



COLLEGE of OCCUPATIONAL
THERAPISTS of NOVA SCOTIA

ANNUAL REPORT

2017



TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 1 Mission, Vision, & Values
- 2 Strategic Plan
- 3 Board Chair's Report
- 4 Registrar's Report
- 6 Board & Committees
- 7 Registration
- 9 Continuing Competency
- 11 Practice Standards & Guidelines
- 12 Investigations
- 13 Auditor's Report and Financial Statement

MISSION

The College of Occupational Therapists of Nova Scotia regulates the practice of occupational therapists by ensuring safe and ethical services that will protect the public we serve.

VISION

The College of Occupational Therapists of Nova Scotia strives to effectively regulate the practice of occupational therapy and values continuous quality improvement.

VALUES

The College of Occupational Therapists of Nova Scotia is committed to demonstrating:

- Fairness and equity in business interactions with the public and with the registrants
- Accountability for decisions and actions
- Respect for both public and professional perspectives
- An open and honest communication process
- Accessibility to services provided
- Efficiency of business practice

1. Responsible & Accountable Leadership

The College...

- Board will demonstrate strong leadership through best practice governance
- Board will adopt a risk management framework with respect to its operational activities
- Assures sufficient financial and human resources to meet its mandate
- Exemplifies good management practices to meet the evolving needs of the College
- Supports its committees to optimize their contribution towards the role of the College
- Enhances the Public's awareness of its role in protecting the public's right to safe ethical occupational therapy

2. Supporting & Advancing Quality Regulation

The College...

- Ensures regulatory excellence by keeping its regulations current and demonstrating compliance with the Nova Scotia Fair Registration Practices Act
- Advances quality regulatory programs and services
- Collaborates with other regulatory bodies to ensure best practice in regulation
- Employs innovation to fulfill its regulatory commitment while being more responsive to the challenges facing occupational therapists
- Promotes public awareness, input and access to information by developing a public awareness strategy

3. Monitoring & Supporting Quality Practice

The College...

- Will implement a Continuing Competence Program to ensure the ongoing quality of occupational therapy practice in Nova Scotia
- Provides support to occupational therapists in Nova Scotia to meet the essential competencies for practice

BOARD CHAIR'S REPORT

Again this year I start by saying that this has been a year of transition for the College. We had to deal with the resignation of both of our employees, resulting in a period of transition where we were down in staffing complement. We asked for, and received, great patience from the membership during this time, and for that we are grateful. Now that we have been able to hire a new registrar (welcome Mr. Jonathan Belbin) and a new administrative manager (welcome Ms. Jenn Mackay-Myra), we feel that the College is in a much stronger position than previously. We have seen that as both Jonathan and Jenn become more comfortable with their positions, we are able to undertake projects that were delayed this year. Jonathan has been instrumental in reviewing the policies and procedures of the College, as well as becoming involved in committee work.

I would like to take this time to thank my fellow board members for their dedication and time this year. You have been asked to be involved with long board meetings and tough decisions, and I appreciate everyone's feedback and our ability to work together towards common goals for the betterment of the College.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank all of the committee members who continue to meet the needs of the College. This was a difficult year, where there were delays in responses from the Board and we appreciate your ability to continue your work despite these challenges.

We asked for, and received, great patience from the membership during this time, and for that we are grateful.

In closing, I again would like to thank the membership for your patience this year. I look forward to seeing the continued progress of the College in the coming years.

Thank you,



Brian Bailkowski, OT Reg. (NS)
Chair, Board of Directors

REGISTRAR'S REPORT

Change has been defined as: to undergo transformation, transition, or substitution. This is a fitting description for the College over the past year, which has seen significant change: transition between three registrars, two administrative managers, three new board members, and a move to a new office space. While change and transition can be difficult, it can drive innovation, creativity, and improvement. Looking forward, this change will have many faces as we review the College's governance model, structure, and processes.

As a member of the Association of Canadian Occupational Therapy Regulatory Organizations (ACOTRO), the College has been participating in change to our competency documents, cross-jurisdictional practice, and how we define currency for registration and renewal. Currently, university program accreditation and the national certification examination are structured based off the Canadian Association of Occupational Therapists' (CAOT) Profile of Occupational Therapy Practice in Canada (2012). However, the provincial regulatory bodies have used a separate competency document to define their expectation of registrants. This has

led to a discrepancy in the education, credentialing, and regulation of new occupational therapists. As such, ACOTRO has partnered with CAOT and the Association of Occupational Therapy University Programs (ACOTUP) to establish a single competency document that will be used across the professional organizations.

