



information

update

College of Occupational Therapists of Ontario

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Travaux en cours : Planification des communications stratégiques de l'Ordre

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DES COMMUNICATIONS

Vous remarquerez que ce numéro du bulletin Information Update, contenant seulement 8 pages et quelques-uns des articles habituels, est plutôt mince par rapport à la version habituelle. La raison en est qu'au cours de l'été et de l'automne, l'Ordre a effectué une analyse en profondeur de ses communications. Une des composantes de cette analyse, décrite en plus amples détails à la page 6, consiste à procéder à une refonte entière et complète du bulletin de l'Ordre. Ce numéro Information Update est en fait « en construction », car nous prévoyons et préparons le lancement de notre nouveau bulletin à l'hiver 2001.

Ce que nous faisons dé passe, et de loin, le simple examen de notre bulletin et de l'efficacité de sa communication avec les personnes inscrites. Nous examinons en fait tous les aspects des communications de l'Ordre – de la réception à nos documents officiels en passant par les services consultatifs touchant l'exercice de la profession. Nous examinons tous ces aspects, nous les mesurons et nous les améliorons en nous basant sur les valeurs de base identifiées

A Work in Progress Strategic Communications Planning at the College

CHRISTINE JAMES, DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS & COMMUNICATIONS

You will notice that this issue of Information Update is something of a shadow of its former self, containing just 8 pages, and only a few of the regular features. This is due to the fact that, over the summer and fall, the College's approach to communications has been undergoing a thorough analysis and review.

One component of this plan, described in more detail on page 6, involves a complete re-design and re-focusing of the College's newsletter. We are in fact 'under construction' for this issue of *Information Update*, as we plan and prepare for the launch of our new newsletter in the winter of 2001.

What we are undertaking, however, is far greater than simply a re-look at our newsletter and its effectiveness in com-

municating with registrants. Rather, every aspect of College communications – from reception, to our practice advisory service, to our official documents – is being reviewed, measured and improved based on core values that we have identified as being critical to effective communications.

At its June meeting, Council members reviewed the College's five primary stakeholders, and the methods with

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Competency Review Participants Demonstrate Quality Professional Practice

The year 2000 – the doorway to the new millennium and a year of transition. It has been a year in which Ontario’s occupational therapists have tangibly demonstrated their competence through public accountability. This year, the College introduced the final tool in Competency Enhancement, the Professional Portfolio, which also serves as a bridge to the next component of the Program – Competency Review.

Competency Review: History in the Making

The first Competency Review occurred through the late spring and summer and provided an enormous learning opportunity for registrants and the College. Some 80 therapists submitted their Professional Portfolios and the names of clients and colleagues to respond to a survey about their practice based on the Standards of Practice. Registrants rose to the occasion and their responsive and timely submission of documentation allowed the process to proceed smoothly.

The largest category of Competency Review participants indicated spending between five and 10 hours to compile their Portfolios, and between one and three hours to obtain consent from clients and colleagues to participate in the survey process. These reports are within our expectations – keeping in mind that registrants might expect to participate in Competency Review about once every 5 years.

Additionally, over 500 surveys were mailed to clients and peers, and well over 70% were returned promptly. With more than half of the surveys going to clients, close to 300 members of the public have had the opportunity to directly provide feedback on the standard of care they have received. It has been an overwhelming experience to scan the survey responses and read so many positive comments about how registrants are making a significant difference in people’s lives! The quality of the self-reflections, and effort towards

professional practice and continuing learning that has been demonstrated in the Professional Portfolios has also been impressive.

Analysis of the surveys is being completed with the assistance of evaluation consultants. In most cases, Competency Review will affirm registrants’ commitment to their clients and professional standards, and provide them with some new ideas for quality improvement in their practice. The College remains committed to making this a valuable learning experience for registrants while also fulfilling our responsibility to ensure members of the public receive safe, ethical occupational therapy service.

This is a unique approach to Competency Review and the initial response has been a remarkable achievement for everyone involved, and is truly exciting for our profession. Analysis is still underway – watch for more feedback in the new year.

Competency Enhancement 2000

Competency Enhancement activities are becoming increasingly familiar to registrants as demonstrated in the feedback for PREP and Self-Assessment.

