

Volume 3, Issue 1

February 2005

Special Points of interest:

- Safety in Health Care Conference
- Practice Guideline: Client Records

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COTNS NEWS

COLLEGE HOLDS FIRST MAIL-IN ELECTION

As you are aware, this year the College held its first election by mail. The College is pleased with the rate of just over 50% response from the membership. Thank you to all who sent back your election ballots. The College will be reviewing its policies around elections. All comments would be appreciated. Please e-mail any comments to admin@cotns.ca.

The members elected Karey Fleming and Phyllis Williams to serve on the Board for the next two years. Congratulations to both!

KAREY FLEMING

Karey has a diverse 10 years of experience as an OT, working in both the hospital system as well as private practice in both Newfoundland for 6 years and in Nova Scotia for the past 4 years. Her roles have included those of therapist and supervisor and currently clinic owner of Health At Work Inc. in both New Glasgow and Fall River. Her current caseload includes pediatrics, orthopedic, vocational rehabilitation and program management. Karey continues to further her education, participating in courses to better her practice and skill levels.

She is certified in AMPS that she has applied with pediatric clients, clients with chronic pain and as well during Functional Capacity Evaluations.

She has experience in marketing the profession, human resources management and college tribunal proceedings in Newfoundland. Karey is interested in developing new approaches and policies to meet the needs of our ever-changing environment and population and believes in expanding the roles of occupational therapy practice and strongly supports the continued evolution of the profession.

PHYLLIS WILLIAMS

A graduate of McGill University in 1977 with a BSc (Occ Ther), Phyllis has been working in the province of Nova Scotia ever since. She was employed at the Halifax County Regional Rehabilitation centre from graduation through June 2002 as a sole therapist and later a department head. With the closure of the rehabilitation centre, employment was offered with Quest—A Society For Adult Support and Rehabilitation.

As the occupational therapist with this agency, her responsibilities include providing service to the eleven clients at the

regional rehabilitation centre site as well as a member of the Community Behavioural Support Service, a multi-disciplinary team which provides service to clients in the Department of Community Services, Community Supports for Adults program who are displaying behavioural difficulties. She has previously served two terms on the board of what was then NSAOT and two terms on the executive of NSSOT. She has always been interested in the role of a self-regulating professional body.

COTNS NEWS

BOARD MEMBERS

2004-05

Kendra Rex—Chair

Phyllis Williams—Vice

Chair

Cherie Lewis—Secretary

Karey Fleming—Treasurer

PRACTICE

COMMITTEE

Denise Bond—Chair

Cynthia Stilwell

Diane MacKenzie

Krista Boychuk

INVESTIGATIONS

COMMITTEE

David Myatt—Chair

Cheryl Billard

Janet de Saint-Sardos

Colleen Shubaly

Jennifer Scott

PEER ASSESSMENT

COMMITTEE

Reg Uranowski, Chair

Ruth Duggan

Anne Hache

Karen Landry

Joanne Comeau

Dorothy Edem, Co-ordinator

PEER ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE

The Peer Assessment Committee (PAC) was introduced in March 2003 to develop, administer and evaluate a Peer Assessment Program (PAP) for occupational therapists in Nova Scotia. The goal of the program is the provision of a quality assurance process whereby occupational therapists in Nova Scotia demonstrate that they maintain their competence and, thus, continue to enhance their practice.

Since its inception, the committee continues to forge ahead with the development of PAP. In the fall of 2003, the committee conducted five focus groups across the province to obtain the perspectives of the membership in regards to the content of the peer assessment process. Based on the feedback from members and research findings on professional quality assurance programs across Canada, the committee initiated the development of the professional practice portfolio, which would include both self-assessment and continuing education.

To date, the committee has developed a draft outline of the content of the professional practice portfolio, and is currently working on developing each section of the portfolio. The draft of the completed work will be shared with members for feedback in the spring of 2005.

Another key development is the position of a Peer Assessment Quality Assurance Coordinator. In November 2004, the College hired Dorothy Edem as a Peer Assessment Quality Assurance Coordinator (8 hours week). Dorothy is an occupational therapist with over seven years of experience. In addition she holds a Master of Health Services Administration degree, and has experience in quality assurance.

Duties of the coordinator include: to develop, implement, direct, and evaluate the peer assessment program. The coordinator reports to the Peer Assessment Committee on matters of policy and program, and also to the College Registrar on day-day management of issues.

Stay tuned for further news as the Peer Assessment Program continues to develop. The committee will continue to maintain communication with membership in regards to the development of the content of the professional practice portfolio. If you have questions or feedback, please contact Dorothy Edem through e-mail at dedem@cotns.ca

The committee is currently seeking new volunteers as the term for some of the current members will soon end. Contact the college today to express your interest to be involved in this great initiative. Contact: admin@cotns.ca.

