

2022

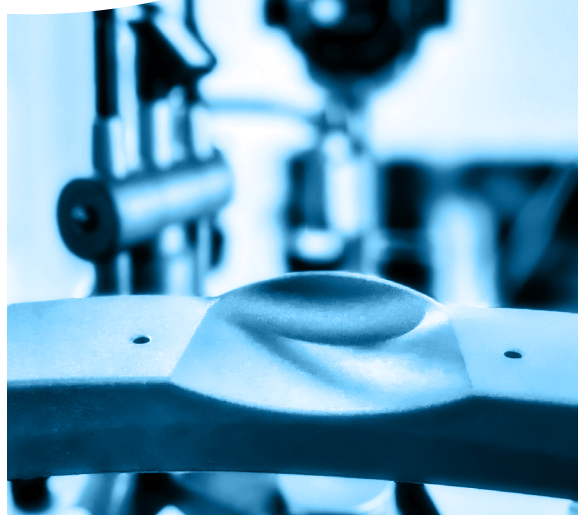
ANNUAL REPORT
TO THE GOVERNMENT



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ALBERTA college
of OPTOMETRISTS



CONTENTS

- 1** Mission, Mandate and Values
- 2** 2022-2023 ACO Council
- 3** President's Report
- 4** Public Members Report
- 5** Governance
- 6** Registration Information
- 7** Training Programs, Examinations and Competency Profiles
- 8** Licensure and Mobility
- 9** ACO Continuing Competence Program
- 10** Complaints & Discipline
- 12** Financial Reporting

MISSION, MANDATE AND VALUES

MISSION

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.



2022-2023 ACO COUNCIL

REGULATED MEMBERS



Dr. Tom Wilk
PRESIDENT



Dr. Michelle Duke
PRESIDENT ELECT



Dr. Nasir Khan
PAST-PRESIDENT



Dr. Jonathan Akle



Dr. Clark Hyde



Dr. Michael Yu

PUBLIC MEMBERS



Rhonda Camplin



Dr. Sherri Chisan



Dr. Kara Barker

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

What a year it has been. The ACO Council has continued to be agile with the constant changes that the COVID-19 pandemic has brought on. I want to thank the entire ACO Council for their commitment to this profession and for staying engaged during our zoom, hybrid, and now in-person Council meetings. I especially want to thank our newest Council members, Dr. Clark Hyde and Public Member Dr. Sherri Chisan, for bringing their new insight and perspective to our discussions. Our Public Members are an integral part of this Council, and we are thankful for their input on how we can continue to best serve our mandate of public protection. Due to personal and mayoral responsibilities, Public Member Mr. Rick Pankiw has stepped away from Council. I wish to thank Rick for this commitment during his time on Council. But more than anything, I want to thank the entire membership for being very engaged in our profession and always putting the interests of our patients first. Your willingness to serve when called upon is amazing.

We continue to have discussions with our provincial government as we advocate for optometric scope expansion in Alberta. We know that optometrists are competent to perform these procedures, Albertans would benefit from improved access to vision care services and systemic health care costs would be reduced. With the introduction of Bill 46, all health care colleges have had to revise their Bylaws, Standards of Practice and Regulations.

In 2021, current ACO Registrar/CEO Dr. Gordon Hensel announced that he would retire from the position. Through an extensive search and interview period, the ACO Council is excited to announce that a new Registrar will start on January 1, 2023. I cannot thank Dr. Hensel enough for his 42 years of commitment to our profession. Optometry in Alberta would not be where it is today without the leadership and perseverance that Dr. Hensel has shown. His presence during Council meetings and never-ending knowledge of our profession will be missed.

On a personal note, I am stepping away from Council completely following seven years as a Council member. My wife and I welcomed our first child in August and with multiple professional commitments, I needed to find a better work-life balance. While this decision was not easy, I am extremely confident that the current and new Council members will keep Alberta leading optometry within Canada. Thank you everyone for your support.

Respectfully submitted

Dr. Rob Kloepfer

PRESIDENT, ACO





PUBLIC MEMBERS REPORT

Public Members are an important and indispensable component of the Alberta College of Optometrists (ACO) Council. We are appointed by the Minister of Health and provide valuable input and oversight into the college's policies and decisions. Our contributions help ensure public accountability.