PREP 2: The Responsibilities of a Regulated Health Professional and the Prevention of Sexual Abuse

Once again registrants demonstrated a clear understanding of their responsibilities as regulated professionals. Answers to the PREP 2 self-test were sent with the Self-Assessment Tool this year. This

allowed for more immediate feedback and consideration of the information as a part of your plan for professional development over the upcoming year. It also meant the answers could not include data to allow comparison of your own results with those of your peers. Analysis has now been completed and overall registrants scored very well – see the chart below:

Question	% answering Correctly
A	.92
B	.98
C	.99
D	.96
E	.96
F	.46
G	.93
H	.94
I	.98
J	.98

The question most frequently answered incorrectly (F) related to the required action to take when a student tells you about being sexually abused by her OT supervisor. Many registrants believed that a mandatory report was required. However, because a student is not a patient under the RHPA, the term “mandatory reporting” is not correct. Be sure to review the answers again to ensure you understand the rationale for the correct response.

Self-Assessment 2000

The response rate for Self-Assessment 2000 was 1298, or 40% of registrants. Compared to 1999 Self-Assessment



Quality Assurance Update *continued*

respondents, more registrants reported completing the tool in four hours or less, and rated it as being easier to complete. 75% of respondents reported that they met some or most of their 1999 learning goals. Additional information on Self-Assessment results will be published in a future newsletter.

What's Next?

The final two stages of the QA Program will be ready for implementation in the fall and winter. Competency Evaluation will involve onsite evaluation by peer assessors for a small number of registrants identified during Competency Review. A call for experienced, competent and respected peer assessors was

made in the spring issue of *Information Update*. It is not too late to apply! Applications will continue to be accepted and added to a pool of eligible assessors on an on-going basis. Training of peer assessors will commence in the fall, with the first on-site assessments projected for late fall.

Competency Improvement will support the learning of registrants needing to develop their skills. Experienced OTs will also be sought by the College to assist as Practice Supervisors – watch for further details about how you can contribute.

As the development phase of the QA Program begins to wind down, evaluation moves to the forefront.

There are many questions to be

addressed and the College is currently developing a plan to evaluate the Program's overall effectiveness. Some of the questions already being discussed include: Does the program work well for all types of OT practice? Does the program effectively promote continued learning? Are registrants able to demonstrate application of their learning in practice? Does the Competency Review process accurately identify registrants who require an evaluation? Registrants have already provided valuable feedback to help guide the development of the program. During the evaluation there will be additional opportunities to help address these and other important questions.

Enclosures

Draft revisions to the Professional Misconduct Regulation.

Please review this draft document with care, referring to the explanatory notes accompanying the regulation. Your comments are requested by Wednesday, October 11, 2000. This regulation is a critical document for OT practice. Make sure you take advantage of this opportunity to comment. Registrant feedback will be considered in finalizing the regulation for Council approval at its October 25 meeting.

2000 Annual Report – a review of the College's 1999/2000 fiscal year, including audited financial statements and a summary of achievements.

Is Workplace Stress Affecting your Practice? This article, the second in a series produced by the Fitness to Practise Committee, examines the impact of workplace and other forms of stress on the practice of safe, effective occupational therapy.

Position Statement: Dual Practice – evolving out of the Draft Scope of Practice Discussion Paper (1999), this College position statement provides guidance for therapists whose practices include components not normally considered to be within the scope of occupational therapy.

Practice Guideline: Use of Surveillance Materials – this guideline addresses an area of very frequent registrant inquiry – the ethical and appropriate use of surveillance materials.

Practice Guideline on the Controlled Acts and Delegation – this guideline, which evolved from the 1999 Draft Scope of Practice Discussion Paper and existing College documents on the topic of delegation, provides specific guidance to registrants on appropriate delegation of controlled acts to occupational therapists. Note that this document replaces the document entitled Briefing Note on Delegation, and the Assigning of Service Components, with Appendices 1-5. This previous document and all appendices should be removed from your Resource binder.

Applying a Competency Framework in a Regulatory Environment

JAN ROBINSON, REGISTRAR

Over the past two years, the language of competency has increasingly seeped in to the every-day work of the College. Registrants will in particular recognize competency language through their involvement in the Quality Assurance Program, with its underlying principle of ‘conscious competency’. Competency language is also increasingly being used to describe the College’s registration process.

