
2018 Annual Report to Government



ALBERTA college
of OPTOMETRISTS

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Our Mission, Mandate and Values

The Mission of the Alberta College of Optometrists is to protect and serve the public by regulating, promoting excellence and providing direction to our Regulated Members.

Mandate

- We will carry out our activities and govern our Regulated Members in a manner that protects and serves the public interest.
- We will provide direction to our Regulated Members and regulate the practice of optometry.
- We will establish, maintain and enforce appropriate registration requirements, a Continuing Competence Program and Standards of Practice for the profession of optometry.
- We will establish, maintain and enforce a Code of Ethics.
- We will carry on the activities of the college and perform all other duties and functions in accordance with the *Health Professions Act*.

Values

- We value the privilege of self-regulation granted to us by the Government and the people of Alberta.
- We value honesty, fairness, reasonableness, transparency and effectiveness in our daily activities.
- We value improved patient outcomes supported by collegial and professional communication with other health care practitioners, technological innovation, evidence-based research and implementation of new and improved models of patient care.
- We value individual practitioner responsibility for always striving to do what is in the best interests of the patient and meeting generally accepted standards of care.
- We value the personal and professional commitment required of competent, knowledgeable, skilled and caring practitioners to ensure they maintain their level of competence throughout their careers.
- We value flexibility, transparency, honesty and reasonableness in discussions and joint endeavors with government and all other external stakeholders.
- We value feedback from patients, the provincial government, other regulatory colleges and any other interested stakeholder on our activities and performance.



2018 ACO Council



Front Row (seated from Left to Right)

Mrs. Barbara Boyer (Public Council Member)

Dr. Nasir Khan (President-Elect)

Back Row (standing from Left to Right)

Dr. Gordon Hensel (Registrar)

Dr. Samantha Giang (Regulated Council Member)

Dr. Rob McLaughlin (Regulated Council Member)

Dr. James Thompson (President)

Dr. Rob Kloepfer (Regulated Council Member)

Dr. Nohad Teliani (Regulated Council Member)

Dr. Tom Wilk (Regulated Council Member)

Regrets – Dr. Jennifer Zwicker (Public Council Member)

President's Report

2018 marked yet another successful and positive year for the profession of optometry. The Alberta College of Optometrists is extremely appreciative of the privilege granted by the Alberta Government to allow us to regulate and guide Doctors of Optometry in the best interests of the public.

I have a dream that one day, our noble profession will be truly self-regulating, finally unencumbered by archaic legislation, and practicing to the highest level of our education. I am extremely proud that the Alberta College of Optometrist (ACO) Council and Alberta optometrists have embraced:

- The pursuit of advanced education designations, specialty residencies and rigorous vision care certification courses as well as continually surpassing the minimum maintenance of competence requirements in an effort to increase professional collaboration and communication with other health professionals and improve patient outcomes.
- The need for a Western School of Optometry that is based in Alberta due to the multitude of benefits for the general public, the Alberta government and our profession. This school would be able to provide vision care services to underserved areas of the province, distant rural and indigenous populations as well as offering specialty vision care clinics that could be accessed by all Albertans.
- The creation of national Standards of Practice, Clinical Practice Guidelines, legislated authorities, maintenance of continuing competence requirements and common registration requirements to ensure that all Canadians benefit from Doctors of Optometry meeting specific minimum standards.



The pursuit and achievement of these ideals will improve patient outcomes, increase health system efficiencies and allow Alberta optometrists to serve the public of Alberta in a fashion they need and deserve. I look forward to this future.

Dr. James Thompson.
President, ACO

Public Member's Report

The Alberta College of Optometrists (ACO) has two Public Members, as mandated by the *Health Professions Act*. Dr. Jennifer Zwicker is an Assistant Professor and Director of Health Policy at the University Of Calgary School Of Public Policy and is in her second three-year term as a Public Member on council. Mrs. Barbara Boyer is a Registered Nurse and health care consultant, and is in her first year of her first three-year term as a Public Member on council.