While change and transition can be difficult, it can drive innovation, creativity, and improvement.

Cross-jurisdictional practice has been a challenge for OTs working in the Atlantic Provinces; a challenge the Nova Scotia government has asked the College to address. In meeting this issue, ACOTRO is in the final steps of drafting a model for cross-jurisdictional practice that balances the freedom of working across borders with the unique challenges of regulating in different jurisdictions.

Currency is a requirement of all registrants and a key component to continuing

competency. A recent review of currency as applied to internationally educated OTs has emphasized the lack of a consistent definition or approach across the country. ACOTRO has published a report on the best practices in defining and the process for determining currency and is finalizing its recommendations for provincial regulatory bodies.

The College has received concerns from registrants about the recent increase in the registration fee. This change was approved by the Board last year and presented at the Annual General Meeting. As the College continues to grow, it required a full-time registrar to continue to meet the demands of government to provide fair, accountable, and transparent regulation. In keeping with good stewardship, the College has initiated a review of its financial practices to promote efficiency and accountability to its membership. One such example is the move to our new office location, which has decreased our monthly commitment while providing access to more resources. The College will continue to review our accounts over the next year and search for areas where efficiency can be achieved.

The scope of practice of occupational therapy is broad and general. While this provides OTs with a variety of areas to work in, it can create role confusion or limitation of services. With the recent focus on

mental health, particularly in the provincial election, this has created barriers to OTs working in this area. As such, the College will form a special interest group to address the issue of scope of practice in mental health, including psychotherapy and suicide risk assessment.

Professional self-regulation exists for the protection of the public. Historically, this has put an emphasis on qualifications, registration, and investigating complaints. This focus on a “minimal competency” requirement has neglected what happens above this limit. I firmly believe that the College can promote the public’s interest by not only establishing and maintaining “minimal competency” but by promoting and supporting evidence-based practice and best practice guidelines. Occupational therapists truly want the best for their patients and clients but feel restricted by the “policing” of the regulatory body. By partnering together, we can enhance the practice of occupational therapists and provide excellent care to the public we serve. This requires registrants to be actively engaged with the College and the profession as a whole. I actively encourage all occupational therapists to support this call.



Jonathan Belbin, OT Reg. (NS)
Registrar

BOARD & COMMITTEES

Board of Directors

Brian Bailkowski, Chair
Crystal Perry, Vice-Chair
Aaron Windsor, Treasurer/Public Member
Christine Bray, Secretary
Jocelyn Brown, Member at Large

Credentials Committee

Christine Bray
Annette Fraser
Myrna King
Christine Marchessault
Scott Thieu

Continuing Competency Committee

Joanne Comeau, Chair
Dorothy Edem
Karen Landry
Diane MacKenzie
Karen Roberts-Small
Jennifer Saunders
Sue Street

Practice Committee

Karen Kendall, Chair
Sandy Cantwell-Kerr
Leslie Greencorn
Amanda Forward
Sheila Poulton
Angela Stairs

Investigations Committee

Colleen Shubaly, Chair
Christine Marchessault
Connie Morrissey, Public Member
Scott Thieu

Nominations Committee

Gayle Salsman, Chair
Brian Bailkowski
Allanna Jost

Staff

Jonathan Belbin, Registrar
Jenn MacKay-Myra, Administrative
Manager

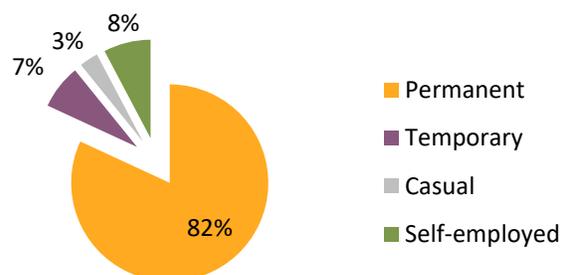
REGISTRATION

The Credentials Committee reviews applications for registration and establishes policies that govern registration. Over the past year, the Committee has reviewed and approved over 45 applications. In addition, they have reviewed and updated all the registration policies, including six new policies, in preparation for our fair registration review under the *Fair Registration Practices Act*. Finally, the Committee has developed a procedure for international temporary applications to allow for collaboration and cross-training.

