

EXPLANATORY GUIDE

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE QUALITY ASSURANCE REGULATION 530/98

JANUARY 15, 2009

College Seeking Registrant and Stakeholder Feedback on Regulation Change

Currently, the College of Opticians of Ontario's (COO) Quality Assurance (QA) program operates under the Ontario Regulation 530/98 and is meeting all the QA requirements prescribed in the *Regulated Health Professions Act, 1991 (RHPA)*. However, some aspects of the QA Regulation need revision as they are not consistent with the *Health Systems Improvement Act (HSIA) 2007*. This Act amended several of the *Regulated Health Professions Act* provisions for QA Programs and will come into effect in June 2009.

Process for Changing Regulations

The *RHPA, 1991* gives Regulated Health Colleges the authority to make regulations, subject to the approval of the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (MOHLTC), relating to the administration and operations of the College and its programs. The *RHPA, 1991* requires that a proposed Regulation amendment be circulated to every member, allowing sixty (60) days for comment before Council can approve the amended Regulation. The proposed amendments are also circulated to other stakeholders for comments. Changes may be made based on the feedback received during the circulation process. If substantive changes are made to the proposed Regulation, then the amendments must be re-circulated. Following stakeholder feedback, the proposed amendments are voted on at Council. If adopted, the amended Regulation will be sent to MOHLTC for review and approval by the government. The Regulation does not come into effect until proclaimed by the government.

Current Situation

At this time, Council is proposing the amendments to the QA Regulation (Regulation) to ensure the language is consistent with terminology and requirements prescribed in *HSIA, 2007*, and to ensure the existing program is clearly defined in the Regulation.

The proposed amendments to the Regulation will have an impact on the current structure and components of the QA Program and Registrant obligations. The revisions are intended to set out a general requirement for Registrant participation in QA through self-assessment, continuing education and professional development and to provide appropriate mechanisms for the College to monitor member participation and compliance with the QA program. This more generic approach will allow the College to ensure that the specific tools it develops for the QA program reflect changes in practice environments, advances in technology and the other components as set out in *HSIA, 2007*.

HSIA, 2007 also transferred authority from the QA Committee to a new Investigations, Complaints and Reports Committee (ICRC) to assess a member's competence and direct practice enhancement or remediation based on a complaint or investigative report. The current Regulation needs to be changed to reflect these changes in legislation.

The College is pleased to introduce a new QA tool to help opticians demonstrate how they keep knowledge, skills and judgment current in their practice to meet their professional

obligations. The Professional Learning and Practice Portfolio (PLPP) is a new component of the QA Program, designed to assist members with their professional development. Creating and maintaining a portfolio throughout one's professional life promotes quality practice and assures the continuing competence of opticians in Ontario. Portfolio development replaces the QA Continuing Education Credit System.

The PLPP is a collection of documents, in a structured format, that reflect career history and demonstrate ongoing learning and maintenance of competence. The PLPP includes documentation of learning activities, a description of what was learned and how that knowledge improved practice. It provides a framework for ongoing learning, an opportunity for self-assessment and self-reflection in order to identify individual learning needs and is a flexible way to ensure opticians' continuing competence.

Summary of Proposed Changes

If these amendments are approved by Council there will be some changes to the QA program and yearly QA requirements for Registrants. These amendments are broad in nature to be inclusive of advances in technology and ongoing research into the continuing competence of regulated health professional and accepted models of adult learning practices. The need to ensure Registrants engage in a self, peer and practice assessment, and complete professional development activities are requirements introduced through *HISIA*, 2007 and supported fully by the College. The changes to the existing Regulation focus on amending and simplifying the language, omitting sections no longer required in legislation and the inclusion of subsections regarding professional development and self, peer and practice assessment. The amendments will help ensure that the QA Regulation is consistent with the legislation.

More details about the precise amendments proposed and their rationale are set out in the accompanying document.

Your feedback is important!

The proposed QA Regulation has been posted on the College's Website www.coptont.org. The College is asking Registrants and other stakeholders for their input to be submitted by March 30, 2009 regarding the proposed amended Regulation.

You are invited to submit comments to the College, in writing, by completing the attached Feedback Form and faxing it to 416-368-2713 or scanning it and emailing it to the College at mail@coptont.org. Alternatively, email comments referencing questions or mail directly to:

Lisa Gibson, Manager (Acting) Quality Assurance
College of Opticians of Ontario
902-85 Richmond St. W.
Toronto, ON. M5H 2C9