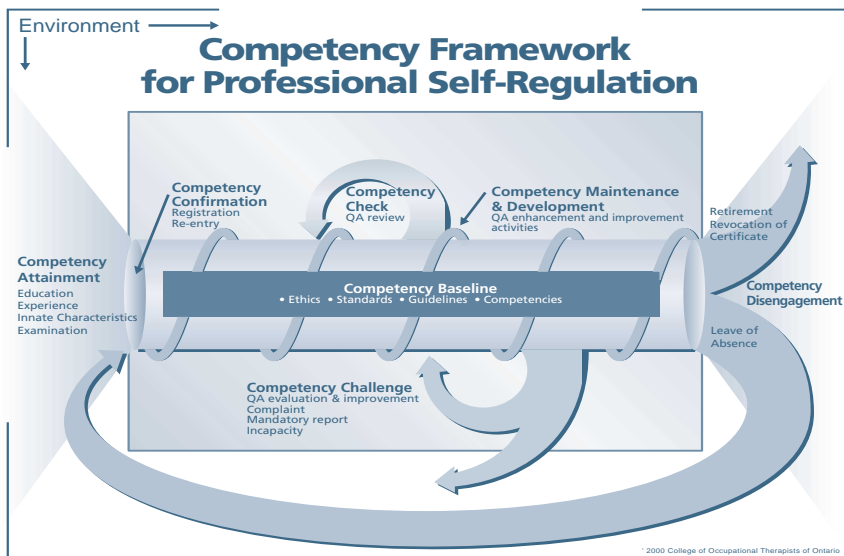
Our College’s movement away from the traditional regulatory language of panels, investigators, tribunals, appeal boards, and re-certification – and toward models that utilize validated competencies to compare the knowledge and skills of mobile professionals – mirrors changes on national and international fronts. For example, the Association of Canadian Occupational Therapy Regulatory Organizations is currently

negotiating agreement on essential competencies, which, once in place, will be the basis upon which provincial regulatory bodies may assess an OT’s eligibility to register in their province. Internationally, major trade and educational agreements are increasingly using competencies, rather than academic credentials, as the starting point for purposes of comparison.

This changing landscape is exciting, but is to a great extent new territory for regulators. While research has been conducted in the area of continuing competency (see Resource List), a recent literature review revealed no work that describes the full system and accountability of a regulatory organization to the dimensions of competency. The Competency Framework presented here aims to fill that gap.

Key Building Elements of the Framework

The Framework itself is made of a number of component parts all based on competency roles within the regulatory or certification mandate. It is acknowledged that the model exists within an environment (sociopolitical, professional, and technological) that influences its development. Each component of the framework will be described in turn. A diagram containing all elements is provided below to assist the reader.



Competency Baseline: A principal role of regulators is developing the platform against which competency is evaluated. A regulator is responsible for establishing the essential competencies for practice, articulating standards of practice, detailing a code of ethics, and issuing guidelines, policies and positions on topics relevant to practice in the public interest. The materials developed serve as cornerstones in all other areas of reg-

ulatory work. All regulated professionals are required to make themselves familiar with the baseline.

Competency Attainment: The attainment of competence is not controlled by the regulatory organization. Often regulators have influence over the attainment process within their own jurisdiction, but rarely is the authority direct. Rather, regulators acknowledge the process of

competency attainment, evaluating the outcomes against predetermined competencies that must be evident for registration or certification. In current thinking, competencies are not only attained through recognized education programs, but through experience, collateral education, examination, and are demonstrated by behaviors or innate characteristics (integrity, honesty, respect).

Resource List

National Council of State Boards of Nursing. Assuring Competency: A Regulatory Responsibility. Chicago, USA. Unpublished (1996).

The Federation of State Boards of Physical Therapy. Continuing competence – A discussion Paper. Washington, D.C., USA. Unpublished (1998).

Jensen, G.M. et.al. "Attribute Dimensions that Distinguishes Master and Novice Physical Therapy Clinicians in Orthopedic Settings" in Physical Therapy, Vol 72, No. 10 October 1992. Washington, USA

Competency Confirmation: Traditionally, the term 'registration' has ruled this domain. The actual purpose of the application process is to confirm that a practitioner is in fact competent to practice. The outcome is to then register or certify that same individual to practice. Important to this model is to convey that competency confirmation can happen at many junctures in a career depending on the statute in the jurisdiction of practice. Annual renewal of registration is a reaffirmation of competence. Return to practice after an absence from practice requires reconfirmation of competence. Confirming competence has legitimate purpose in all circumstances to ensure safe, ethical practice.

Competency Maintenance and Development: All registered professionals are required to maintain their competency over time. Further, beyond maintaining competencies essential to practice, continually developing competency may be required. Development of methods to achieve and demonstrate this is usually the obligation of the practicing professional, though many regulators may develop tools to enhance or assist in the process (e.g. professional portfolios, continuing education opportunities).

Competency Check: Regulators may choose or may have the authority to periodically check to ensure that registrants are maintaining competency standards. Formats for this process vary and may include such options as examination, peer review or a portfolio check. Regardless of the method, checks are usually conducted randomly, are intended to facilitate continuing competence, and flag potential practice problems.

