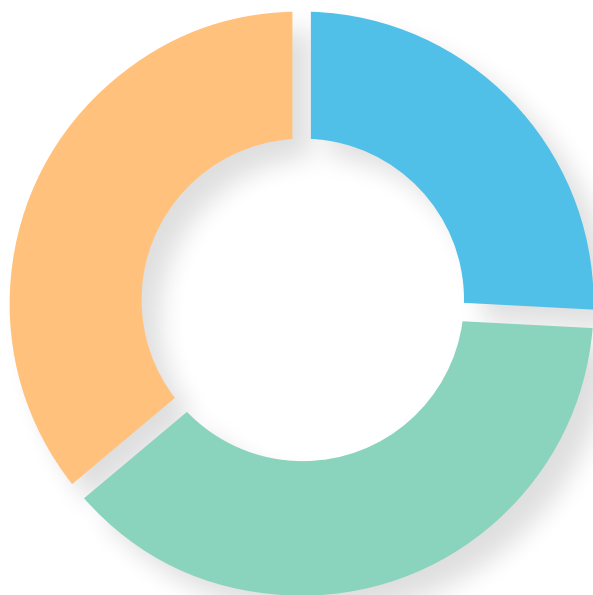
AVERAGE NUMBER OF CE HOURS COMPLETED BY REGISTRANTS IN 2023



MOST POPULAR CE COURSE TOPICS IN 2023



% OF CE COURSES TAKEN BY COURSE FORMAT



- 26% Synchronous In-person
- 38% Synchronous Virtual
- 36% Asynchronous

Update on QA Redevelopment Project: Self-Assessment Tool

The Self-Assessment tool is a new component that will be added onto the current Continuing Education program.

Mandated by the *Regulated Health Professions Act (RHPA), 1991, Section 80.1* the Quality Assurance (QA) Program for all colleges shall include self, peer, and practice assessments. In 2022, subject matter experts developed a

self-assessment tool based on real-life eyecare scenarios and key risks that were identified by the College.

This year, the College completed a pilot program of the new self-assessment tool. Twenty registrants were randomly selected to participate in the pilot testing which was completed in July. Upon receiving positive feedback from the pilot testing, the QA Committee worked with the external vendor to make further improvements, and on September 15, 2023, Council approved the self-assessment component of the College's QA program.

The Self-Assessment Tool is set to launch in the beginning of 2024, coinciding with the start of the new CE Cycle. This tool will assist optometrists in identifying eyecare areas that need improvement, while also providing the resources to create a custom learning plan. Ultimately, this learning plan will help them engage in meaningful CE activities that reflect their areas that require improvement.

OPR MODERNIZATION PROJECT

The Optometry Practice Reference (OPR) articulates the current regulatory and professional standards of practice for optometry in Ontario and provides guidelines for practitioners wishing to exceed the basic requirements.

In 2023, there was direction from Council to conduct an environmental scan for the OPR to determine how the tool is currently viewed and used by registrants, and if any improvements could be made. The Clinical Practice Panel (CPP) saw this as an opportunity to conduct a

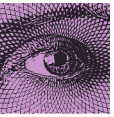
comprehensive review of the document, and to modernize the document by making it more user-friendly.

CPP conducted an environmental scan of the standards of practice from other regulatory health colleges in Ontario, as well as those of other provincial optometric regulators. Additionally, they reviewed the results of a survey that was sent out in 2022, which gathered registrant feedback on the changes that had been made to the the OPR that year.

After reviewing this information, CPP decided to move forward with the OPR Modernization Project and sent out a Request for Proposals (RFP) to modernize the standards of practice reference guide for optometrists. By the end of 2023, two consultants presented to the Special Projects Panel and one consultant was chosen. Work on the OPR is expected to begin in early 2024.

This year, the College completed a pilot program of the new self-assessment tool...

