

2016

ANNUAL REPORT



ALBERTA college
of OPTOMETRISTS

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OUR MISSION

The purpose of the Alberta College of Optometrists is to ensure the practice of the profession of optometry is conducted in the best interests of the public.



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 and regulate the practice of optometry by our Regulated Members.
- » 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 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 providers, 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, compassionate 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 all external stakeholders.
- » We value feedback from patients, the provincial government, other regulatory colleges and any other interested stakeholder on our activities and performance.

ACO COUNCIL



(Back Row)

Dr. Sallie Barclay (Past-President)
Dr. Jennifer Zwicker (Public Council Member)
Dr. Kim Bugera (President)
Dr. Gordon Hensel (Registrar)
Dr. Nohad Teliani (Regulated Council Member)
Mrs. Louise Mosier (Public Council Member)

(Front Row)

Dr. James Thompson (President-Elect)
Dr. Rob McLaughlin (Regulated Council Member)
Dr. Nasir Khan (Secretary-Treasurer)
Dr. Mark Ross (Regulated Council Member)



PRESIDENT'S REPORT

I am proud to report that 2016 was an extremely successful year for the profession of optometry in Alberta. We achieved many pivotal milestones and exceeded our mandate of providing safe, skilled and competent vision care services to all Albertans.

Although, Doctors of Optometry have been self-regulating in Alberta since 1921, the Alberta College of Optometrists (ACO) was officially brought under the umbrella of the Health Professions Act in 1993. Since that time, our profession has undergone several major changes to our legislated scope of practice and mandated educational requirements.

The ACO and its Regulated Members take their role as leaders in the delivery of vision care services very seriously. The recent change of providing health care services in a team-based, collaborative process has brought the following positive effects to our health care system:

- › Improvement in patient outcomes.
- › Increased sharing of patient information between practitioners involved in the care of the patient.
- › Reduction in unnecessary ordering of test procedures.

- › Reduction in unnecessary repeat examinations.

The 2016 year saw individual optometrists research and prepare various documents and agreements required by various Privacy Acts and Legislation, embrace access to Alberta Netcare and complete the rigorous (maintenance of competence) requirements of the Optometry Advanced Scope Certification Course. We are extremely proud of our Members in meeting these challenges. The decision to not “grandfather” any optometrist to the new Advanced Scope legislated level of practice has proven to be the right decision. The ACO is honored to uphold its mandate of protecting and serving the public’s best interest.

We will also continue to reach out to the general public, the government and other regulatory organizations to guarantee that all stakeholders have a say in the future of Albertans access to safe, skilled and competent vision care services. The future is indeed bright.

Dr. Kim Bugera.
President, ACO

➤ PUBLIC MEMBERS REPORT

We are extremely honored and privileged to serve as Public Members on the Alberta College of Optometrists (ACO) Council, as mandated by the *Health Professions Act*. As voting members in council meetings, 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. Over the past year we have been engaged in the maintenance and enforcement of the Code of Ethics, Standards of Practice and a Continuing Competence Program as they impact Regulated Members.

The Council and staff of the Alberta College of Optometrists 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. We are confident that the Council will continue to fulfill its mandate to protect and serve the public by regulating and providing direction to the optometric profession.

We commend the Alberta College of Optometrists (ACO) for their commitment to gain access to Alberta Netcare. The ACO has provided strong leadership for other health professions to follow and has developed good working relationships with government partners. Finally, we also commend the cooperative collaboration between the Alberta Association of Optometrists' Council and the Alberta College of Optometrists Council for understanding and respecting each other's mandate. This collaboration allows the optometrists' of Alberta 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,
Mrs. Louise Mosier & Dr. Jennifer Zwicker
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 is comprised of a non-voting Past-President and a voting President, President-Elect, 4 members of council and 2 public representatives. The ACO council also retains the services of a part-time Registrar who coordinates the regulatory activities of the college.

The ACO was very pleased that both of our current Public Members, Mrs. Louise Mosier and Dr. Jennifer Zwicker, were able to continue in their role.

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, ACO Bylaws and the ACO Policy Governance Manual. These guidelines and policies are reviewed on a regular basis to ensure they continue to be reasonable, legally correct, effective and enforceable.



➤ Standards of Practice and 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 ACO Clinical Practice Guidelines on a regular basis. These revisions are necessary to ensure that all optometrists provide vision care services based on the best available and most current optometric and medical clinical evidence and research. In 2016, revisions were made to several Clinical Practice Guidelines due to new research and technological innovations in the delivery of health care services.