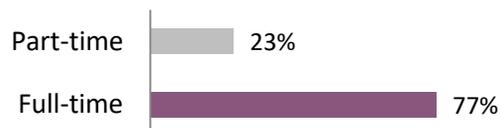
New Registrations

New Nova Scotia	21
New Canadian	4
International Educated OTs	1
LMSA	11
Re-registrants	8
TOTAL	45
Surrenders	29

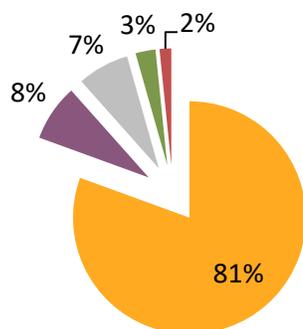
Employment



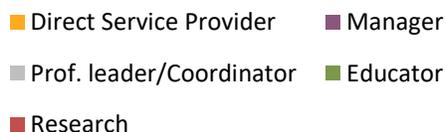
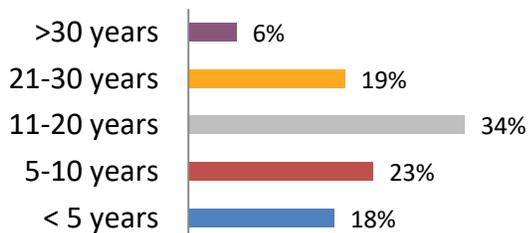
Age Groups



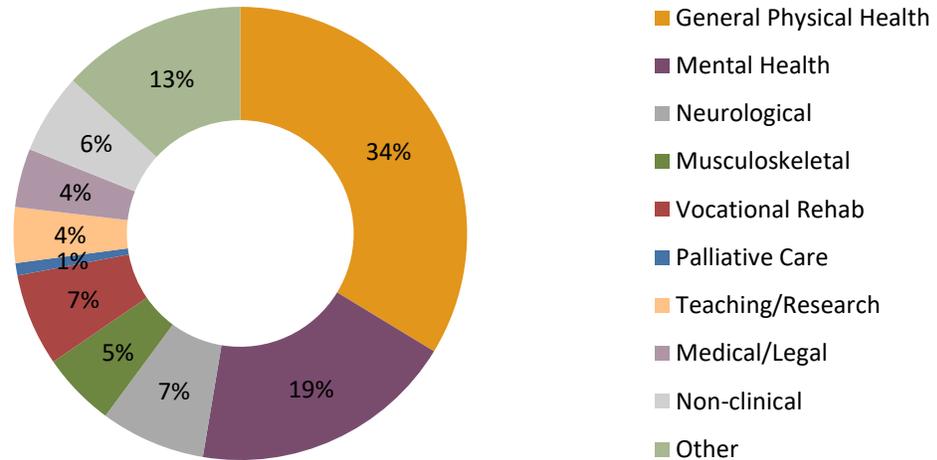
Position



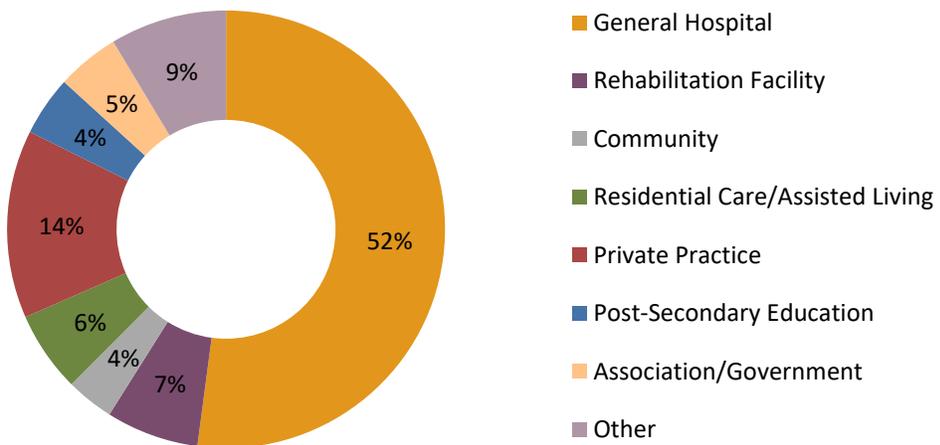
Years since Graduate



Practice Area



Practice Setting



This data is based off the 2016 Canada Institute for Health Information (CIHI) and the 2016 Fair Registration Practices reporting data.

