

# YEAR IN REVIEW

June 2026 College of Occupational Therapists of Ontario





# Mission and Vision

## Mission

We protect the public through effective regulation and instills 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 2 Goals

- ✓ Leverage data
- ✓ Build efficiencies for re-entry to practice
- ✓ Cultivate strategic partnerships and collaborations
- ✓ Refine the 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



**7,443**  
**registrants**

**526 new registrants in 2025-2026**

*(All numbers as of May 31, 2026)*



# 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.

## Building Public Awareness

The College built and launched three campaigns to build public awareness:

- NewsCanada radio and article campaign (*March-June*)
  - Material available in French and English
  - Pick up by 391 outlets, 12.5 million people reached
- 2 postcards, 1 brochure, all available in French and English
  - Displayed in 180 Ontario clinics along with a 30-second COTO video
  - Piloted at Practice Team presentations to Ottawa retirement communities and at St. Joseph's Health Centre
- "What to Expect From Your Occupational Therapist" handout (published in 10 most spoken languages in Ontario) available on [coto.org](http://coto.org)

You deserve care  
you can trust



Occupational therapists work with people of all ages and all abilities.

Every child develops and learns in their own way. Understanding who's qualified to support them matters. Here's what you can expect from a registered occupational therapist in Ontario.

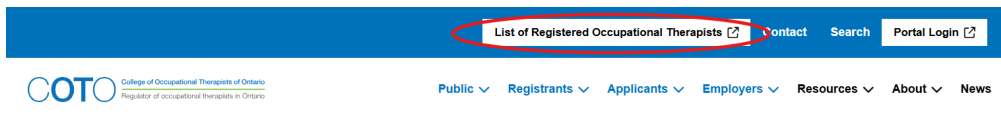
☎ 1-800-890-6570  
✉ [info@coto.org](mailto:info@coto.org)  
🌐 [coto.org/ot](http://coto.org/ot)

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

# Meaningful Engagement

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

## Understanding the Public Register



The public register, formerly called “Find an Occupational Therapist” was renamed to **List of Registered Occupational Therapists**. The List is accessed through [coto.org](http://coto.org).

- This change was based on public input. The public recommended a name change that clarifies the public register function as a resource for up-to-date information rather than a referral tool
- Search functionality was also improved, in response to public feedback received by COTO front line staff
- Ongoing promotion of the List of Registered Occupational Therapists through social media, newsletters, and video

### 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](#)



# Public Outreach

Presentations to 'naturally occurring retirement communities' with 100+ residents in Ottawa



**The Highlands  
Ottawa  
May 2026**



**The Riviera  
Ottawa  
May 2026**

issues and topics included wellness, home safety, community supports and aging in place

# Meaningful Engagement

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

## Employer Engagement

College of Occupational Therapists of Ontario

Employer Newsletter | September 2025



### Connecting with the College: Employer Edition

#### New Occupational Therapy Graduates: What Employers Need to Know



As new occupational therapy graduates begin their careers in Ontario, employers play a vital role in supporting their transition into safe, ethical, and competent practice.

##### Regulatory Requirements

Before practicing independently, new grads must pass the CAOT National Certification Examination and register with the College of Occupational Therapists of Ontario (COTO). During this time, they may work under provisional registration, which requires supervision by an occupational therapist with a general practicing certificate who has submitted a Supervision Agreement to COTO.

- 114 employer subscribers across sectors connecting to 2,900+ registrants working in hospitals, private clinics, community care, school boards, long-term care facilities, rehabilitation services, and more.
- 3 employer newsletters:
  - Key topics included: 'As of Right' legislation; Practice Resource Service supporting employers; What Employers need to know about new occupational therapy graduates; using the List of Registered Occupational Therapists to confirm standing

# Employer Outreach

Presentations to Vision Loss Rehabilitation Canada, Intact Financial, Lifemark, Corrections Canada, St. Joseph's Healthcare



St Joseph's Health Care  
London  
April 2026

## Increased Workplace Outreach

- presented to **5 employers** in different sectors, such as **health** (hospitals, not-for-profit organizations), **financial** (insurance), and **public administration** (corrections)
- **issues and topics included:** professional boundaries, standards of practice and investigations, Artificial Intelligence in occupational therapy practice

# Meaningful Engagement

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

## New Registrant Engagement

### Webinar: Let's Talk Practice

**Sandra Carter**  
Practice Manager



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



- **Let's Talk Practice: Supporting New and Returning Occupational Therapists**
  - Webinar for new and returning registrants in November 2025
  - Recording made available on YouTube, with content and questions chaptered so users can quickly access key points
- Dedicated social posts for new registrants, promoting the digital Welcome Guide, webinar for new registrants, and practice resource service for support.
- **New Registrant Survey** launched in May 2026
  - Feedback will inform refinements and new resources to support registrants entering practice