Of all the mandates of the ACO, protecting the public interest is the most important. To that end, Public Members provide that perspective on behalf of all Albertans and the Alberta Government. With the proclamation of Bill 46, 50% of voting members of all health regulatory Councils must be Public Members.

Since 2021, four new Public Members were appointed to the ACO Council:

- Mrs. Kara Barker is a Crown Prosecutor with the Alberta Government specializing in Youth and Restorative Justice Practices which includes the Edmonton Drug Treatment Court.
- Mrs. Rhonda Camplin is a graduate of the University of Alberta, Faculty of Law, a partner of Francis Law in Calgary and duty counsel for Legal Aid Alberta.
- Dr. Sherri Chisan is the President and Director of Research at the University of Northern Alberta in Edmonton, Alberta.
- Mr. Rick Pankiw is the current mayor of Rimbey, AB.

Unfortunately, due to personal and professional obligations, Mr. Pankiw had to step away as a Public Member in 2022. As all of us were new to the ACO Council, we have all had a very steep learning curve to the intricacies of your profession. Our preliminary opinion is that the ACO Council provides appropriate leadership to the profession, and that the ACO Code of Ethics, ACO Standards of Practice, Guidelines to the ACO Standards of Practice and the ACO Clinical Practice Guidelines all provide appropriate guidance to Doctors of Optometry in the provision of vision care services.

We are also very excited to be a part of your scope of practice request to the Alberta Government as it will offer improved patient health outcomes, decreased systemic health costs and better access to vision care services to all Albertans – especially to those in remote and rural areas. We also look forward to reviewing the revisions to the ACO Continuing Competence Program and the legislative changes mandated by Bill 46.

We thank the ACO Council and staff for welcoming us to the optometric profession and 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. We also look forward to meeting many of you at this year's (in-person) Annual General Meeting.

Respectfully submitted

Kara Barker, Rhonda Camplin and Sherri Chisan

PUBLIC MEMBERS, ALBERTA COLLEGE OF OPTOMETRISTS

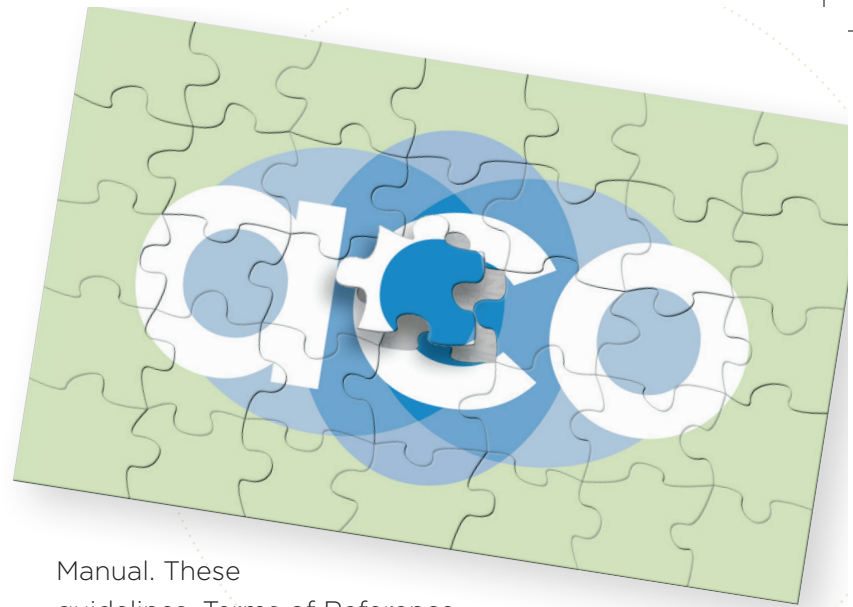
GOVERNANCE

The Alberta College of Optometrists regulates the profession of optometry in Alberta in the best interest of the public. The Government of Alberta proclaimed the Optometry Profession Act on April 19, 1921 at that time the Alberta Association of Optometrists was created. On January 01, 1993 the Alberta College of Optometrists was officially formed. This resulted from a formal split of regulatory duties from the joint regulatory and association duties of the previous Association. Since then, there has been a complete delineation of college activities from association activities.