JOINT ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING ANNOUNCEMENT

COTNS is pleased to announce that the 2005 AGM will be a joint venture with the Nova Scotia Society of Occupational Therapists. The AGM will be held on a Saturday in late May/early June. We are hoping that this will address some of the concerns raised in previous meetings and allow for occupational therapists outside the metro region to attend.

In addition to the annual meetings of the organizations, we are looking at including workshops and/or discussion sessions. We would welcome all feedback regarding topics that you would like to see addressed. They can be e-mailed to admin@cotns.ca by the end of February.

Safety in Health Care

CONFERENCE NOTICE and CALL FOR ABSTRACTS

Abstracts are invited for poster displays. Closing date: March 11, 2005.

ABSTRACT SUBMISSIONS for POSTER DISPLAYS

In today's healthcare system, safety is a top-of-mind issue for both those involved in the conference, which is sponsored by six professional regulatory bodies and the Nova Scotia Department of Health, will be an exciting opportunity to examine the roles and responsibilities of healthcare professionals and the public in creating a culture of safety in our healthcare system.

What is the plan?

With the help of two keynote speakers, three breakout sessions, and a panel discussion, attendees at this conference will have the unique opportunity to expand their knowledge of issues that impact safety in health care; learn about the mandate, work plan and role of the Canadian Patient Safety Institute; explore issues and innovative safety practices in relation to medication errors, work design and workplace violence; and reflect on the roles and responsibilities of everyone involved in safe health practices.

Who should attend?

This conference is for anyone interested in making health care safer in Nova Scotia, including members of the public and healthcare professionals practising in the province. (Accredited program for physicians.)

On-line registration for this course begins on February 15, 2005. Spaces are limited. It is suggested that those wanting to attend, register early!

If you, or your agency, are involved in projects promoting **ANY** aspect of health safety, the Planning Committee invites you to submit an abstract for a poster display at the Safety in Health Care Conference. Poster displays should relate to provincially based patient safety initiatives and/or projects that have recently been implemented or are in progress.

Abstract Submission Guidelines:

- Maximum word count: 250 (single-spaced: Times New Roman -12 point).
- Submit electronically (Word or Word Perfect) to rafuselm@gov.ns.ca.
- To facilitate a blind review, please record authors' names and the address and institution of the primary author in a file separate from the abstract. Also, include a brief profile of each author (max. one paragraph) and contact information for the primary author (e-mail address required).
- Primary authors should be present at the conference to discuss posters. Those attending the conference for poster displays will be required to register for the conference. (\$50 registration fee)
- Individuals may submit more than one abstract for review, however, due to space and time constraints, may be limited to only one poster display. Posterboards are approximately 1.2 m. (4 ft) x 2.5 m. (7 ft).
- Notification of acceptance or non-acceptance will be via e-mail no later than March 31, 2005.

COTNS NEWS

Safety In Health Care (cont'd.)

Please send abstracts, by MARCH 11, to: Maria Kuttner, Manager, Quality Management Support, Nova Scotia Department of Health. E-mail rafuselm@gov.ns.ca. Telephone 902-424-1690.

Conference sponsors: College of Licensed Practical Nurses of Nova Scotia, College of Occupational Therapists of Nova Scotia, College of Physicians & Surgeons of Nova Scotia, College of Registered Nurses of Nova Scotia, Nova Scotia College of Pharmacists, Nova Scotia College of Physiotherapists, and Nova Scotia Department of Health.

Don't lose another minute ... take this opportunity to let others know what Occupational Therapists are doing to help make our healthcare system safer. Closing date for abstracts: March 11, 2005.

INFORMATION UPDATES

COCHRANE LIBRARY

The Atlantic Health Knowledge Partnership (AHKP) is an informal consortium of health knowledge brokers in Nova Scotia and Newfoundland. They have jointly subscribed to the Cochrane Library and are able to make it available to all health practitioners in Nova Scotia. The Cochrane Library consists of a regularly updated collection of evidence-based medicine databases, including The Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews.

In order to take advantage of this opportunity, please contact the College in order to receive your free password and login information as well as conditions of use. For more information, please visit the following web address: <http://www.library.dal.ca/kellogg/ahkp/ahkp.htm>

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

A new program is being set up by the NS Department of Health, in partnership with the Canadian Red Cross, NS Division. It is a specialized equipment program targeted to residents in long term care facilities under the mandate of the Department of Health.