# Student Outreach

13 presentations to students in OT and OTA programs at 5 universities and 3 colleges in Ontario



**issues and topics included:** introduction to the College, scope of practice, professional boundaries, record keeping, psychotherapy, preparing OTA/PTAs for the profession, standards of practice and regulation

# Meaningful Engagement

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

## Practice Resource Service

- Promotion of Practice Resource Service on social media (27 posts)
- **2,000+ calls and emails** to the Practice Resource Service
  - Key themes from inquiries added to newsletter with resources to support registrant practice
- **'Practice Tip of the Week'** series posted across COTO's social media channels
- Ontario Society of Occupational Therapy Conference presentations on 'Professional Boundaries' and 'Partnering with your Regulator'
- New **Spotlight on Practice** series in registrant newsletter
  - 'Unwritten Rules of Practice'
  - 'Types of Consent'
  - 'Am I a Health Information Custodian (HIC) or Agent?'





# Meaningful Engagement

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

## Staff Learning



- **4 all staff Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion education sessions**
  - Cultural Competence & Humility
  - Microaggressions
  - Allyship
  - Advancing Indigenous Resurgence through Truth & Reconciliation
- **1 leadership Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion education sessions**
  - Inclusive Leadership
- **Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) assessment**
  - 25 Individual assessments
  - 2 Group debrief sessions

# Public Awareness Metrics

**3** new public-focused videos 

**10** new “Practice Tip of the Week” video shorts posted on social media and YouTube

**17** social posts promoting public register

**4** social posts promoting renamed List of Registered Occupational Therapists

**3,500+** impressions across COTO’s social media platforms

**47**   

public-focused social posts

**7,000+** impressions across COTO’s social media platforms

 **3** public awareness articles in English and French

**7.39M +** reached through public articles

 **1** radio ad in English and French

**5.17M+** reached through radio ads

**21** employer-focused posts

**3,500+** impressions across COTO’s social media platforms

**110+** total subscribers to employer newsletter



# 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.

## National Re-Entry to Practice Program



- COTO and the 9 other Canadian occupational therapy regulators are piloting a national pathway template to advance consistency among regulators
  - Goal is to help professionals rejoin in a timely way to improve patient care and address the health human resources shortage.
- Program allows trained professionals to return to work, helps refresh their clinical skills and meet current standards and legislation
  - COTO has processed 25+ Registration Competency Assessments for Re-Entry to Practice and more are in progress.
- Improvements were made to the COTO registration process and the online Registration Competency Assessment for Re-Entry to Practice:
  - the self-reflection assessment process is now an automated registrant questionnaire, and
  - the competency review and interview process is now virtual and has an integrated database.

# Quality Practice

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

## Practice Guidance to Protect Patients and Clients



### College Responses to Coroner's Reports

- Office of the Chief Coroner of Ontario continues to work with COTO to address patient safety risks:
  - Use of Wheelchair Lap Belt
  - Medical Assistance in Dying guidance

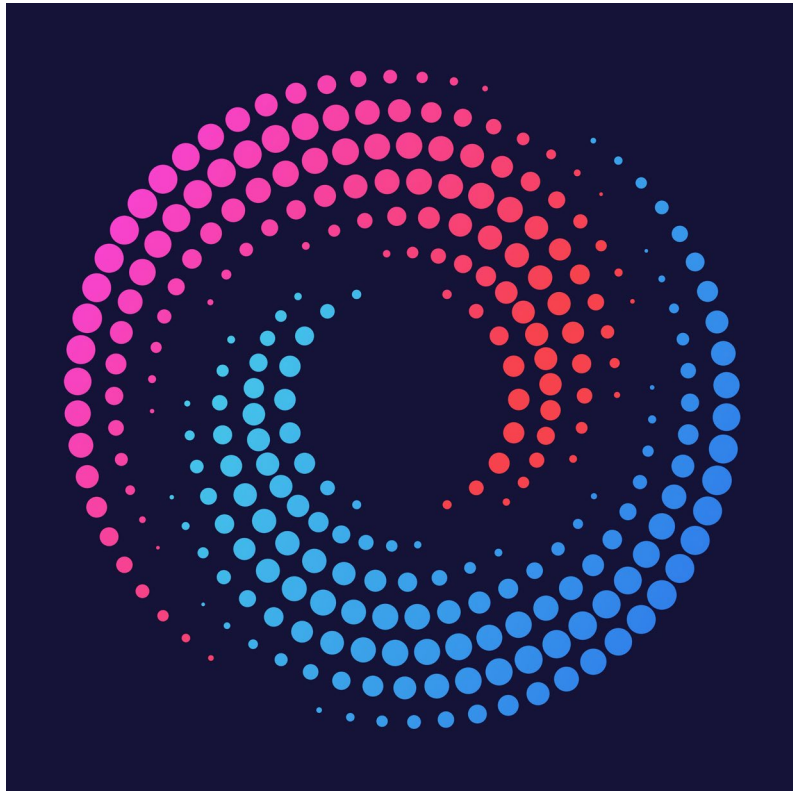
### New resource: Questions to Consider for OT and OTA Collaboration