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 and follows the mandate set out in the *Health Professions Act*.

The ACO Council is comprised of four voting Public Council Members and seven Regulated Council Members (of which four are designated as voting and three are designated as non-voting including the Past-President). This 50-50 voting split conforms to the requirements of Bill 30 and ensures that the public is well protected. Under circumstances where there is a vacancy for an appointed member position, the number of voting members is adjusted to reflect balance between public and regulated members.

All college committees are governed by strict guidelines, Terms of Reference and operating policies as directed by 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 by ACO Committees and the ACO Council to ensure they continue to be reasonable, legally correct, effective and enforceable.

Following the release of the “Divestment of Professional Association Functions by Regulatory Colleges” in 2021, the ACO conducted a full review to ensure that none of the existing actions

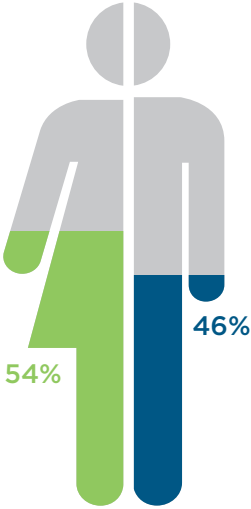
could be categorized as an “associated related activity”. This review was drafted and submitted to Alberta Health in March 2022.

With respect to the implementation of plan for Bill 46, the ACO followed guidelines to revise the ACO Bylaws to incorporate newly required updates. The bylaws were reviewed by ACO Council and approved at a Special Meeting of the Members in August of 2022. All ACO Council Governance documents and Terms of Reference were reviewed to reflect the changes to the bylaws.

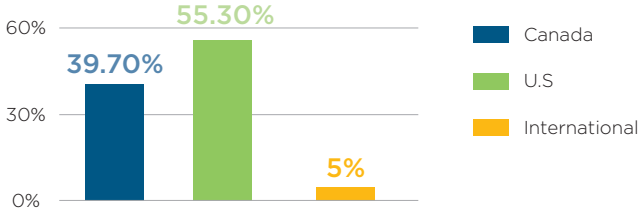
New ACO Standards of Practice were drafted and approved by ACO Council in 2022 based on the “Framework for Continuing Competence Standards of Practice” template provided by Alberta Health. In fall of 2022 changes to the Optometrists Profession Regulation were approved by the ACO council and await formal government approval in 2023. Stakeholder consultation was undertaken with all changes to the ACO Standards of Practice, reviewed by ACO council and approved by Alberta Health.

REGISTRATION INFORMATION

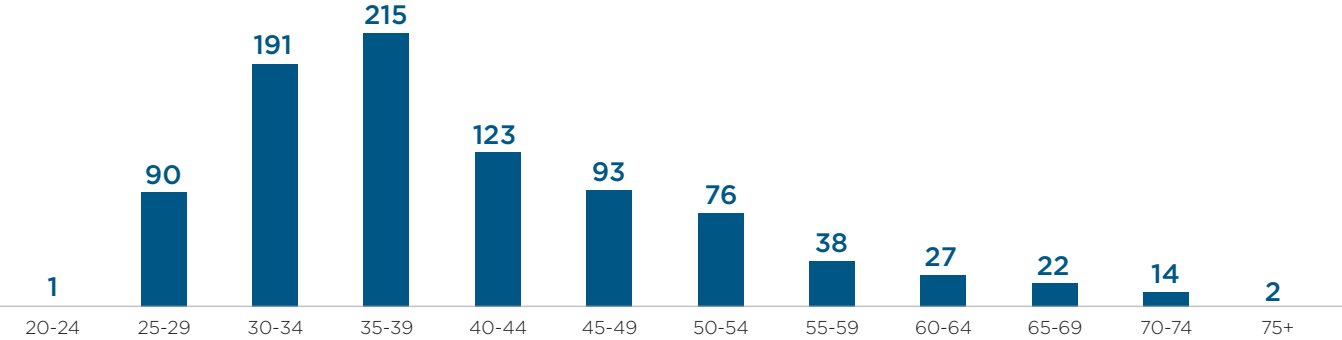
In 2022, the ACO had a total of 892 Regulated Members which is an increase of 3.2% from the previous year. Of this number, a total of 484 members were female and 408 were male. The average age of the Membership is 41.8 years old.



