



YEAR IN REVIEW

June 2025 College of Occupational Therapists of Ontario

2024-25



Mission and Vision

Mission

We protect the public through effective regulation and instill confidence and trust by ensuring that occupational therapists are competent, ethical, and accountable.

Vision

Excellence in regulatory leadership.

Strategic Priorities

Meaningful Engagement

The College builds trust in its role and value through purposeful and meaningful engagement and collaboration.

Quality Practice

The College embraces leading regulatory practices to protect the public.

System Impact

The College collaborates for access to the profession and consistent quality practice.

Performance and Accountability

The College maintains strong corporate and governance structures and fosters a culture of continuous improvement.



Year 1 Accomplishments

- Governance reforms
- Data project
- Re-entry program
- Code of Ethics
- Enterprise system
- Practice guidance
- New registrant engagement
- Employer engagement
- Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion workplan and Board diversity plan
- Website redesign
- Discipline Tribunal



7,200+
registrants

358

new registrants in 2024-2025



Strategic Priorities

Meaningful Engagement

The College builds trust in its role and value through purposeful and meaningful engagement and collaboration.

Meaningful Engagement

Provides clear information about what to expect when working with occupational therapists.

PROJECTS AND INITIATIVES

Website Redesign

- New coto.org website launched January 2025
- Modern and dynamic redesign with improved navigation
- Continued refinement based on feedback and analytics

Employer Engagement

- New website content for employers launched with new website
- First employer newsletter issued April 2025
 - **54 subscribers to date, who:**
 - employ **1700 registrants** across the province
 - represent government, hospitals, clinics, community services and home care, long-term care, children's treatment centres, school boards

COTO College of Occupational Therapists of Ontario
Regulator of occupational therapists in Ontario

Public ▾ Registrants ▾ Applicants ▾ Employers ▾ Resources ▾ About ▾ News

Guiding your occupational therapy journey

As the regulator of occupational therapists (OT) in Ontario, we are here to make sure you receive safe, competent, ethical care from occupational therapists.

Popular searches: [Standards](#) [Consent](#) [Case Studies](#)



Meaningful Engagement

Builds opportunities for public and professional collaboration and participation with the College.



PROJECTS AND INITIATIVES

Building Understanding with New Registrants

- Digital Welcome Guide introduces new registrants to COTO programs and resources, and professional responsibilities as an occupational therapist.
- Introductory videos from CEO and program leads ‘put a face to each program and the College’
- Digital format allows for frequent updates based on feedback, inquiries to staff at outreach sessions, and evolution of COTO
- Registrant feedback to date indicates guide is very helpful and ‘contains all the important points’
- Available in French and English at coto.org/welcome

Practice Team Outreach

presented to Ontario OT & OTA programs

5

universities



3

colleges

**increased
workplace
requests**



presented to adjudicators,
hospitals (Ottawa, Quinte Bay),
Corrections Canada, Ontario
Health atHome, March of Dimes



practice issues and topics:

record keeping, consent, Ontario
Autism Program, psychotherapy,
OTAs and group therapy

1597

calls and emails to the
Practice Resource Service



inquiries identify trends that
**help inform and develop
resources and guidance**

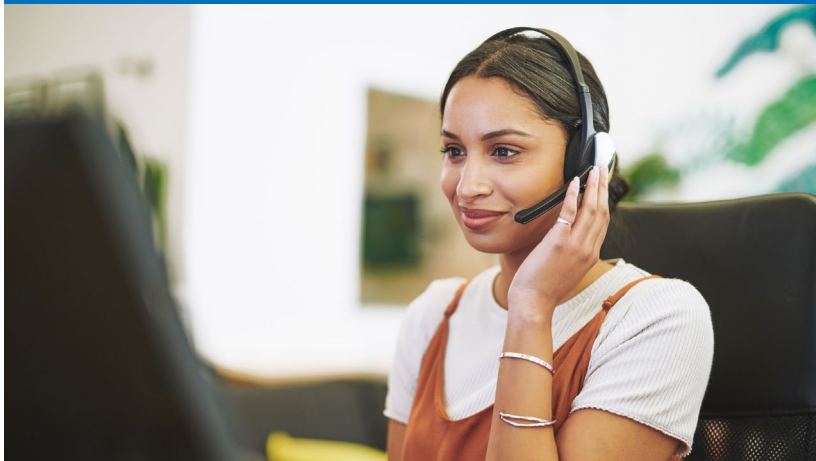


**12 new case studies and Q&As
posted on coto.org**

10,000 views

Meaningful Engagement

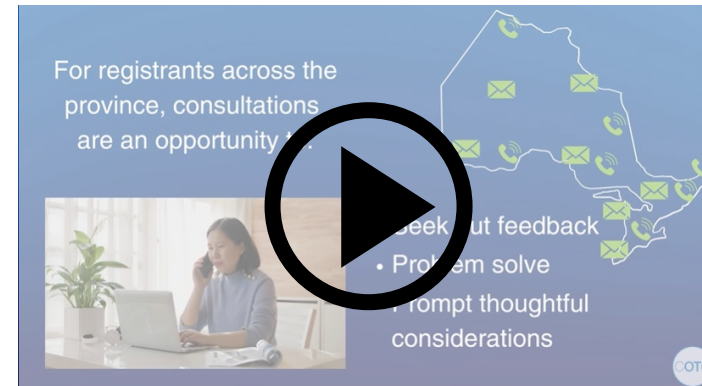
Engages registrants to build understanding of professional obligations, College programs and services