- Questions OTAs may want to ask their supervising OT and that OTs should be prepared to discuss when establishing the supervision and communication plan for each client/patient

# Quality Practice

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

## Managing Risk in Practice



- Competency Assessment: more than 140 registrants took part in a competency assessment in 2025/2026



Assessments identify gaps and strengths in practice. Key area for registrants to strengthen are:

- Privacy
  - Consent and
  - Power dynamics
- Findings inform future resource development

# Quality Practice

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

## Conflict of Interest



- Data from 280 competency assessments (2024-2026) identified most common themes and management strategies for **Conflict of Interest**



In response, COTO released a new [Conflict of Interest resource](#) in May 2026, available in English and French

A woman with dark hair in a bun, wearing a grey blazer and a silver hoop earring, is seen from behind, gesturing with her right hand towards a diverse group of people seated in a modern office environment. The background is blurred, showing other office workers and a bright, open-plan space.

# Strategic Priorities

## **System Impact**

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

# System Impact

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

## Sociodemographic Data Collection and Health Human Resources

To better understand the workforce diversity, identify inequities, and improve access to equitable care, we ask occupational therapists to voluntarily complete sociodemographic information.

- Baseline information has been collected in alignment with Canadian Institute of Health Information reporting requirements of regulatory colleges.
- COTO implemented sociodemographic data questions to support the voluntary collection of racialized group identity during the 2026 renewal cycle.
  - 5,977 registrants participated (subject to update as of May 31, 2026), contributing to workforce planning and data insights.
  - Further reporting to appear in COTO 2026 annual report



# System Impact

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

## Supporting Student Placements

### Q&A: Should I consider taking on an occupational therapy student?



Occupational therapists play a vital role in shaping the next generation of practitioners.

**Supervising students is not only a regulatory expectation**—it's a strategic opportunity. By engaging with learners, occupational therapists help ensure that practice remains current, safe, and aligned with both the **College standards** and **organizational policies** that protect client safety and quality of care.

Read our Q&A to learn more about why occupational therapists should consider taking an occupational therapy student.

[Read about the benefits of taking a student](#)

- Student placements promoted through employer newsletter
  - Q&A resource about the benefits of taking on an occupational therapy student was published
- 3 student placements at COTO working on evidence-informed projects
  - Practice Program  
March–June 2026 - 2 McMaster University students
  - Quality Assurance Program  
March–May 2026 - 1 University of Toronto student

# System Impact

Collaborates with national partners to further regulatory excellence.

## Association of Canadian Occupational Therapy Regulatory Organizations



- **National Practice Standards:** Working Group tasked with developing five national Core Standards for:
  - Scope of Practice
  - Record Keeping
  - Consent
  - Addressing Anti-Indigenous Racism
  - Maintaining Professional Boundaries/Prevention of Sexual Abuse
- **Current Status:** Working Group is developing Core Standards for
  - Record Keeping
  - Maintaining Professional Boundaries/Prevention of Sexual Abuse

# System Impact

Collaborates with national partners to further regulatory excellence.

## Code of Ethics



- Collaborated with the Association of Canadian Occupational Therapy Regulatory Organizations to develop a **National Template for the Code of Ethics**.
- Tailored the Code and Guide to practice in Ontario and shared for consultation in December 2025. The new Code will:
  - Guide ethical and professional practice for all occupational therapists in Ontario, regardless of practice area.
  - Define key concepts and terminology, including *Risk Management Approaches* and *Trauma-Informed Approaches*.
  - Introduce guidance on the ethical use of social media, virtual platforms, and generative Artificial Intelligence (AI).

# System Impact

Collaborates with national partners to further regulatory excellence.