Competency Challenge: This section of the framework is intended to deal with the area most commonly connected to regulators – complaints and discipline. Whether it is a complaint, a report on capacity, or a quality assurance review that flags concerns, all provide a single message to a registrant – his or her competence is being challenged and the onus is on him/her to demonstrate his/her competency. Though systems may vary as to procedure and outcome options, only two primary endpoints exist – either the registrant successfully demonstrates competency and/or resolves the competency concerns, or the registrant is removed from practice.

Competency Disengagement: The most difficult section of the framework to describe, this section speaks to actions, either by the regulator or the individual, that remove the individual from the regulatory system. Often these reasons are positive ones – a change in career, post-graduate education, or family leave – but regardless, an individual returning to practice must again confirm competence at entry. Disengagement does not equate to loss of competence; rather, it is intended to portray a separation from the active competency process related to practicing as a regulated professional.

Conclusion

This framework, combined with influences at the academic and professional association levels, is intended to give meaning to competency across the spectrum of professional regulation. The components are integrated and dynamic. It is hoped that it projects a positive image for regulators, the public and registrants, facilitating a straightforward understanding of the importance of competence to regulation and practice.

A Work in Progress (Continued from first page)

Strategic Communications Planning at the College

which we currently communicate with these groups. These stakeholder groups include registrants, the Ontario public (i.e., consumers), students, OT employers, and profession/regulation related groups such as associations, other regulators provincially and nationally, and the government. Methods of communicating with these groups range from formal newsletters, trade shows, and conferences, to such informal means as telephone chats and networking opportunities. However, when Council reviewed the underlying messages that we wish to incorporate into all methods of communication – formal or informal – consistencies were readily apparent. Above all, College communications

must convey:

- accountability to our public protection mandate;
- transparency in our dealings with all stakeholders;
- competency in performing our core functions; and
- effectiveness as an information resource for a broad cross-section of stakeholders.

With agreement on the fundamentals of College communications in place, College staff worked over the summer to develop measurements for each criteria. We are now in the process of conducting staff consultations, applying these measures to all aspects of College communications, and making

recommendations for improvements where needed.

The end result will be clear communication standards and guidelines for staff, and increased efficiency and effectiveness for individuals relying on College information, whether they be a registrant seeking practice advice, a member of the public with a complaint, or a government official seeking College perspective on a policy issue. Watch for more information the College's strategic communications initiatives in your new-and-improved Winter 2001 newsletter!

Election 2001

A Great Opportunity to Contribute

Election of occupational therapists to the College Council takes place every year. But only every three years do you have a chance to stand for election or nominate a colleague. In the 2001 elections the opportunity is available to all occupational therapists working in District 1 (Central East). Nomination forms will be mailed in November for the three elected Council positions available in this district.

On Council, elected occupational therapists sit side by side with members of the public appointed by the Lieutenant Governor. Together, they establish the goals and policies of the College, shaping the future of the occupational therapy profession in Ontario.

Being a Council member is a three-year, part-time commitment and involves a variety of responsibilities, including regular attendance at Council and Committee meetings, and actively debating policy issues. Previous Council or Board experience is not a requirement. Varied member backgrounds and experiences facilitate the process of considering issues from a broad perspective. A per diem is paid, and expenses such as travel and accommodation are covered.

Please give serious consideration to letting your name stand. If you would like to receive more information on College activities, or to speak to a current Council member about their experience, please do not hesitate to contact Britt Bengtsson, at extension 232.

District 1 - Central East

comprises all occupational therapists who work in the Municipality of Toronto, the counties of Haliburton, Northumberland, Peterborough, Simcoe and Victoria, and the regional municipalities of Durham, Peel and York.

A taste of what's to come...

Credible
Competent
Committed

As part of the College's comprehensive review of its communications strategies, the College's newsletter will be receiving a significant facelift, starting with the Winter 2001 issue. In addition to a new look and a new name, the primary focus of the newsletter will shift to professional competence.

Developments in this area, such as those outlined in the article on pages 4 and 5, are profoundly impacting OT practice, professional self-regulation, and public protection in Ontario. Our revised newsletter will detail how these changes are impacting your practice, while providing a look ahead to changes on the

national and international fronts that will influence the future of occupational therapy practice in Ontario.

Other sections of the revised newsletter will continue to provide newsworthy College and Council information, regulation and guideline changes, and statistical information on practice trends in Ontario. Circulation of the newsletter will take place three times per year, in a 16-page format, rather than the current four times per year, 12 pages per issue format.