CONTINUING COMPETENCY

The Continuing Competency Committee is responsible for developing, implementing, maintaining, and evaluating a continuing competency program to ensure registrants have the knowledge, skills, judgements, and values to provide quality service to the public. While the current program consists of a self-administered professional portfolio, the restructured program will consist of the following three components:

1. *Competence Maintenance*: This is the supportive component of the program and describes the basic activities required by registrants to demonstrate that they are engaging in reflective practice and complying with regulatory requirements. This includes annual declaration of currency hours, development of a professional development plan, and completion of practice education modules (PEM).
2. *Competence Review*: This is the evaluative component of the program. It is designed to assess registrant's knowledge, skills, and judgements required for professional practice and to identify those registrants who may require improvement to practice. This includes a written jurisprudence exam and a peer assessment process.
3. *Competence Improvement*: This is the improvement component of the program for those registrants identified in competence review as having competence below acceptable standards. Recommendations for improvement are made by a peer assessment committee based on the results of competence review.

The Committee is in the process of developing the jurisprudence exam as the first step of the competence review. The purpose of the exam is to assess registrants' knowledge, skills, and judgements required for professional practice and to identify individuals who may need further assessment or support to maintain a minimal level of competency. The exam is expected to cover regulatory topics, relevant legislation, and core competencies to practice. To this extent, the College hosted the College of Occupational Therapists of British Columbia for a weekend session on exam development this past year. The Committee has completed a draft blueprint to guide the development and will be seeking stakeholder consultation from registrants, government, and employees over the summer. In addition, we will be requesting volunteers to participate in an exam development working group to develop the content and scoring for the

exam. Interested parties should submit the curriculum vitae to the Registrar. To see the Committee's progress to date, see the following figure:

- Tool Development**
1. Develop and Maintain Blueprint
 1. ✓ What regulatory topics to include?
 2. ✓ Practice analysis; CIHI/provincial data review
 3. ✓ Practice questions and complaints received by COTNS/ACOTRO members
 4. ✓ Validation survey
 5. ✓ Identify item writers
 6. ✓ Identify resources
 2. Recruit, evaluate, and select item writers
 1. ✓ Term of reference (job description)
 2. ✓ Budget
 3. ✓ Recruitment strategy
 4. Representation (practice context, geography)
 5. Arrangement among provinces
 3. Develop cases and scoring
 1. Item writing workshop **Sept 2017**
 2. Budget to support **Summer 2017**
 3. Explore online writing environments **Summer 2017**
 4. Cross province analysis
 5. Develop standard = minimally competent
 6. Sharing experiences
 4. Psychometric testing
 1. Request for proposal **Summer 2017**
 2. Call for volunteers

The exam will be administered to all registrants once every 5 years, which we anticipate to start fall 2018. Those below the minimal standard will be required to complete a peer assessment to further assess their competence.

To prepare registrants for the exam and to provide support for competency, the program includes online practice education modules as part of competency maintenance. It will be the expectation of registrants to complete one module per year. The Committee is currently forming a working group to develop these modules, with one module being available prior to the exam.

The Committee anticipates starting development of the peer assessment program in the fall 2017. The Committee will seek stakeholder consultation and subject matter expert consultation at key strategic points.

PRACTICE STANDARDS & GUIDELINES

Under the *Occupational Therapists Act*, the College is required to establish, maintain, and develop standards of knowledge and skill among its registrants. The Board has delegated this function to the Practice Committee, which is responsible for developing practice standards and guidelines. Standards are issued by the College to ensure a minimum level of practice is maintained for occupational therapists in Nova Scotia. Although standards are prescriptive, occupational therapists are still expected to exercise professional judgment in their practice. In contrast, 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 judgment by therapists in particular situations.