The Alberta College of Optometrists is perceived as a leader in Canada in the development and enforcement of optometric Standards of Practice and Clinical Practice Guidelines.

MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

The total number of regulated members increased 5% from 2015 with the number of female members increasing 6.8% and the number of male members increasing 3.3%.

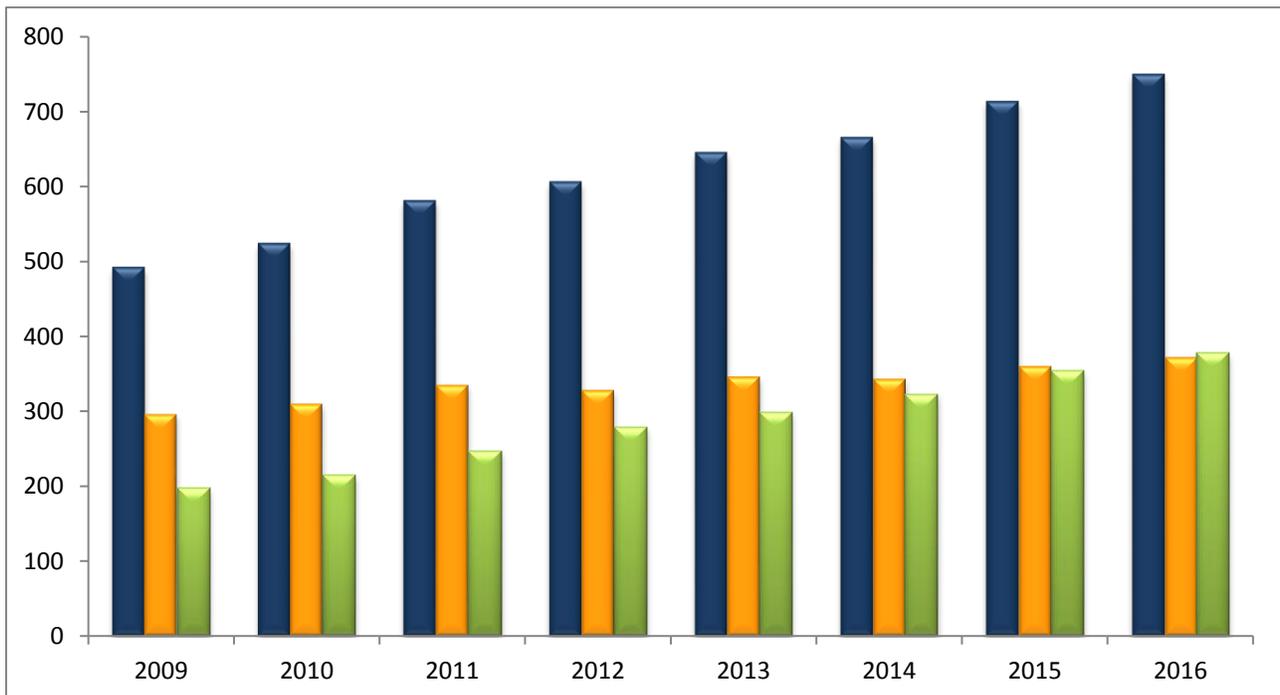
As of December 31, 2016, the current membership breakdown was as follows:



In addition, the educational background of our members can be broken into the following categories:

- Canadian Trained - 339
- USA Trained - 378
- Internationally Trained - 33

➤ HISTORICAL REGISTRATION NUMBERS



➤ ALL ➤ MALES ➤ FEMALES

TRAINING PROGRAMS

➤ 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 throughout Alberta. The ACO continues to enjoy great relationships 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.