We are extremely honored and privileged to serve as Public Members on the ACO Council. As voting members in council meetings who are not optometrists, we represent the public's interest on the ACO Council in governing and carrying out its mandate in a manner that protects and serves the public's interests. As volunteer Albertans appointed by the Government of Alberta, we have been engaged in the maintenance and enforcement of the Code of Ethics, Standards of Practice, registration requirements and a Continuing Competence Program as they impact Regulated Members.

The council and staff of the ACO consistently demonstrate their commitment to protect and serve the public interest of all Albertans. They act with integrity and transparency in a fiscally responsible manner. With increasing emphasis on effective governance of council and efficient decision-making that keeps the public interest at the forefront, we commend them for their professionalism. The ACO continues to strive to support members in practicing to their full scope of practice. We are confident that the ACO council will continue to fulfill its mandate to protect and serve the public by regulating and providing direction to the optometric profession.

The ACO has provided strong leadership for other health professions to follow and continues to develop good working relationships with government partners. We expect that this will continue to enable a smooth rollout of training, key legislation and updates to Regulated Members as they begin to access important patient information within Netcare. Improving access to health information is another way for members to maintain their standards of excellence in providing Albertans with safe and high quality optometric health care.

Moving forward, we look forward to improving processes that encourage greater stakeholder consultation with the general public, the government and all other stakeholders.

Respectfully submitted,
Dr. Jennifer Zwicker & Mrs. Barbara Boyer
Public Members, Alberta College of Optometrists

Governance

The Alberta College of Optometrists (ACO) Council manages and conducts the activities of the college, exercises the rights, powers and privileges and carries out the duties of the college in the name of and on behalf of the college. The ACO Council operates under a Policy Governance structure.

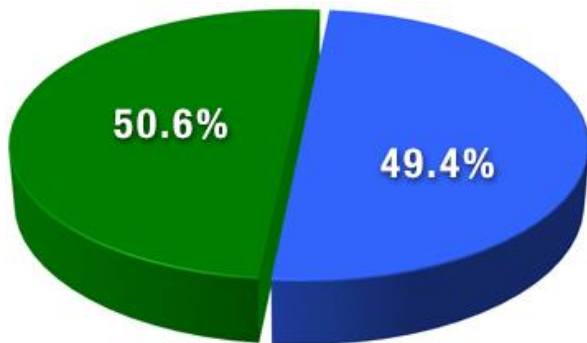
The ACO Council is comprised of six voting and one non-voting Regulated Council Members elected at our Annual General Meeting and two Public Council Members appointed by the government.

In 2017, Mrs. Barbara Boyer was appointed by the provincial government to her first three-year term and Dr. Jennifer Zwicker was reappointed for her second three-year term on Council. As such, both will have their three-year terms expire in December, 2020.

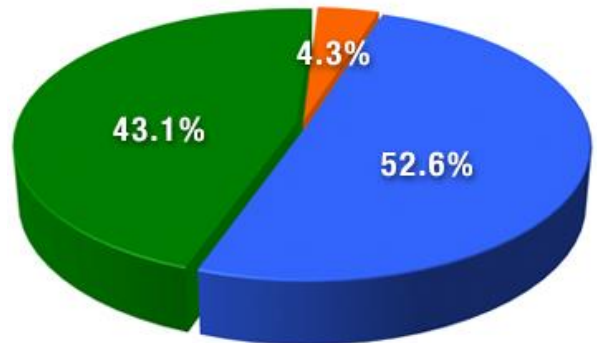
All college committees are governed by strict guidelines, Terms of Reference and operating policies as directed by the spirit and law of the *Health Professions Act*, *Optometrists Profession Regulation*, ACO Bylaws and the ACO Policy Governance Manual. These guidelines, Terms of Reference and policies are reviewed on a regular basis to ensure they continue to be reasonable, legally correct, effective and enforceable.