The Committee has finalized two practice documents: record keeping and social media. The record keeping standard establishes the minimal expectations for occupational therapists for keeping client records and contains much of the information provided in the *Personal Health Information Act*. The social media guideline is to help occupational therapists use a decision-making process when using social media. Both documents contain a risk assessment and management framework to assist occupational therapists in identifying risk in their practice and strategies that may mitigate that risk. These documents have been sent to a random sampling of registrants for stakeholder consultation and will be sent to the Board in the early fall for final approval and publication.

Common practice questions received by the College:

- Scope of practice
- Use of support personnel
- Release of information/disclosure

INVESTIGATIONS

The College completes full, fair, and proper investigation into all formal complaints it receives. This function is completed by the Investigation Committee according to the *Occupational Therapists Act*. The Committee has completed two investigations into complaints over the past year. The Committee dismissed one complaint due to insufficient evidence of professional misconduct, conduct unbecoming, or incompetence. In the other complaint, the Committee issued a caution to the member as there was a breach in standards of practice that did not constitute professional misconduct. As of March 31st, 2017, the College had no outstanding complaints.

Common complaints received by the College:

- Termination of services
- Breach of confidentiality/Disclosure
- Contesting clinical opinion/use of assessments
- Misuse of authority

AUDITOR'S REPORT

To the Members of:

College of Occupational Therapists of Nova Scotia

We have audited the accompanying financial statements of **College of Occupational Therapists of Nova Scotia**, which comprise the statement of financial position as at March 31, 2017 and the statements of operations, changes in net assets and cash flows for the year then ended and a summary of significant accounting policies and other explanatory information.

Management's Responsibility for the Financial Statements

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of these financial statements in accordance with Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations, and for such internal control as management determines is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

Auditors' Responsibility

Our responsibility is to express an opinion on these financial statements based on our audit. We conducted our audit in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards. Those standards require that we comply with ethical requirements and plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements are free from material misstatement.

An audit involves performing procedures to obtain audit evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. The procedures selected depend on the auditors' judgment, including the assessment of the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error. In making those risk assessments, the auditors consider internal control relevant to the entity's preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the entity's internal control.

An audit also includes evaluating the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates made by management, as well as evaluating the overall presentation of the financial statements.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our audit opinion.

Opinion

In our opinion, the financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of **College of Occupational Therapists of Nova Scotia** as at March 31, 2017 and the results of its operations and its cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations.

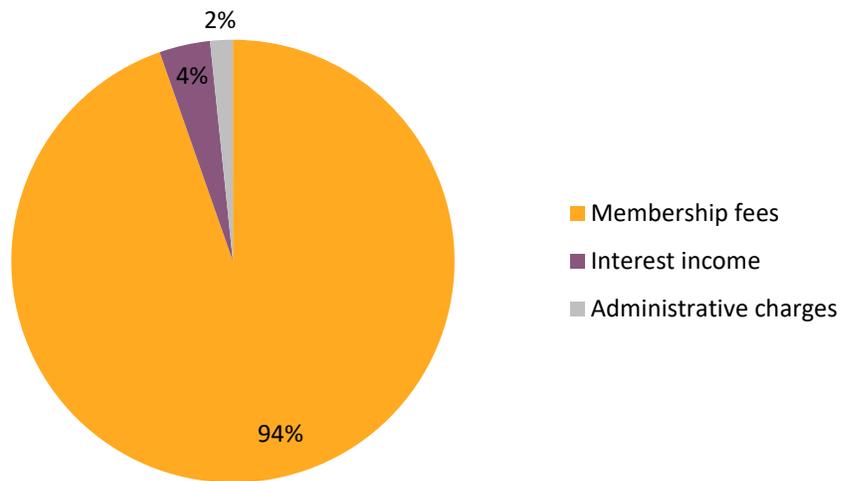
A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Collins Barrow Inc." in a cursive script.