## Practice Outreach and Input Meetings



- COTO seen as a key partner for consultation on matters impacting the profession and patient care
- Practice team provided input on or consulted on the following:
  - Canadian Association of Occupational Therapists' Psychotherapy Working Group
  - Ontario Government Assistive Devices Program
  - Ontario Autism Program
  - Service Ontario
  - Ministry of Health Infection Prevention and Control Working Group

# System Impact

Collaborates with national partners to further regulatory excellence.

## 'As of Right' Legislation

- Implemented the **As of Right** framework effective January 1, 2026, allowing occupational therapists registered in other Canadian jurisdictions to practise in Ontario for up to six months while completing registration requirements.
- This supports improved labour mobility and timely access to services.
- Currently, COTO has 3 occupational therapists registered under As of Right

## Provisional Registration of Canadian Graduates

### Parallel Processing Model

- Implemented a parallel registration process for Canadian graduates to streamline registration and reduce time to practice.
- Eligible applicants may obtain provisional registration by submitting an affidavit prior to convocation, allowing them to begin working while final transcripts are submitted to the College after graduation.



A group of diverse business professionals are clapping at a meeting. In the foreground, a woman with blonde hair wearing a white patterned blouse is clapping. To her right, a man with a beard wearing a light blue shirt is also clapping. In the background, another woman with dark hair is clapping. They are gathered around a wooden conference table. A green circular graphic is overlaid on the bottom right of the image, containing text.

## Strategic Priorities

### **Performance and Accountability**

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

# Performance & Accountability

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

## Governance

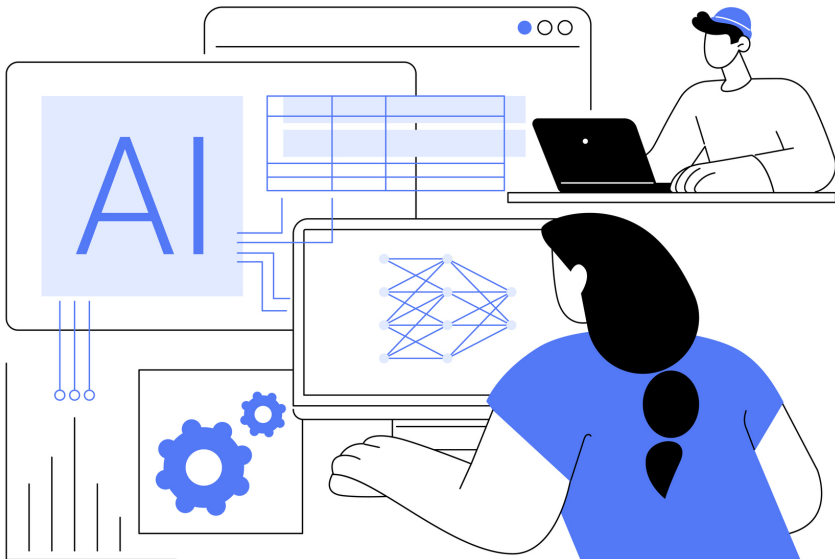


- Developed a new Governance Manual to support clear, consistent, and effective governance practices across the College.
- The Governance Manual contains updated governance processes, roles, and responsibilities to better support effective decision-making and accountability.
- Manual is posted on the College's website to support transparency.