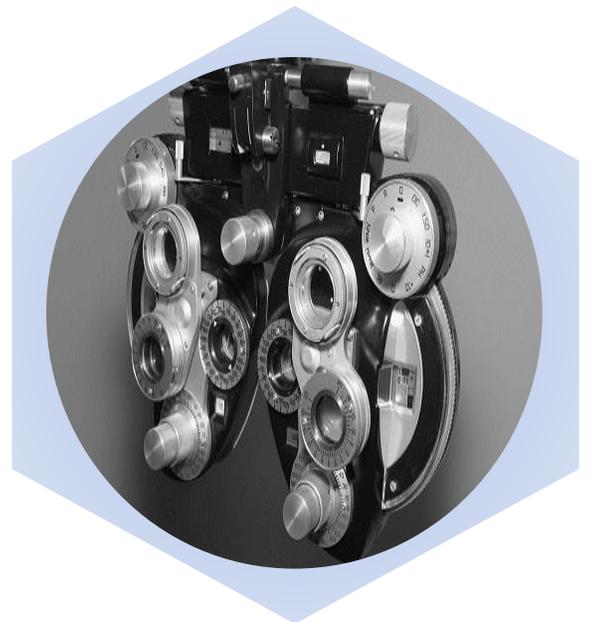
➤ Western School of Optometry

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 Health and Alberta Health Services. As a result of the limited enrollment spots at Waterloo and Montreal, we have more Canadian students enrolled in U.S. Schools of Optometry than in both Canadian Schools of Optometry combined.

In 2016, the ACO entered into discussions with Concordia University of Edmonton (CUE) regarding CUE's investigation into the possibility of creating an optometry program at their institution. The ACO requested that the didactic education curriculum and clinical experiences of the proposed CUE optometry program met or exceeded the minimum required by the Accreditation Council on Optometric Education (ACOE).

➤ Canadian Licensure Exam

The Alberta College of Optometrists accepts the Canadian Examiners in Optometry entry-to-practice examination called the Canadian Assessment of Competency in Optometry (CACO) for initial registration to Alberta. The CACO exam is composed of 2 comprehensive written exams and 4 clinical assessment exams. The two written exams include the Ocular Therapeutics (120 multiple choice questions) and the Synthesis (248 multiple choice questions based on 62 different case scenarios). The 4 Clinical Skills Assessment exams are comprised of tests involving 29 different clinical skills and procedures on "live" standardized patients. All other Canadian provincial optometric regulatory organizations also accept the CACO for initial licensure to their province.



➤ Advanced Scope Certification

Following an update to the Optometrists Profession Regulation, optometrists were authorized to provide additional services to Albertans. As promised to the Alberta government during the Health Profession Advisory Board hearing into the requested legislative scope of practice changes, the ACO Council decreed that no Regulated Member would be grandfathered into certification. As such, all optometrists in Alberta were required to successfully complete a rigorous Advanced Scope Certification Course and Final Exam before being allowed to perform these new legislated activities. Unfortunately, not all current Regulated Members were able to successfully complete the advanced scope certification requirement and will not be issued a Practice Permit next year. In the meantime, the ACO Council is continuing to work with the remaining “non-certified” registrants to assist them in achieving this certification.

➤ ACO Registration Committee

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

In 2016, a total of 55 candidates wrote the ACO Jurisprudence exam. The average mark was 81% and the range was 64% to 96%. As the pass mark is set at 70%, the three candidates who did not pass were given a short time period to review the exam material and write an alternative Jurisprudence exam. All three candidates passed the alternative exam.

In summary, all registration applications received in 2016 were approved as all applicants met all ACO registration requirements. As such, no registration reviews were required.

The ACO does not have any Regulated Members registered in the Courtesy Registration register.

➤ Labor Mobility

Due to labor mobility provisions in the Agreement on Internal Trade (AIT), our province is required to accept practitioners who are registered in good standing in all other Canadian provinces or territories. Currently, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland & Labrador accept the CACO exam for initial registration in their province. British Columbia accepts the CACO exam as well as the NBEO exam (US-based) for initial registration in their province. Quebec accepts the CACO 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 CACO exam has ever been performed. Further information on the CACO is available at www.oebc.ca and further information on the NBEO is available at www.optometry.org.

➤ 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

GOAL

- » 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.

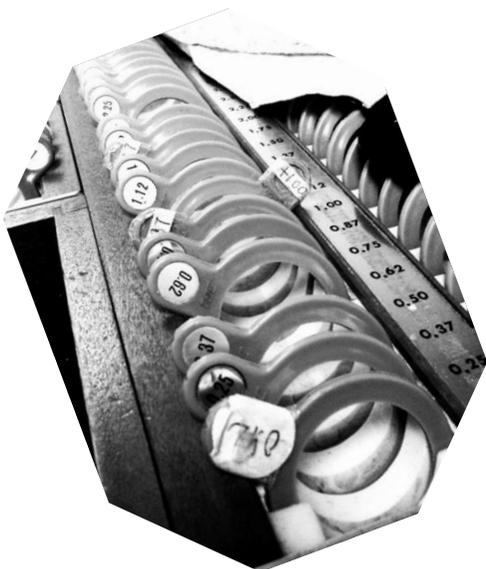
Participation by all Regulated Members is compulsory.