The majority of optometrists in Alberta are trained in accredited Schools of Optometry in the United States (55.3%). 39.7% of Alberta optometrists received their training in Canada. The remaining 5% received training at International Schools of Optometry before returning to Alberta to practice.



AGE RANGE OF MEMBERSHIP



The ACO Registration Committee determines registration requirements for applicants to our province 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 any revisions or changes to the *Health Professions Act*, *Optometrists Profession Regulation* and ACO Bylaws. Applicants are able to write the ACO Jurisprudence Exam in either Calgary or Edmonton on any weekday.

In 2022, a total of 52 candidates challenged the ACO Jurisprudence Exam with an average pass

rate of 75.5%. As the pass mark is set at 70%, the candidates who did not pass on their first attempt were given a period of time to review the exam material before writing an alternative Jurisprudence Exam. All candidates passed the alternative ACO Jurisprudence Exam.

In summary, all complete registration applications received in 2022 were approved as all applicants met the 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.

TRAINING PROGRAMS, EXAMINATIONS AND COMPETENCY PROFILES

CANADIAN SCHOOLS OF OPTOMETRY

Currently, the Universities of Waterloo and Montreal continue to offer 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 immediately upon graduation.

As optometrists provide the vast majority of primary vision care services in our province, the development of a world class

Faculty of Optometry at one of Alberta's renowned universities would integrate with and complement the short and long-range plans of Alberta Advanced Education, Alberta Health and Alberta Health Services. The ACO is committed to collaborating with our government, the public and all other stakeholders in accomplishing this goal.

Due to the limited number of enrollment spots at the Universities of Waterloo and Montreal Schools of Optometry, many Canadian students are forced to pursue optometric education opportunities in the United States and abroad. The net effect is that we currently 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 validated, and defensible assessment of entry-to-practice competence in optometry in Canada. This exam consists of a written exam and a clinical OSCE that utilizes standardized patients. All provinces accept the OEBC exam for initial licensure to their province.



ADVANCED SCOPE CERTIFICATION

As of December 31, 2018, all Regulated Members of the ACO were mandated to be Therapeutic Pharmaceutical Agent (TPA) certified and Advanced Scope certified. No current Regulated Member was “grandfathered” into either of these certifications as all members had to successfully pass a rigorous certification course and final exam to earn this designation. New applicants to the ACO are able to choose from a variety of certification course options (including an on-line certification course) to meet these registration requirements.

LABOR MOBILITY

As per the labor mobility provisions in the Canadian Free Trade Agreement (CFTA), the Alberta College of Optometrists accepts license applications from practitioners who are registered in good standing in any other Canadian province or territory.

Further information on the Optometry Examining Board of Canada (OEBC) entrance to practice exam, eligibility, exam dates and accommodations is available at www.oebc.ca.

ACO CONTINUING COMPETENCE PROGRAM

The Alberta College of Optometrists (ACO) Continuing Competence Program CCP was originally developed in 1985 and last updated in 2022 with the goal of maintaining the competence, knowledge and skills needed to provide service to the public. The program ensures that there is a continual elevation in the quality and delivery of optometric services and ensures the continual educational development of all optometrists in Alberta.

The purpose of the CCP is 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 and to set an expectation that each Regulated Member will practice according to the Alberta College of Optometrists Code of Ethics.

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. Due to Bill 46, the ACO conducted a thorough review of the current program to ensure compliance with the new regulations. In collaboration with the Alberta College of Physicians and Surgeons, the ACO developed a selection tool to identify optometrists most at risk of competency concerns. A poster submission will be made at IAMRA in Bali in fall of 2023 to present the results of the collaboration on commonalities between



competency risk factors among health professionals.

In 2022, a total of 100 chart reviews were conducted. Of the 100 reviews conducted:

- 47 were deemed satisfactory.
- 47 were deemed satisfactory with minor compliance.
- 4 were deemed a failure with a follow-up assessment scheduled in 90 days.
- 1 Regulated Member was referred immediately to the ACO Complaints Director 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 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 or referred to an ACO Hearing Tribunal (given sufficient evidence of unprofessional conduct against a Regulated Member). The complaint may also be dismissed if the investigated Regulated Member and the ACO agree to all requirements set forth within a Member Undertaking agreement and those requirements are met.