PROJECTS AND INITIATIVES

Practice Resource Service Video

- New video highlights how **Practice Resource Service** supports registrants, employers and the public by providing free, confidential guidance on a range of practice-related topics.



Practice Resource Service video

Watch: youtube.com/watch?v=mszTqIkVZ5A

Meaningful Engagement

Engages registrants to build understanding of professional obligations, College programs and services



PROJECTS AND INITIATIVES

New Data Informed Resources

- Data analysis → resources tailored to address specific OT needs
- New occupational therapy resources on **professional development**, **managing risk**, and **power imbalances** in practice
- New worksheet and podcast on 'goal setting made simple' helps registrants set **SMART goals** and support their **Annual Learning Plan**

Goal Setting Podcast



Listen: youtube.com/watch?v=8zqtMO14oVA

Meaningful Engagement

Integrates the practices of diversity, equity, and inclusion throughout the College and profession.



PROJECTS AND INITIATIVES

Understanding the Profile of the Profession

- New voluntary collection of **racialized group identity** registrant data aims to build understanding of demographic trends in the occupational therapy profession
- Sociodemographic data and baseline will inform efforts to reduce barriers
- Initiative supports COTO's ongoing commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion in health regulation

Next steps:

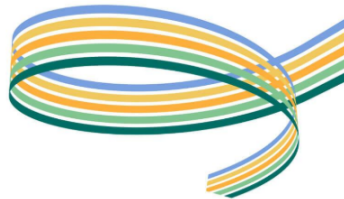
- Seek feedback from registrants about data collection process
- Share data back to the profession, universities and system partners to build a better understanding of the profession and any impacts to service delivery to the public

Meaningful Engagement

Integrates the practices of diversity, equity, and inclusion throughout the College and profession.

Welcome to the 2025 National eLearning Module:

Advancing Culture, Equity and Justice in Occupational Therapy Practice



PROJECTS AND INITIATIVES

eLearning module

- 2025 national eLearning module on **cultural humility** (*Advancing Culture, Equity, and Justice in Occupational Therapy Practice*)
 - Focuses on real scenarios to engage professionals and build awareness and application to practice
- Input to learning module from across the country – extensive consultation with diverse groups, subject matter experts, patients, clients, and caregivers
- **7 other provincial regulators** will be using the module in their jurisdictions

Public Awareness Metrics



8

new public-focused videos

9,800 views

on YouTube



51

public-focused posts across
COTO's social media platforms



4

public awareness
articles



1

radio ad

1.1M +

reached through public articles

480,000+

reached through radio ads



Strategic Priorities

Quality Practice

The College embraces leading regulatory practices to protect the public.

Quality Practice

Takes an evidence-informed, risk-based approach to ensuring OTs are competent, safe, effective, and accountable.



PROJECTS AND INITIATIVES

National Re-entry Program

- Delivering solutions for **health human resources** crisis—increasing consistency for OT regulators across the country
- Developed assessment for re-entry and rolled out to provinces
- Worked with ACOTRO to create common pathway to re-entering practice

Discipline Tribunal

- **Ontario Occupational Therapists Discipline Tribunal (OOTDT)** is COTO's new Discipline Committee panel made up of occupational therapists and members of the public.
- All panels will benefit from an **experienced adjudicator as the chair**

Quality Practice

Engages occupational therapists to advance quality practice and the delivery of safe, effective occupational therapy service.



PROJECTS AND INITIATIVES

Practice Guidance to Protect Patients and Clients

AI guidance “What Should Occupational Therapists Consider if Using Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Practice?”

- Addresses risks and considerations when using AI
- Presented to national association of OT regulators and provincial OT association
- Shared to other regulatory Colleges

College Responses to Coroner’s Reports

- Office of the Chief Coroner of Ontario working with COTO to address issues in practice and patient safety risks
- COTO educating OTs to improve safety and care
- Material valued and distributed by other regulators including College of Nurses and College of Physiotherapists

Quality Practice

Engages occupational therapists to advance quality practice and the delivery of safe, effective occupational therapy service.