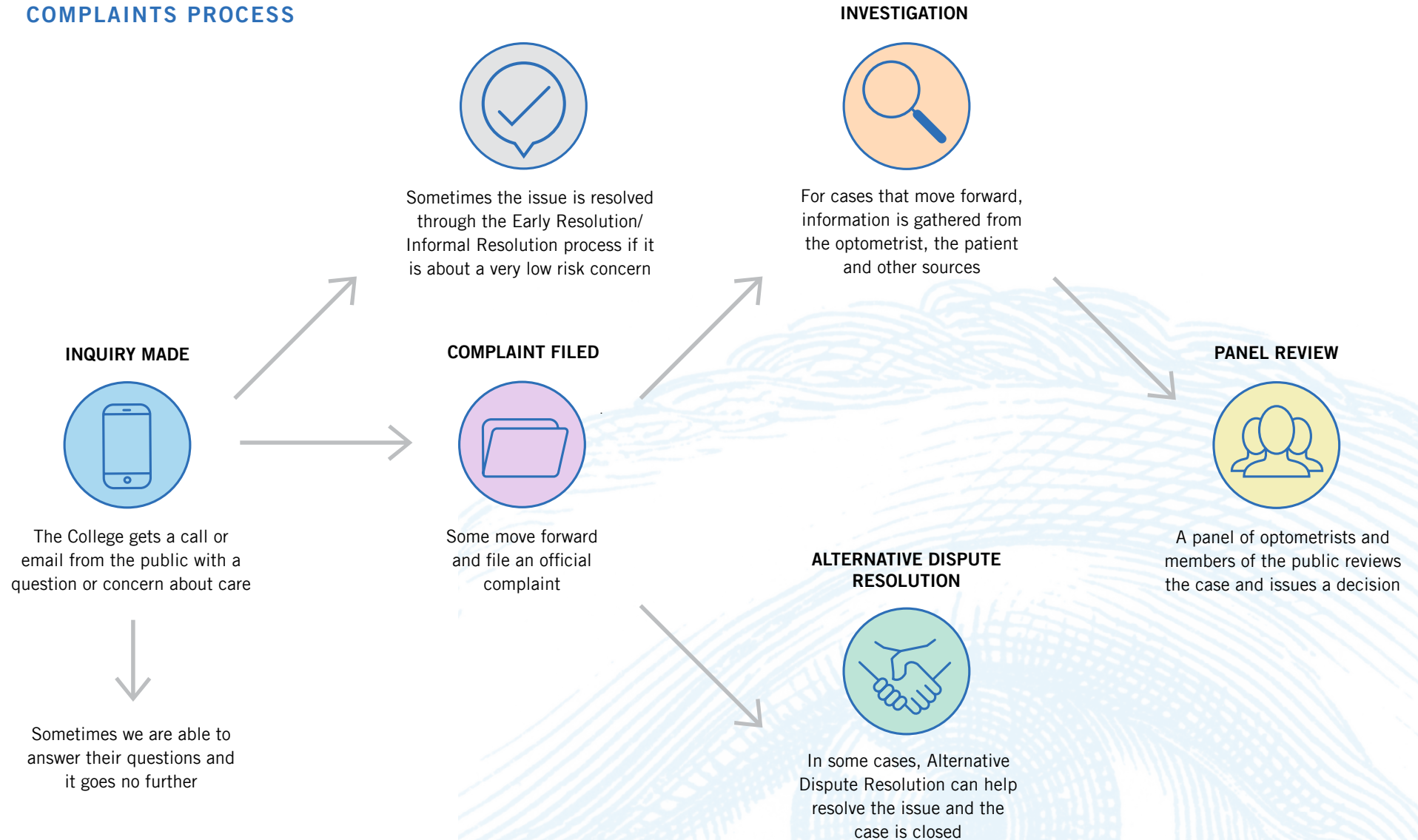
This tool will assist optometrists in identifying eyecare areas that need improvement, while also providing the resources to create a custom learning plan.



RECEIVING AND INVESTIGATING COMPLAINTS AND REPORTS

The role of the College is to regulate the profession of optometry in the public interest. The Investigations department regulates the profession by receiving and investigating concerns raised about an optometrist's conduct, competence, or capacity. The Inquiries, Complaints and Reports Committee (ICRC) oversees investigations arising from complaints and reports filed with the College.

COMPLAINTS PROCESS



When the College receives a formal complaint or report, we investigate the allegations. A panel of optometrists and members of the public (which make up the ICRC) reviews the cases and issues decisions with the help of a Risk Assessment Framework to guide its decision-making. The decision can include issuing advice and recommendation, requiring the optometrist to take part in educational and remedial activities to improve their practice, referring the optometrist to the Discipline Committee for a public hearing, or taking no further action.

HOW INVESTIGATIONS PROCEEDED IN 2023

73 Cases Filed
(67 complaints, 6 Registrar's Investigations Initiated)

2 complaints were resolved through Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR)

6 cases were withdrawn (this includes cases filed in previous years)

55 Cases Reviewed by ICRC in 2023 (includes cases filed in previous years)

61 Decisions Issued:

- No further action: 43
- Advice/Recommendation: 3
- Remedial Agreement: 8
- Specified Continuing Education and Remedial Program (SCERP): 1

- Oral Caution: 0
- Acknowledgment and Undertaking: 4
- Frivolous and Vexatious: 1
- Referral to the Discipline Committee: 1

Remaining cases not yet reviewed carried over to 2024

FINANCES

The College Council approved the audited financial statements for the fiscal year ending December 31, 2023, at the June 21, 2024, Council Meeting. Please refer to the full audited financial statements on the College [website](#).

MOST COMMON COMPLAINTS IN 2023*

7%	Billing and Fees	29%	Professional Conduct & Behaviour
16%	Communication	1%	Unauthorized Practice
55%	Competence/Patient Care	6%	Record keeping

**A complaint can raise concerns that fall under multiple categories; therefore, the total of the graphic does not add to 100%.*

Most of the complaints received in 2023 fell into two categories: competence/patient care, and professional conduct & behaviour. Competence and patient care include allegations of inadequate care, incorrect prescription, failure to refer to a specialist or diagnose, and incorrect diagnosis or improper treatment. Professional Conduct & Behaviour include allegations of unprofessionalism and unethical conduct, failure to maintain the standards of practice of the profession, practising the profession while in a conflict of interest or breach of confidentiality.

DISCIPLINE

There were no discipline hearings in 2023. The Discipline Committee received one referral from the Inquiries, Complaints, and Reports Committee in 2023. Information on upcoming hearings can be found on our website: <https://collegeoptom.on.ca/public/discipline/discipline-hearings/>