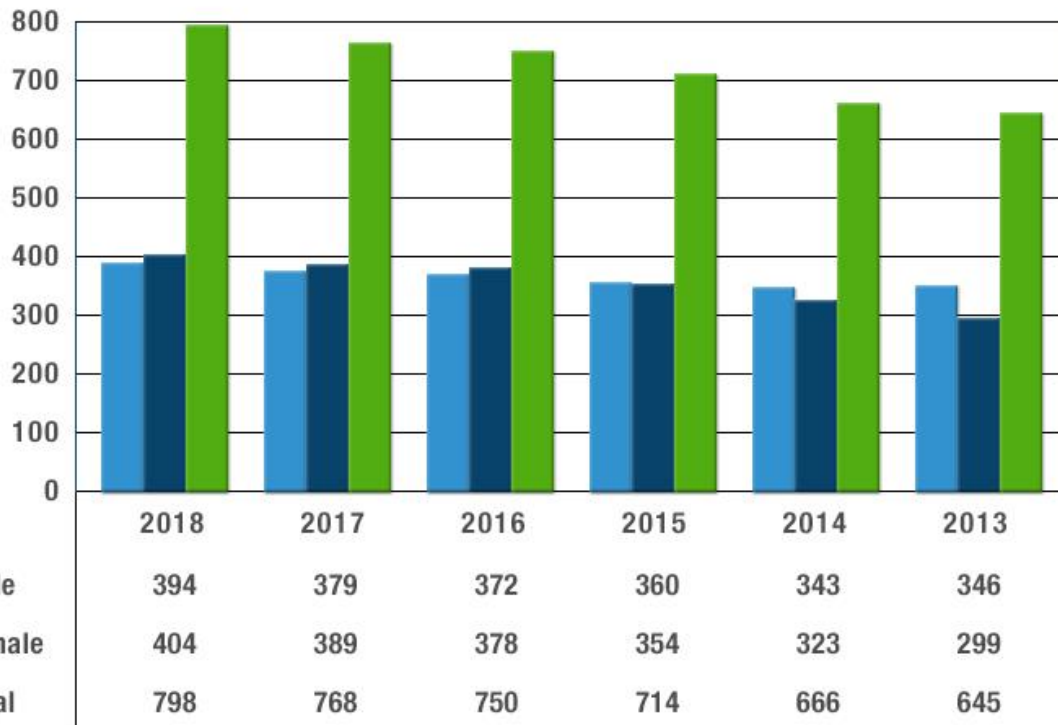
Registration Information



■ 394 - Male
■ 404 - Female



■ 420 - American Trained
■ 344 - Canadian Trained
■ 34 - Internationally Trained



Standards of Practice & ACO Code of Ethics

The ACO Council and the ACO Standards of Practice Committee review and revise the ACO Standards of Practice, Guidelines to the ACO Standards of Practice, ACO Code of Ethics and the ACO Clinical Practice Guidelines on a regular basis. These reviews are necessary due to the constant evolution and advances in optometric and medical science, innovative technological updates and legislative changes.



All standards and guidelines are meant to provide guidance and direction as to the scope of services that Doctors of Optometry are authorized to provide and the manner in which those services are provided. They are based on the best available and most current optometric and medical clinical evidence and research.

All ACO standards and guidelines may be used by the ACO in judging and assessing the competence and professional conduct of Regulated Members.

In 2018, the ACO began preparatory work and held informational meetings with our members on revisions to the ACO Standards of Practice as required by Bill 21 – An Act to Protect Patients.

The Alberta College of Optometrists is very proud to be viewed as a leader in Canada in the development, revision and enforcement of optometric Standards of Practice and Clinical Practice Guidelines.

Canadian Optometry Training Programs

Canadian Schools of Optometry

Currently, the Universities of Waterloo and Montreal continue to house the only two Schools of Optometry in Canada.



Students from both Canadian schools participate in clinical externship rotations in various clinics throughout Alberta. The ACO continues to enjoy a great relationship with both schools to ensure that graduating students have the didactic education and clinical experiences necessary to provide safe, skilled and competent vision care services upon graduation.