PROJECTS AND INITIATIVES

Managing Risk in Practice

- QA program's risk-based analysis of **all** registrants identifies high-risk registrants for competency assessments
 - 103 QA competency assessments in 2024-25
 - Process ensures people who are highest risk are practising competently
- COTO process for QA risk-based regulation presented at the Canadian Network of Agencies for Regulation with several of our partners.

Quality Practice

Engages occupational therapists to advance quality practice and the delivery of safe, effective occupational therapy service.



PROJECTS AND INITIATIVES

Formalizing Processes to Mitigate Risk

- Additional practice risks included in annual renewal 2025-26 based on aggregate data from practice support and quality assurance competency assessments
 - Ensures occupational therapists provide COTO with current information about risks in practice, which informs the development of COTO practice guidance
- I&R program now using QA Peer Assessors when requiring registrants to complete education programs
 - Ensures objective, qualified and trained individuals are coaching, mentoring or monitoring registrants



Strategic Priorities

System Impact

The College collaborates for access to the profession and consistent quality practice.

System Impact

Supports efforts to increase the number of licensed occupational therapists in Ontario to address the health human resources crisis



PROJECTS AND INITIATIVES

CIHI and Health Human Resources

- New racialized group identity data questions in renewal form structured according to the **Canadian Institute of Health Information (CIHI)** Health Human Resources Minimum data set
- Anonymous, aggregate data will be shared with CIHI to assist with their development of the profile of Canadian occupational therapists.

Supporting Student Placements

All university programs reporting a critical need for fieldwork preceptorship in occupational therapy across Canada.

- COTO efforts to promote student placements include:
 - Communication of importance of taking students via newsletter
 - Promotion of university fieldwork survey to identify barriers to precepting
 - Annual renewal questions regarding student placement participation
- OTOC partnership with academic programs and OSOT to provide recognition

Registrant Metrics for CIHI

5,749
clinical

1,114
non-clinical

64%

provided voluntary
sociodemographic
racialized group
data at renewal

42

identified as
Indigenous

System Impact

Collaborates with national partners to further regulatory excellence.

ACOTRO
ASSOCIATION OF CANADIAN OCCUPATIONAL
THERAPY REGULATORY ORGANIZATIONS



ACORE
ASSOCIATION CANADIENNE DES ORGANISMES
DE RÉGLEMENTATION EN ERGOTHÉRAPIE

PROJECTS AND INITIATIVES

ACOTRO & Accreditation

- Working with CAOT and ACOTUP to reimagine governance of accreditation of OT educational programs in Canada
- **Goal:** ACOTRO integral part of governance of accreditation

Code of Ethics

- Currently each regulator has their own code and most need to be updated. National consistency to create quality
- Template approved by ACOTRO Board, Consultation with Practice Subcommittee and Patient Relations Committee with regards to COTO COE
- COTO will engage Equity Perspectives Committee, Indigenous Insights Advisory Committee, and Indigenous OTs to advance this initiative.

System Impact

Collaborates with national partners to further regulatory excellence.



PROJECTS AND INITIATIVES

Nova Scotia Partnership and Collaboration

- Working with the Nova Scotia OT regulator to implement a process similar to COTO's for competency assessment of Nova Scotia registrants
- Responding to requests from OT regulators about delivery of a consistent QA program → sharing practice information across the country supports delivery of safe care and helps ensure all OTs are competent

Practice Outreach and Input Meetings

- COTO seen as key partner for consultation on matters impacting the profession and patient care
- Practice team consultations include:
 - Railway Association of Canada: evolving role of OT assessment
 - Ministry of Health: Infection Prevention and Control working group
 - Service Ontario: disability parking permits

System Impact

Collaborates with national partners to further regulatory excellence.



PROJECTS AND INITIATIVES

As of Right Legislation

- Plans to introduce new “As of Right” regulations will allow health care professionals who are already licensed or registered in another Canadian province or territory to practice in Ontario without delays.
- COTO continues to work closely with the government and other health system partners to support more health care workers in Ontario

MOU on Remote Service

- 10/10 provinces have Memorandum of Understanding on remote services
 - Allows OTs to provide remote services to clients located in Ontario without having to register with COTO
- MOU supports continued care and service delivery across Canada

Interjurisdictional practice metrics

25

applicants for
labour mobility to
Ontario

**1-3
days**

time to process
completed LMSA
application

33

OTs resigned
because they're
leaving Ontario
or Canada



Strategic Priorities

Performance and Accountability

The College maintains strong corporate and governance structures and fosters a culture of continuous improvement.

Performance and Accountability

Ensures College governance is proactive, effective, competency-based, and accountable.



PROJECTS AND INITIATIVES

Governance Modernization

Multi-year project to modernize governance and ensure COTO Board and Committees reflect leading practices in regulatory oversight now complete.