It will be launched January 1, 2005 province-wide. This is a program that has been piloted in the Capital and Annapolis Valley health districts for the last year or so.

For more information, please visit: www.gov.ns.ca/health/ccs/ltc. This site has a number of fact sheets and articles, which may be helpful including: the Specialized Equipment Program policy; the Specialized Equipment Program Guidelines and a Fact Sheet on the Specialized Equipment Program.

PROVISIONAL PRACTISING CERTIFICATE OF REGISTRATION

The College may issue a provisional registration to allow occupational therapists to practise when they have not met all the requirements for full registration with the College. There are two categories of provisional registration with the College:

- i. When the individual applying for licensure meets all the requirements for licensure with the College, however, written confirmation is unavailable but will be provided within a reasonable time period and where the Registrar is able to verify the information through some other acceptable means.

These individuals do not require supervision in order to practise in Nova Scotia.

- ii. When the individual applying for licensure with the College has not yet met the requirements for registration with the College (eg. Has not yet written the CAOT exam).

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE SPONSORING THERAPIST

A member of the College who accepts the responsibility of acting as a sponsor must enter into a written agreement with the College by completing the Sponsorship Acknowledgement Form. The therapist will be expected to develop a supervision plan, which includes regularly scheduled meetings with the provisional registrant in order to provide support and direction as needed. The frequency of these meetings will decrease with time as confidence is established.

The sponsoring therapist is responsible for bringing issues of concern regarding the provisional registrant's performance to the College. The College may request a report in writing on the performance of the provisional registrant at any time. Such requests must be complied with in a timely manner.

Provisional registrants are responsible and accountable for their own conduct and practice. The sponsor is only accountable for the development of a supervision plan and the management of this process. The sponsoring therapist should ensure adequate documentation of this process.

The College does not require that the sponsoring therapist co-sign notes or reports.

EXTENSION OF A PROVISIONAL CERTIFICATE

It is the responsibility of the provisional member to ensure that all conditions are met within the time period. In the event that the individual requires an extension of the provisional practise certificate, the individual must inform the College in writing prior to the expiry of the certificate. The provisional practise certificate will only be extended once unless the individual is able to demonstrate exceptional circumstances.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE COLLEGE

The College is here to assist and provide information pertaining to the establishment of acceptable sponsorship arrangements at the request of the individual applying for licensure or the sponsoring therapist.

SAMPLE SUPERVISION PLAN

Employer and Clinical Orientation Process - review of job description, policies and procedures, location of equipment and records, introduction to support staff etc.

Weekly meetings to discuss caseload, review problem areas and review client records.

Two or more opportunities for the sponsoring therapist to observe clinical interactions (unless excused by the College)

Informal supports are identified and easily accessible.

COLLEGE PUBLISHES “NEW PRACTICE GUIDELINE: CLIENT RECORDS”

Each year the College receives numerous phone calls from occupational therapists and members of the public regarding the issue of client records. Often, the individual is requesting additional information to that outlined in the Occupational Therapists Act, 1998, c. 21, s. 1. or the College regulations. Therefore, the College felt that the development of a practice guideline would assist occupational therapists in their practice.

Members of the College of Occupational Therapists of Nova Scotia are accountable for the practice they provide to the public. Guidelines are issued by the College for the assistance of the professional. They represent guidance from the College on how members should practice. Guidelines are intended to support, not replace, the exercise of professional judgement by therapists in particular situations.

This guideline was adapted from the College of Occupational Therapists of Ontario (COTO) Client Records Guideline. The guideline developed by COTO has become the standard for regulatory bodies in Canada and has been used by several provinces in the development of similar guidelines. The College's practice committee reviewed and revised this document to suit the needs of occupational therapists practicing in Nova Scotia, including ensuring all requirements of the *Occupational Therapists Act, 1998, c. 21, s. 1.* and the College Registration Regulations, specifically Section 57 were adequately reflected in the document.

You will find a copy of this document enclosed with the Newsletter. It will also be posted on the College website at www.cotns.ca. The College appreciates all feedback it receives from its Registrants. Please forward any comments to admin@cotns.ca

PRACTICE COMMITTEE FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTION

This Fall, the College received several inquiries from occupational therapists related to the type of assessment tools they as occupational therapists are able to administer. For example, the College has received several inquiries questioning whether or not an occupational therapist is able to complete the DSM-IV assessment. The DSM-IV or Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (Fourth Edition) was published by the American Psychiatric Association as a major diagnostic reference for health professionals in the identification and management of mental illness. Of particular concern was whether or not the results of this assessment could be used to provide a diagnosis of a mental condition when administered by an occupational therapist.