Western School of Optometry

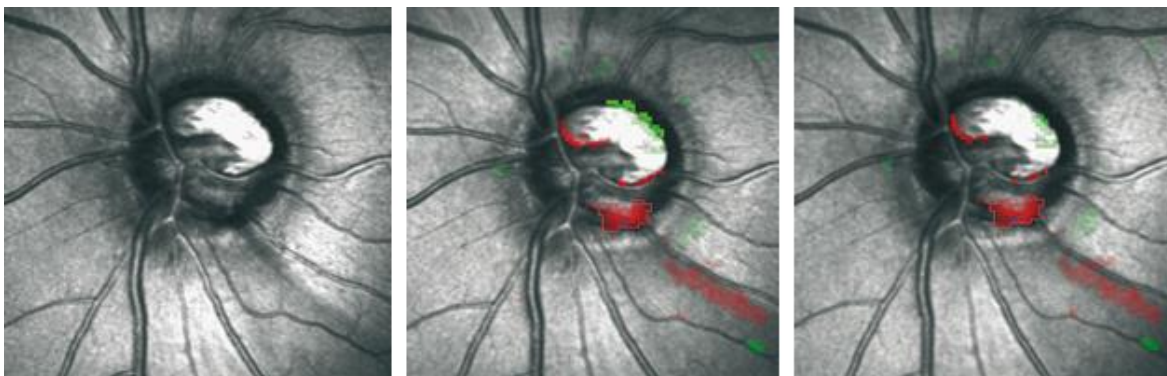
As optometrists provide the vast majority of primary vision care services in our province, the development of a Faculty of Optometry at one of the renowned Alberta Universities would integrate and complement the short and long range plans of Alberta Advanced Education, Alberta Health and Alberta Health Services. The ACO is committed to work with our government, the public and all other stakeholders in accomplishing this vision.

Due to the limited number of enrollment spots at the Universities of Waterloo and Montreal Schools of Optometry, many Canadians pursue optometric education opportunities in the United States. The net effect is that we now have more Canadian students enrolled in U.S. Schools of Optometry than in both Canadian Schools of Optometry combined.

Licensure and Mobility

Canadian Licensure Examinations

The Alberta College of Optometrists accepts the Optometry Examining Board of Canada (OEBC) entry-to-practice examination for initial registration to Alberta. OEBC offers a bilingual, psychometrically valid and defensible assessment of entry-to-practice competence in optometry in Canada that is composed of a written exam and a clinical OSCE that utilizes standardized patients. Although, some Canadian provincial optometric regulatory organizations currently accept the US Optometry Board Exam (NBEO) for initial licensure, all accept the OEBC exam for initial licensure to their province.



Advanced Scope Certification

As of December 31, 2018, all Regulated Members of the ACO are Therapeutic Pharmaceutical Agent (TPA) and Advanced Scope certified. A 2019 Practice Permit was not issued unless the practitioner met these requirements. In addition, no current Regulated Member was “grandfathered” into certification as all members had to successfully pass a rigorous certification course and final exam. To assist our members in achieving this certification, the ACO sponsored an additional certification course in 2017 for the few members who were not able to achieve certification in previous years.

Labor Mobility

Due to labor mobility provisions in the Canadian Free Trade Agreement (CFTA), our province is required to accept practitioners who are registered in good standing in any other Canadian province or territory. Currently, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland & Labrador only accept the OEBC exam for initial registration in their province. British Columbia and Ontario accepts the OEBC exam as well as the NBEO exam (US-based) for initial registration in their province. Quebec accepts the OEBC exam, NBEO exam or the exit exam from an accredited North American Optometry Program for initial registration in their province. Unfortunately, no research on the similarity of the NBEO or an Optometry Program Exit Exam to the OEBC exam has ever been performed. Further information on the OEBC is available at www.oebc.ca and further information on the NBEO is available at www.optometry.org.