MANDATORY MODALITIES

Competency skills are assessed using:

- » On-Site Practice Visits
- » Minimum time in active clinical practice
- » Continuing Education Credits

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 2016, a total of 138 on-site Practice Visits were conducted. Of this total:

- » 105 were deemed satisfactory
- » 19 were deemed satisfactory with minor compliance
- » 12 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.

Three practitioners were referred to the ACO Complaints Director for further action. The Competence Committee meets twice a year and determines as a whole committee the final outcome of each review.

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 conditionally dismissed provided that the investigated Member of the ACO meets all requirements set forth within a Member Undertaking Agreement between that 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 2015

The requirements for the Member Undertaking which was in progress at the time of the 2015 Report have been met. This was the result of a complaint forwarded by the ACO Continuing Competence Committee (CCC).

Highlights from 2016

In 2016, three new complaints were forwarded to the Complaints Director by the ACO CCC. One of these complaints was investigated and subsequently dismissed due to insufficient or no evidence of unprofessional conduct. The other two of these complaints were resolved by the Complaints Director.

Also in 2016, nineteen (19) new, formal complaints against Regulated Members of the ACO were received:

- ▶ Ten (10) formal complaints were dismissed immediately as being deemed vexatious or trivial.
- ▶ Four (4) formal complaints were resolved through formal mediation between the optometrist and patient.
- ▶ Three (3) formal complaints were investigated and subsequently dismissed due to insufficient or no evidence of unprofessional conduct.
- ▶ Two (2) formal complaints were investigated and subsequently referred to the ACO Hearings Director for Hearing Tribunals. These Hearing Tribunals have been adjourned and new dates for the Hearings have not yet been determined.

No appeals of complaint dismissals or requests to go to a Complaint Review Committee were received in 2016.

Dr. Rob Eastwood
ACO Complaints Director

➤ OTHER REGULATORY FUNCTIONS

The Alberta College of Optometrists continues to work with all other provincial optometric regulatory colleges across Canada in the following areas:

- Development of a National Optometry Competency Profile.
- Development of a valid, culturally sensitive and evidence-based Evaluating Examination for internationally-trained practitioners.
- Formal incorporation and governance restructuring of the Federation of Regulatory Authorities of Canada (FORAC).
- Discussions on possible pan-Canadian national Standards of Practice, Clinical Practice Guidelines and common registration requirements.
- Development of common protocols, processes and standards to facilitate smooth transfer of practitioners between provinces under AIT Labor Mobility provisions.
- Discussions on the national CACO exam to ensure continued excellence when measuring entry-to-practice competencies of candidates.

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, 2016, 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, 2016, and its financial performance and its cash flows for the year ended in accordance with Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations.

April 4, 2017
Edmonton, Alberta

Pisko & Miskiw LLP

CHARTERED ACCOUNTANTS

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

ASSETS

	2016	2015
Current Assets:	\$	\$
Cash	739,282	787,405
Term Deposits	1,460,917	1,210,782
Accounts receivable	3,250	7,904
Prepaid expenses	54,668	54,668
Total current assets:	2,247,586	2,060,759
Property and Equipment	569,527	601,058
Total assets:	2,817,113	2,661,817

LIABILITIES

Current Liabilities:		
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	45,940	42,378
Members' due collected in advance	846,300	809,550
Total current liabilities:	892,240	851,928

NET ASSETS

Investment in Property and Equipment	569,527	601,058
Unrestricted	1,355,346	1,208,831
Net Assets:	1,924,873	1,809,889
Total Net Assets:	2,817,113	2,661,817

➤ REVENUES

	2016	2015
Member Dues	827,200	709,000
Application and Registration Fees	31,550	33,000
Professional Corporation Fees	41,400	31,750
Rental income	12,642	10,878
Occupational Health & Safety Project	-	15,000
Interest Income	1,057	504
Fines and Cost Recoveries	-	-

➤ EXPENDITURES

	2016	2015
Administrative and Executive	347,171	321,643
Amortization	31,531	62,794
College Committees and Meetings	214,092	183,835
Computer and IT Costs	25,961	28,430
Council	67,522	74,939
Legal Fees	53,697	43,998
Office Building Costs	24,361	25,661



NOTES TO THE SUMMARY 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 college's risk exposures from the prior year.



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www.collegeofoptometrists.ab.ca