- Reduced Board of Directors size by 4
- Established competency-based Board and statutory committees
- Separated Board and Committees
- Restructured Exec and introduced Board Committees (Finance & Audit, Governance, and Nominations Committee)
- Revised Board evaluation
- Included Nominations Committee in screening of candidates for Board elections to support competency-based Board of Directors
- Changed titles and terminology.

Work supports more transparent, competent and inclusive decision-making, in line with COTO public protection mandate.

Performance and Accountability

Ensures College governance is proactive, effective, competency-based, and accountable.



PROJECTS AND INITIATIVES

College Performance Measurement Framework (CPMF)

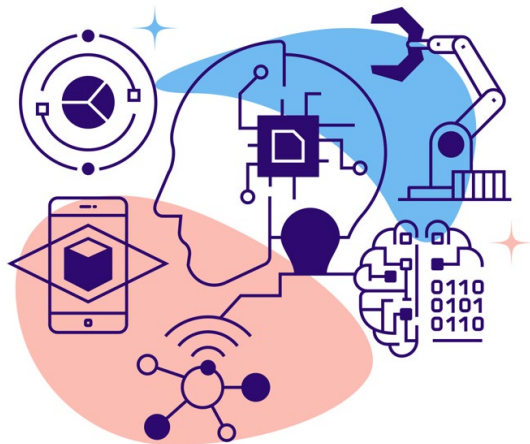
The Ministry of Health requires all health regulatory colleges to report on how well they are protecting the public interest (**CPMF Reporting Tool**)

- CPMF evaluates effectiveness and impact of COTO's regulatory activities and covers a wide variety of topics, like how colleges:
 - perform as an organization,
 - register applicants,
 - measure practice improvement of regulated health professionals, and
 - process complaints about their registrants.

For 2024-2025, COTO **continues to meet 50/50 measures**

Performance and Accountability

Maintains the expertise and resources to address evolving demands caused by changes in the regulatory or practice environment.



PROJECTS AND INITIATIVES

Enterprise System

New enterprise system brings welcome changes:

- Targeted notifications based on each registrant's profile = **improved overall registrant compliance** with requirements about annual renewal, insurance and practice/employment information.
- Process automation = Improved **efficiency** for program areas
- Process automation = more **time to focus** on key strategic initiatives
- All requirements now housed within one system, eliminating the need to switch between platforms to find the latest information.
- **Case Management:**
 - Real-time insights enable **coordination between programs**.
 - Registrants can use **online self-serve functions to provide information** for consideration by registration and quality assurance committees.

Performance and Accountability

Leverages data to drive performance internally and externally to enhance service delivery.

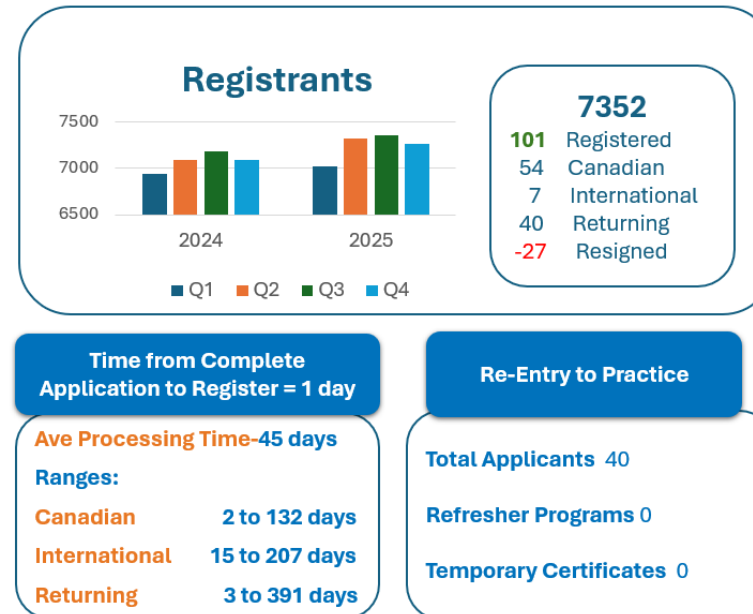
PROJECTS AND INITIATIVES

Data Project

Next steps for leveraging data:

- Implementing strategic data dashboards and reports to support informed governance and system level decision-making
- Reports include key performance indicators, baselines and benchmarks

Registration Quarterly Report: Q3 2024-2025





2026 Project List

- Leverage data
- Build efficiencies for re-entry to practice
- Cultivate strategic partnerships and collaborations
- Refine Code of Ethics and related materials
- Implement next phase of enterprise system
- Implement new document management system
- Implement national eLearning module with focus on cultural safety
- Develop practice guidance on risk-based approach, psychotherapy, and Code of Ethics
- Promote public register
- Build registrant and employer engagement
- Advance COTO equity, diversity and inclusion commitment