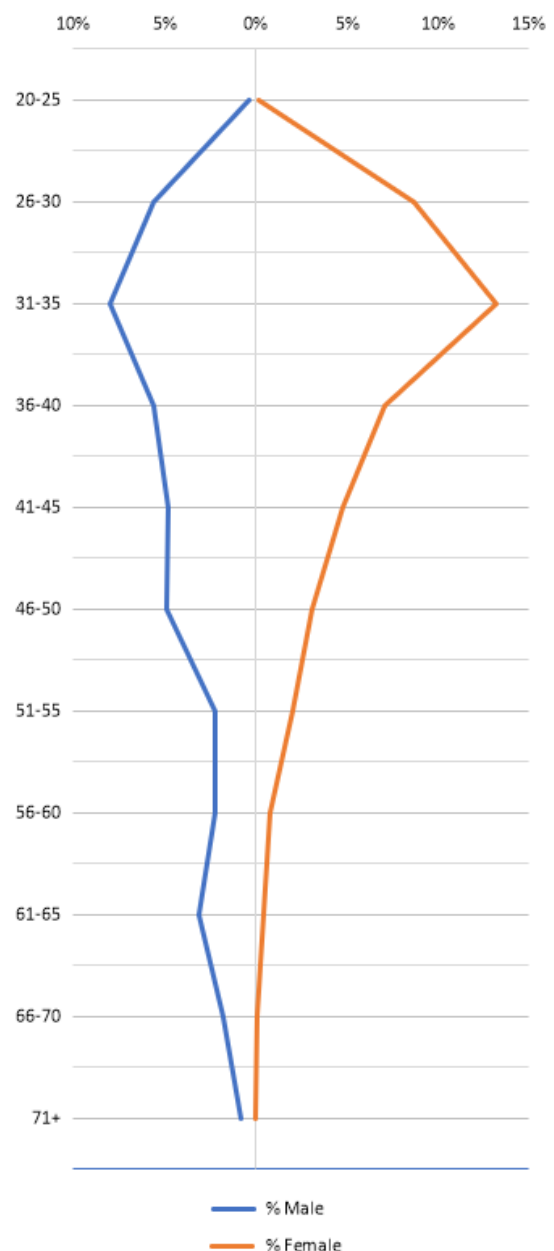
ACO Registration Committee

The ACO Registration Committee determines registration requirements as well as developing, revising and delivering the ACO Jurisprudence Exam. The results of the ACO Jurisprudence Exam are analyzed on a yearly basis and questions are modified based on changes to the *Health Professions Act*, *Optometrists Profession Regulation* and ACO Bylaws.

In 2018, a total of 45 candidates challenged the ACO Jurisprudence Exam. The average mark was 80.4% and the range was 56% to 98%. As the pass mark is set at 70%, the five candidates who did not pass were given a short period of time to review the exam material and write an alternative Jurisprudence Exam. All five candidates passed the alternative ACO Jurisprudence Exam.

In summary, all complete registration applications received in 2018 were approved as all applicants met ACO registration requirements. As such, no registration reviews or appeals were required. The ACO does not have any Regulated Members registered in the Courtesy Registration register.

Age + Sex Distribution Graph



ACO Continuing Competence Program

PURPOSE

- To measure, assess and enhance the knowledge, skill and judgment of practicing optometrists.
- To ensure that each Regulated Member meets the prevailing Standards of Practice required to provide appropriate vision care to each patient.
- To set an expectation that each Regulated Member will practice according to the Alberta College of Optometrists Code of Ethics.

CRITERIA

- To be effective, valid, accurate, honest and fair.
- To be reliable, accountable and measurable.
- To be flexible and non-threatening.
- To be educational and contemporary.