Dartmouth, Nova Scotia
May 25, 2017

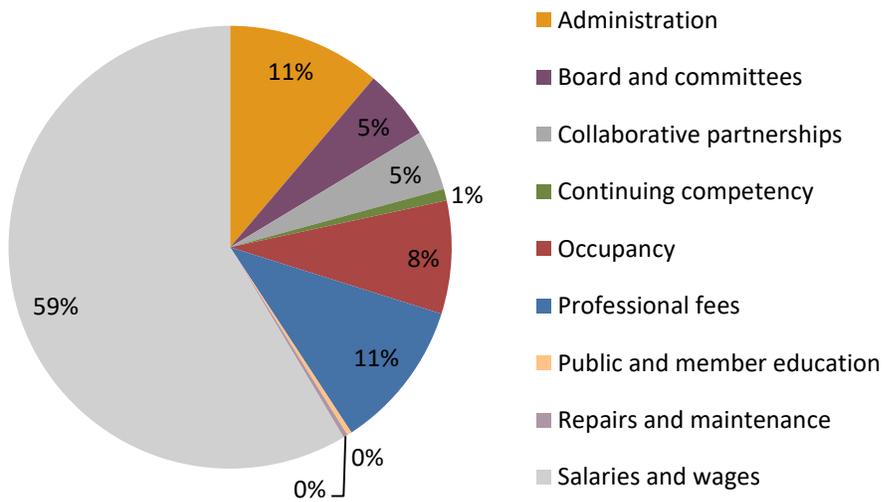
Chartered Professional Accountants
Licensed Public Accountants

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Revenues



Operating Expenses



**COLLEGE OF OCCUPATIONAL THERAPISTS OF NOVA SCOTIA
STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED MARCH 31, 2017**

	2017	2016
	\$	\$
REVENUES		
Membership fees	201,900	195,563
Interest income	7,911	8,064
Administrative charges	<u>3,525</u>	<u>3,600</u>
	<u>213,336</u>	<u>207,227</u>
OPERATING EXPENSES		
Administration	26,133	27,753
Board and committees	12,033	11,770
Collaborative partnerships	10,263	5,436
Continuing competency	1,976	1,003
Occupancy	19,245	16,806
Professional fees	25,451	7,949
Public and member education	791	678
Repairs and maintenance	771	-
Salaries and wages	<u>136,572</u>	<u>117,074</u>
	<u>233,235</u>	<u>188,469</u>
EXCESS (DEFICIENCY) OF REVENUES OVER EXPENSES	<u>(19,899)</u>	<u>18,758</u>

**COLLEGE OF OCCUPATIONAL THERAPISTS OF NOVA SCOTIA
STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN NET ASSETS
AS AT MARCH 31, 2017**

	CONTINUING COMPETENCY FUND \$	HEARING FUND \$	SPECIAL PROJECTS FUND \$	UNRESTRICTED \$	Total 2017 \$	Total 2016 \$
Net Assets						
Balance, beginning of year	123,483	200,000	80,681	18,758	422,922	413,164
Excess (deficiency) of revenues over expenses	-	-	-	(19,899)	(19,899)	18,758
Revenues	-	-	5,000	-	5,000	-
Expenses	<u>(3,405)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>(11,967)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>(15,372)</u>	<u>(9,000)</u>
Balance, end of year	<u>120,078</u>	<u>200,000</u>	<u>73,714</u>	<u>(1,141)</u>	<u>392,651</u>	<u>422,922</u>

**COLLEGE OF OCCUPATIONAL THERAPISTS OF NOVA SCOTIA
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION
AS AT MARCH 31, 2017**

	2017	2016
	\$	\$
ASSETS		
CURRENT		
Cash	99,219	69,395
Investments (Note 3)	121,892	121,154
Accounts receivable	2,292	1,274
Prepays	<u>1,625</u>	<u>1,588</u>
	225,028	193,411
INVESTMENTS (Note 3)	<u>204,748</u>	<u>244,479</u>
	<u>429,776</u>	<u>437,890</u>
LIABILITIES		
CURRENT		
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities (Note 4)	<u>37,125</u>	<u>14,968</u>
NET ASSETS		
CONTINUING COMPETENCY FUND	120,078	123,483
HEARING FUND	200,000	200,000
SPECIAL PROJECTS FUND	73,714	80,681
UNRESTRICTED	<u>(1,141)</u>	<u>18,758</u>
	<u>392,651</u>	<u>422,922</u>
	<u>429,776</u>	<u>437,890</u>

College of Occupational Therapists of Nova Scotia

380 Bedford Hwy, Suite 203

Halifax, NS B3M 2L4

P: 902-455-0556 | F: 902-455-0621 | cotns.ca

COTNS