# Performance & Accountability

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

## Artificial Intelligence

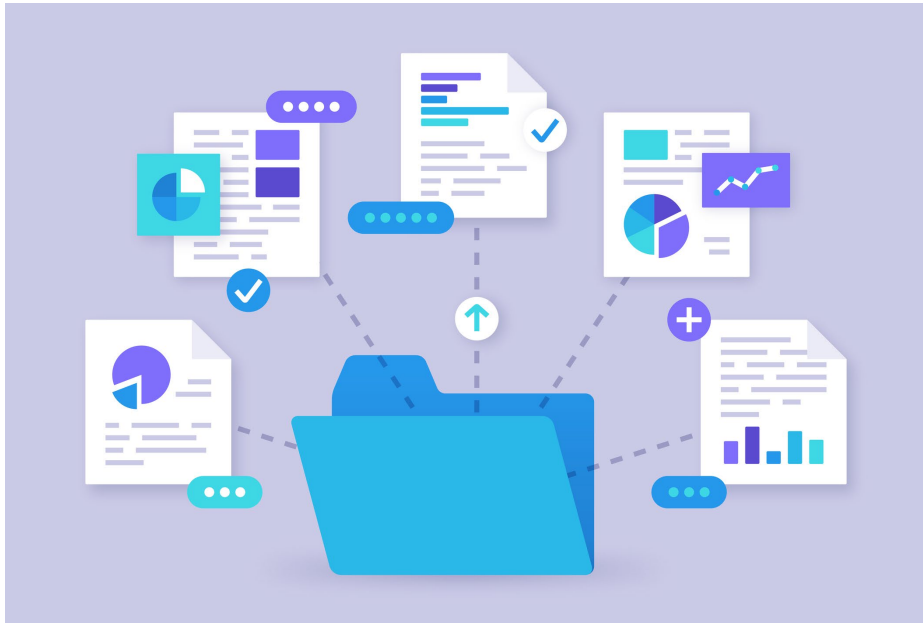


- COTO is advancing the implementation of Microsoft Copilot to enhance productivity and efficiency.
- The Copilot readiness assessment has been completed
  - Current status: Now in the configuration phase, including pilot testing to validate functionality and support user adoption.

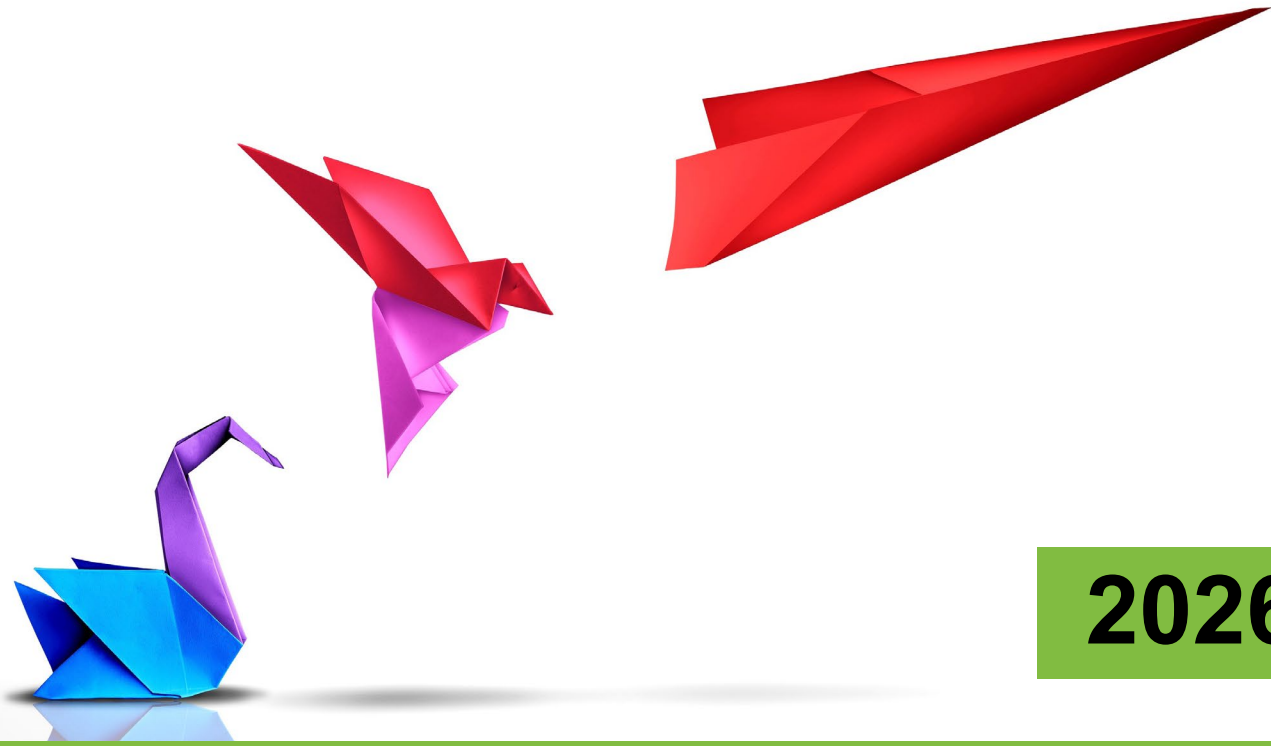
# Performance & Accountability

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

## Data Management & System Enhancement



- **Enterprise system (database):** Improved data quality for reporting, enhanced registration, and renewal forms, and streamlined automation processes (including tax receipts, voting district updates, and duplicate prevention).
- Launched a single online complaint and reporting form to simplify public complaint and reporting submissions
- **Document management system:** Successfully migrated over 310K files to a new document management system, improving document organization and strengthening security controls.



## 2026-2027 Project List

- Evaluate Registration Re-entry Program
- AI Readiness
- Organizational EDI Project
- Strategic Planning
- Translate COTO Website
- Scope of Practice
- QA Continuing Competency Project
- Enterprise System Development/Support
- Public Awareness
- Launch eLearning Module on Communications and National eLearning Module on Ethics