

## BRIEFING NOTE

**TO:** Board of Directors

**FROM:** Patient Relations Committee

**DATE:** February 22, 2021

**SUBJECT:** Traditional Land Acknowledgment

☒ For Decision

☐ For Information

☐ Monitoring Report

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### Purpose:

To consider whether to implement a policy of making a traditional land acknowledgment at the beginning of Board and Committee meetings.

### Background:

Last year the Patient Relations Committee discussed traditional land acknowledgments and the role that they play in recognizing the traditional First Nations, Métis and/or Inuit territories of a place in a way that is honest and historically accurate. The Committee agreed that providing a land acknowledgment at the beginning of a meeting gives time for reflection and demonstrates recognition of Indigenous lands, treaties and peoples. As part of reconciliation efforts with Indigenous Peoples (First Nation, Metis, and Inuit), it is important to take the time to recognize the original stewards of the territory where our meetings are taking place.

On January 29, 2021, George Couchie of Redtail Hawk Training and Consulting gave a presentation on cultural awareness to the Board and appointed members.

### For Consideration:

#### *Traditional Land Acknowledgments*

The Committee has been provided with the following proposed territorial land acknowledgment from George Couchie, of Redtail Hawk Training and Consulting:

"The land I am standing on today is the traditional territory of many nations including the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Anishnabeg, the Chippewa, the Haudenosaunee and the Wendat peoples and is now home to many diverse First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples. I also acknowledge that Toronto is covered by Treaty 13 signed with the Mississaugas of the Credit, and the Williams Treaty signed with multiple Mississaugas and Chippewa bands."

The Committee proposes the following:

1. This acknowledgment directly relates to the land the College of Opticians sits upon and could be incorporated as part of a personal introduction at any in-person board or committee meeting.
2. Now that the College has pivoted to a virtual environment where persons are in different geographical spaces, a land acknowledgment could be tailored to acknowledge the land on which the College of Opticians sits, and/or the location where the meeting chair is located as a personal introduction when speaking
3. That the Board introduce additional cultural awareness, safety and humility training/information sessions throughout the year

**Public Interest Considerations:**

Part of regulating the profession of opticianry in the public interest includes being responsive to the diverse needs of all Ontarians.

Providing a land acknowledgment at the beginning of an event or meeting gives time for reflection and demonstrates recognition of Indigenous lands, treaties and peoples. It involves thinking about what happened in the past and what changes can be made going forward in order to further the reconciliation process.

Land acknowledgments mark a small and important step in the process of reconciliation and building a positive relationship with Indigenous peoples. By making a land acknowledgment people are taking part in an act of reconciliation, honouring the land and Indigenous presence which dates back over 10,000 years.

**Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Considerations:**

It is incumbent on the Board to consider whether the proposed acknowledgment is consistent with the COO's organizational values relating to diversity, equity and inclusion.

**Recommendations:**

1. To approve that Traditional Land Acknowledgments be read at the beginning of Board and Committee meetings of the College as recommended by the Patient Relations Committee
2. To continue participating in cultural safety and humility training throughout the year