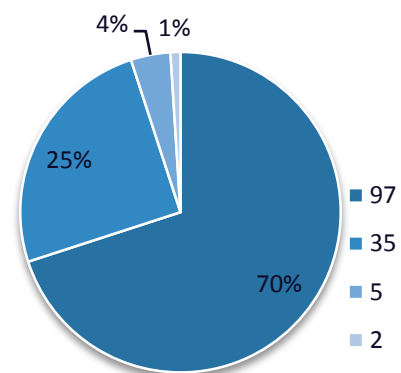
GOALS

- Maintain the competence, knowledge and skills he/she needs to provide service to the public,
- Continually enhance the quality and delivery of optometric services, and,
- Ensure his/her continuing educational development.

Participation by all Regulated Members is compulsory. The Alberta College of Optometrists defines competence as having the right skills to perform the right procedure to the right person at the right time. In 2018, the ACO started the process of evolving the ACO Continuing Competence Program into a Performance Assessment process.

In 2018, a total of 139 on-site Practice Visits were conducted. Of this total:

- 97 were deemed satisfactory.
- 35 were deemed satisfactory with minor compliance.
- 5 were deemed a fail with a follow-up Practice Visit scheduled in 90 days.
- 2 Regulated Members were referred immediately to the ACO Complaints Director Investigation for further investigation and possible disciplinary action.



The cost to operate this program is entirely funded by Alberta optometrists as part of their yearly dues. No funding comes from the provincial government or private industry.

Complaints & Discipline

Although the vast majority of Albertans enjoy very positive experiences with their Doctor of Optometry, there are times where issues arise between the patient and the optometrist. The Alberta College of Optometrists (ACO) prides itself on following a fair, responsible and transparent complaints process as mandated by the Health Professions Act (HPA).

General Overview

The HPA mandates that: The Complaints Director is responsible for reviewing all formal written, signed complaints which are submitted to the Alberta College of Optometrists (ACO) and directed against Regulated Members of the ACO.

The Complaints Director utilizes a variety of options following the receipt of a formal complaint. These action steps include immediate dismissal of the complaint (if the complaint is trivial or vexatious), formal mediation of the complaint (attempting to solve the complaint via encouraging communication, etc.) and the conducting of an investigation into the complaint.

Following the completion of an investigation, a complaint can be dismissed, referred to an ACO Hearing Tribunal (if sufficient evidence of unprofessional conduct exists against a Regulated Member) or the complaint may be dismissed provided that the investigated Regulated Member of the ACO agrees to and meets all requirements set forth within a Member Undertaking agreement between that Regulated Member and the ACO.



If the complaint is dismissed by the Complaints Director, the complainant may submit an appeal of the dismissal to the ACO Hearings Director, who will then assemble a Complaint Review Committee (CRC) to review all documentation relating to the complaint and its dismissal. Following the conclusion of the CRC review, the dismissal may be upheld, investigated further or be referred to an ACO Hearing Tribunal.

Carry-Over from 2017

The three Hearing Tribunals which were adjourned have taken place and resulted in findings of unprofessional conduct. The two complaints which were forwarded to the Complaints Director by the ACO Continuing Competence Committee have been resolved by the Complaints Director.

Highlights from 2018

In 2018, twenty-nine (29) new, formal complaints against Regulated Members of the ACO were received:

- Two (2) formal complaints were dismissed immediately as being deemed vexatious or trivial.
- Thirteen (13) formal complaints were resolved through formal mediation between the optometrist and patient.
- Ten (10) formal complaints were investigated and subsequently dismissed due to insufficient or no evidence of unprofessional conduct.
- Three (3) formal complaints were investigated and subsequently dismissed based upon the Regulated Members agreeing to and fulfilling the requirements set forth in Member Undertakings
- One (1) formal complaint was investigated and subsequently referred to the ACO Hearings Director for a Hearing Tribunal. This Hearing Tribunal has been adjourned and the new date for the Hearing has not yet been determined.

No appeals of complaint dismissals were received in 2018.

No assessments or decisions required under Section 118 of the *Health Professions Act* were required in 2018.