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, may be investigated further or may be referred to an ACO Hearing Tribunal.

CARRY-OVER FROM 2021

- The Hearing Tribunal relating to three complaints which were investigated jointly has taken place, resulting in multiple findings of unprofessional conduct.
- The complaint investigation which was being held in abeyance (until judicial proceedings within the jurisdiction where the alleged offences occurred were concluded) has now commenced and the investigation is currently active.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM 2022

In 2022, thirty-nine (39) new, formal complaints against Regulated Members of the ACO were received:

- Twenty-three (23) formal complaints were deemed vexatious or trivial and were dismissed.
- Five (5) formal complaints were resolved through formal mediation between the optometrist and complainant.
- Seven (7) formal complaints were investigated and subsequently dismissed due to insufficient or no evidence of unprofessional conduct.

- One (1) complaint was investigated and resulted in a Member Undertaking Agreement between the Member and the ACO.
- One (1) complaint was investigated and subsequently referred to a Hearing Tribunal, which is in the process of being scheduled by the Hearings Director.
- One (1) formal complaint investigation is currently active.

- One (1) assessment under Section 118 of the HPA was required in 2022.

No appeals of a complaint dismissals were received in 2022.

Dr. Rob Eastwood

ACO COMPLAINTS DIRECTOR





INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

To the Members of Alberta College of Optometrists

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of Alberta College of Optometrists, which comprise the statement of financial position as at December 31, 2022, and the statements of changes in net assets, operations and cash flows for the year then ended, and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies.

In our opinion, the accompanying financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the organization as at December 31, 2022, and its results of operations and its cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with ASNPO.

Basis for Opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements section of our report. matter independent of the organization in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in Canada, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Responsibilities of Management and Those Charged with Governance for the Financial Statements

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements in accordance with ASNPO, 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.

In preparing the financial statements, management is responsible for assessing the organization ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless management either intends to liquidate the or to cease operations, or has no realistic alternative but to do so.

Those charged with governance are responsible for overseeing the organization financial reporting process.

Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error

and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements. As part of an audit in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards, we exercise professional judgment and maintain professional skepticism throughout the audit. We also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit 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 organization's internal control.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by management.
- Conclude on the appropriateness of management's use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the organization's ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial statements or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the organization to cease to continue as a going concern.
- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial statements, including the disclosures, and whether the financial statements represent the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

We communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that we identify during our audit.



Chartered Professional Accountants

April 5, 2023
Edmonton, Alberta

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

ASSETS

	2020	2021
	\$	\$
Current Assets		
Cash	1,311,554	1,273,252
Term Deposits	1,656,180	1,682,815
Accounts receivable	20,782	65,924
Prepaid expenses	17,198	28,375
Total current assets:	3,005,714	3,050,366
Property and Equipment	525,626	498,092
Total assets:	3,531,340	3,548,458

LIABILITIES

Current Liabilities

Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	59,282	89,678
Members' due collected in advance	957,600	980,700
Total current liabilities:	1,016,882	1,070,378

NET ASSETS

Investment in Property and Equipment	525,626	498,092
Unrestricted	1,988,832	1,979,988
Net Assets:	2,514,458	2,478,080
Total Net Assets:	3,531,340	3,548,458

REVENUES

	2020	2021
Member Dues	935,000	966,200
Application and Registration Fees	28,000	32,550
Professional Corporation Fees	39,650	40,900
Rental income	14,112	14,112
Interest Income	14,262	22,131
Hearing Tribunal Recoveries	7,500	67,583

EXPENDITURES

	2020	2021
Administrative and Executive	511,955	232,483
Amortization	28,303	27,534
College Committees and Meetings	253,606	301,601
Computer and IT Costs	27,730	26,721
Council	62,597	91,198
Legal Fees	39,299	144,058
Office Building Costs	24,973	27,125

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

The Statement of Financial Position is derived from audited financial statements, prepared in accordance with Canadian accounting standards. The preparation of this 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 of 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. GIC 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 always guaranteed.

The College has a risk management framework to monitor, evaluate and manage the primary 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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ALBERTA college
of OPTOMETRISTS

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