According to the *Occupational Therapists Act, 1998, c.21, s.1*;
“Occupational therapy means the performance of professional services requiring substantial specialized knowledge of occupational therapy theory in order to promote, develop, restore, improve or maintain optimal occupational functioning in the area of self-care, productivity and leisure and includes, but is not limited to,

(i) the application and interpretation of procedures designed to evaluate occupational functioning,

(ii) the planning, administration and evaluation of developmental, restorative, maintenance, preventative and educational programs,

(iii) providing education, health promotion, consultation, management, research or other such services that implement and advance the practice of occupational therapy.

When selecting, administering and interpreting assessment tools as well as when communicating the assessment results, occupational therapists must ensure that they meet the Essential Competencies of Practice for Occupational Therapists in Canada (2nd Edition). The Essential Competencies describe the knowledge, skills and abilities that are required for an occupational therapist to practice safely, effectively and ethically in any province and have been adopted by the College as the Standards of Practice for occupational therapists in Nova Scotia.

As not all occupational therapists have the same knowledge, skills and abilities in all areas, each individual occupational therapist must determine whether or not she/he has the requisite knowledge, skills and ability to: select an appropriate, valid and reliable assessment tool; correctly and fully administer the assessment tool within the parameters outlined by assessment protocol; and to appropriately interpret and communicate the findings of the assessment tool within the parameters of the assessment tool and the scope of practice as defined by the Occupational Therapists Act.

In the DSM-IV example, the occupational therapist would likely require specific training in order to have the knowledge, skills and ability to perform this assessment tool safely, effectively and ethically. In addition, when administering, interpreting and communicating the findings of the DSM-IV assessment, the occupational therapist would need to ensure that it was clear to all parties that the results of this tool provide a clinical or diagnostic impression and does not constitute a medical diagnosis. It is the College's opinion that providing a diagnosis is not within the scope of practice of occupational therapy as defined in the *Occupational Therapists Act, 1998, c.21, s.1.*

NBCOT ANNOUNCEMENT

The National Board for Certification in Occupational Therapy, Inc. (NBCOT) has announced that the eligibility criteria for OTR Certification in the United States will be changing effective December 31, 2006. Candidates applying for certification as an Occupational Therapist Registered OTR® after January 1, 2007, must have graduated from a post-baccalaureate accredited occupational therapy professional program recognized by NBCOT. This policy will affect all internationally educated occupational therapists that apply through the NBCOT prescreening program after January 1, 2007.

Internationally educated occupational therapists who meet the current eligibility criteria and are approved to take the certification examination by December 31, 2006, will have until December 31, 2007 to become initially certified as an OTR®.

PRACTICE COMMITTEE REQUESTS FEEDBACK

The Practice Committee has completed a draft Practice Guideline on the use and supervision of support personnel. The Committee will be sending the document out to a select and diverse occupational therapists around the region for feedback. If you would be interested in providing feedback on this topic, please call or e-mail the College office.

BOARD SEEKS APPLICANTS FOR REGISTRAR POSITION

The Board of the College would like to invite applicants interested in applying for a one-year part time locum position as the Registrar of the College to submit their curriculum vitae by March 1st.

The Registrar is responsible for maintaining the day to day operations of the College at the direction of the Board; coordinating the registration and complaints processes, acts as a resource to all College committees and represents the College to outside organizations including acting as a member of the Association of Canadian Occupational Therapy Regulatory Organizations.

For further information regarding the Registrar's position, please contact the College or visit the website at www.cotns.ca

*Get
involved!*

*The College
urgently needs
Volunteers*

**COLLEGE OF OCCUPATIONAL
THERAPISTS OF NOVA SCOTIA**

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We're on the web!

www.cotns.ca

Office Staff

Joy Moulton Office Manager

Gayle Salsman Registrar

Office Hours:

Monday–Friday

9:00–1:00

REMINDER

Update the College!

Each member is required to update the College of a change to any information contained on their annual registration forms. These may include:

1. Change of Home Address or Phone
2. Change of Employment Information
3. Change of Practicing Status
4. Change of e-mail address
5. Change of Name

Please note that while the College shares office space with NSSOT, we act as separate and distinct entities. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the individual OT to update both offices of information changes as required.

BOARD MEETING

Members of the College are permitted to attend any Board meetings if they call in advance so room may be made available to accommodate them.

The next Board meeting is scheduled for March 8, 2005 at 5:30 p.m.

WEBSITE

Please visit us at our website www.cotns.ca. Here you will find dates for our Board Meetings, updates and news, information about our committees as well as important documents including the Essential Competencies of Practice, Practice Guidelines and Safety in Healthcare Conference information.