Dr. Rob Eastwood
ACO Complaints Director

Financials

To the Members of Alberta College of Optometrists:

We have audited the accompanying financial statements of Alberta College of Optometrists, which comprise the statement of financial position as at December 31, 2018, and the statement of changes in net assets, statement of operations and statements of cash flows for the year then ended, and a summary of significant accounting policies and other explanatory information.

Management's Responsibility for the Financial Statements

Management is responsible for the preparation of these financial statements in accordance with Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations, and for such internal control as management determines is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

Auditor's Responsibility

Our responsibility is to express an opinion on the financial statements based on our audit. We conducted our audit in accordance with Canadian general accepted auditing standards. Those standards require that we comply with ethical requirements and plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements are free from material misstatement.

An audit involves performing procedures to obtain audit evidence about the amounts and disclosure in the financial statements. The procedures selected depend on the auditors' judgement, including the assessment of the risk of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error. In making those risk assessments, the auditor considers internal control relevant to the entity's preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the entity's internal control. An audit also includes evaluating the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates made by management, as well as evaluating the overall presentation of the financial statements.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our audit opinion.

Opinion

In our opinion, these financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of Alberta College of Optometrists as at December 31, 2018, and its financial performance and its cash flows for the year ended in accordance with Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations.

May 8, 2019 - Edmonton, Alberta

Pisko & Miskiw LLP
CHARTERED ACCOUNTANTS

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

ASSETS

	2017	2018
Current Assets:	\$	\$
Cash	807,402	1,048,128
Term Deposits	1,564,455	1,588,252
Accounts receivable	3,375	29,914
Prepaid expenses	56,623	49,421
Total current assets:	2,431,885	2,715,715
Property and Equipment	545,807	524,101
Total assets:	2,977,622	3,239,816

LIABILITIES

Current Liabilities:		
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	43,924	70,336
Members' due collected in advance	871,550	905,350
Total current liabilities:	915,474	975,686

NET ASSETS

Investment in Property and Equipment	545,807	524,101
Unrestricted	1,516,381	1,740,029
Net Assets:	2,062,188	2,264,130
Total Net Assets:	2,977,662	3,239,816

➤ REVENUES

	2017	2018
Member Dues	857,450	880,550
Application and Registration Fees	31,100	36,100
Professional Corporation Fees	39,250	36,800
Rental income	14,259	14,112
Interest Income	104,463	42,986
Advanced Scope Course	37,500	-
Hearing Tribunal Recoveries	-	15,000

➤ EXPENDITURES

	2017	2018
Administrative and Executive	233,156	217,269
Amortization	23,720	21,706
College Committees and Meetings	209,578	193,174
Computer and IT Costs	21,053	23,476
Council	101,767	72,851
Legal Fees	97,176	70,853
Office Building Costs	26,959	31,103

Notes to the Financial Statements

The Summary Financial Statement is derived from audited financial statements, prepared in accordance with Canadian accounting standards. The preparation of this Summary Financial Statement requires the ACO office staff to determine the information that needs to be reflected in them so that they are consistent in all material respects with, and represent a fair summary of the audited statement.

The audited financial statements of the Alberta College of Optometrists (ACO) are available upon request by contacting the ACO office.



The College initially measures its financial assets and liabilities at fair value adjusted by, in the case of a financial instrument that will not be measured subsequently at fair value, the amount of transaction costs directly attributable to the instrument. The college subsequently measures all its financial assets and liabilities at amortized cost, which includes cash,

term deposits, accounts receivable, accounts payable and accrued liabilities.

All ACO Regulated Member fees (Practice Permit, Professional Corporation Permit, registration fee, etc.) are set by the ACO Council. Term Deposits are held for periods of up to five years with annual interest rates that fluctuate based on market conditions. The principal investment is guaranteed.

The College has a risk management framework to monitor, evaluate and manage the principal risks assumed with financial instruments. The risks that arise from transacting financial instruments include credit risk, liquidity risk and interest rate risk. There have been no changes in the colleges risk exposures from the prior year.



ALBERTA college
of OPTOMETRISTS

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