We look forward to receiving your comments and feedback following distribution of our Winter 2001 issue.

winter 2001

Highlights from the June 16th Meeting of Council

Highlights from the June meeting include:

- approval of Practice Guidelines and Position Statements on Controlled Acts & Delegation, Dual Practice, and Use of Surveillance Materials, for circulation to registrants;
- approval of draft amendments to the Professional Misconduct Regulation for circulation to registrants for comment;
- confirmation of Council's underlying communications messages when interacting with stakeholders – see page 1 for additional information;
- approval of the 2000/2001 Budget;
- adoption of a series of policies on appointment and recognition of non-Council Committee members;
- review and approval of a Competency Framework Model – see page 4;
- adoption of a Council position on use of title. Material from this Council discussion will be used to develop a Position Paper for registrants.

If you would like more information on any of these items, please don't hesitate to contact the office.

Travaux en cours :

Planification des communications stratégiques de l'Ordre

(Suite de la première page)

comme essentielles à des communications efficaces.

À leur réunion du mois de juin, les membres du Conseil ont examiné les cinq principales parties intéressées ayant des rapports avec l'Ordre et les moyens de communication actuels avec ces groupes. Mentionnons entre autres les personnes inscrites, le public de l'Ontario (c.-à-d. les consommateurs), les étudiants, les employeurs d'ergothérapeutes et les groupes associés à la profession et à la réglementation comme les associations, d'autres organismes de réglementation provinciaux et nationaux et le gouvernement. Pour communiquer avec ces groupes, nous utilisons des moyens officiels comme les bulletins, les salons commerciaux, les congrès et des moyens moins officiels comme les conversations téléphoniques et les occasions de réseautage. Lorsque l'Ordre a examiné les messages sous-jacents que nous

désirons incorporer dans tous ces moyens de communication, qu'ils soient officiels ou non, plusieurs mêmes messages étaient clairs. L'Ordre, dans ses communications, doit surtout transmettre les aspects suivants :

- responsabilité par rapport à notre mandat de protection de la population;
- transparence dans nos rapports avec toutes les parties intéressées;
- compétence dans l'exécution de nos fonctions de base; et
- efficacité en tant que ressource d'information pour une vaste gamme de parties intéressées.

Une fois tous les aspects fondamentaux en place, le personnel de l'Ordre a travaillé cet été à établir des mesures pour chaque critère. Nous sommes maintenant en train de mener des consultations auprès du personnel, d'appliquer ces mesures à tous les

aspects des communications de l'Ordre et de faire des recommandations d'amélioration, au besoin.

Il résultera de tout cela des normes et des lignes directrices claires en matière de communication dont pourra se servir le personnel. Nous verrons également une plus grande efficacité dont pourront bénéficier les personnes qui se fient sur l'information fournie par l'Ordre, qu'il s'agisse d'une personne inscrite ayant besoin de conseil en matière d'exercice de la profession, d'un membre du public qui a une plainte à formuler ou d'un représentant du gouvernement qui désire obtenir le point de vue de l'Ordre au sujet d'une politique quelconque. Voyez votre nouveau bulletin « nouveau et amélioré » de l'hiver 2001, qui contiendra plus de renseignements sur les initiatives stratégiques de l'Ordre en matière de communications!

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Upcoming Events

October 25, 2000 – Council Meeting and Annual General Meeting of Council.

January 25, 2001, March 27, 2001 Council Meetings

Council meetings are held at the College office, between 9:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. Registrants and members of the public are welcome to attend. Please call the office prior to the meeting to reserve a seat.

November 21, 2000, 3:00 – 5:00 p.m. – Windsor Forum. Guest speaker: Jan Robinson, Registrar. College update and opportunity to have your questions answered and to discuss areas of interest or concern. Location: The Learning Centre, Western Campus, 1453 Prince Road, Windsor Regional Hospital. RSVP by Nov. 15th to Heather ((519) 254-5577 x 52260) or Pat ((519) 255-7151). If you wish to join Jan and other OTs for dinner following the forum, please advise Heather or Pat when you RSVP.

December 25, 2000 – January 2, 2001 – Holiday season office closure.

Staffing Update

Staff at the College are pleased to welcome three new team members: Margaret Breton has taken on the role of Registration Coordinator, and will be with the College until November when Pam Marler, currently on maternity leave, returns. Tara Brubacher joined the College staff in June and is providing support to the Operations Team, including reception. Marion Rantin also joined the College staff in June, assisting the Practice Team with administration and project management.

We warmly welcome our newest staff members, and look forward to working with all of you!



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