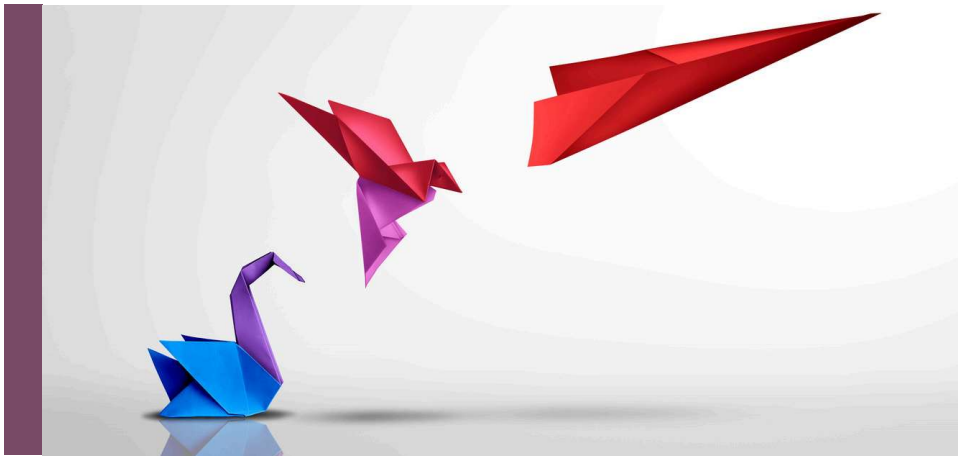


FEBRUARY 2025

Newsletter



TRANSFORMING OT REGULATION IN NOVA SCOTIA UNDER THE RHPA

In 2023, the Nova Scotia Legislature passed the *Regulated Health Professions Act* (RHPA). The RHPA standardizes rules and processes across 21 self-regulated health professions. Each profession will continue to have its own regulations that address scope of practice and the unique requirements of their fields.

COTNS will migrate to the RHPA in the coming months. Although COTNS will be continued as the regulatory body for occupational therapy under the RHPA, there will be some transformations:

COTNS will get a **new name** under the RHPA. This new name will be announced when the the RHPA occupational therapy regulations are finalized by government.

Most significantly, there will be a new **legislative framework** for the regulator and the profession of occupational therapy. Rules affecting OTs will be split between:

- the RHPA
- government regulations under the RHPA
- By-laws and policies of the regulator (COTNS)

This means that rules may be in a different location than before. For example, rules that were in the old *Occupational Therapists Act* may now be in the By-laws. Some rules will change. The College is currently seeking feedback from registrants on our new draft By-laws, which include some substantive changes. More information is on **PAGE 2**.

A detailed guide to the new legislation and regulations and any significant changes will be shared in the near future.

Newsletter Highlights

The Regulated Health Professions Act and You!

Data Collection Update

New Practice Support Resource

Online Proof of Licensure Available

Continuing Competency Program Update

RE: Your E-mail with the College

Your Action Required...

Consulation on By-Law Changes

In line with the new legislative framework under the RHPA, the College has drafted new By-Laws to come into effect under the RHPA.

The College is sharing the Draft By-Laws so that registrants, stakeholders, and members of the public have the opportunity to provide feedback.

SUMMARY OF MAJOR CHANGES:

- **Language that enables the Regulator to identify additional practice competencies, which are advanced practice areas that require additional education, training or requirements before a registrant may engage in that advanced practice**
- **Language that facilitates competency-based appointment of Board members rather than selection by election**

FEEDBACK DEADLINE 9:00 AM - FEB 24, 2025

How to participate:

1. Review the Draft By-Laws [HERE](#)
2. Submit your feedback via email to info@cotns.ca with subject line: COTNS Draft By-Laws under the RHPA

Thank you for taking the time to review the document and contribute to this important process.

Deadline to Update Practice and Employment Information



As mentioned in our e-mail to you on January 21, 2025, the College has begun collecting additional employment-related information from registrants. One reason we are collecting this new data is to facilitate the implementation of the new risk-based selection process for the Continuing Competence Program.

Accordingly, the Continuing Competence Committee has set a deadline of **end-of-day February 17, 2025** for all registrants to update their online profiles to declare **whether they engage in any higher risk practice areas and if they engage in solo practice**. Even those registrants who do not participate in high risk practice areas are required to update their profiles indicating such.



If a registrant does not update their online profile by the deadline, the College will be unable to determine if they engage in higher-risk practice approaches or in solo practice. As a result, **we will consider these registrants to be engaging in these practices and thus they will have increased risk indicators**. Those with more risk indicators have a higher chance of being selected to participate in Competence Review.

Some clarifications:

For **higher risk practice**, registrants are to declare if they participate, in any capacity, in any of the higher risk practice areas listed as options on their profile. This includes registrants who only engage in this practice area on an infrequent basis, or those who only practice a component of the practice area.

Solo practice is defined by the College as a practice situation where a registrant is the only OT practising at their employment site, or where an OT primarily provides remote services, even if other OTs are employed at the same employer and connect with the registrant remotely. If you work in a role with a title other than Occupational Therapist, and your counterparts in this role are not OTs, this is also considered solo practice.

Data Collection Update



COTNS has changed what data we collect from registrants. Many registrants will already have noticed that we are now collecting new and more specific data relating to employment, practice areas, and modes of practice (e.g. in person, videoconference).

When registrants renew their registration for 2025-2026, they will also have the option to provide **voluntary** data relating to **Indigenous and Racialized Group Identity**.

We are collecting this new data in alignment with the [Canadian Institute for Health Information \(CIHI\)](#)'s updated 2022 health human resource dataset. All occupational therapy regulators in Canada, including COTNS, share aggregate health workforce data with CIHI to support health workforce planning and policy development. COTNS collects this type of data from registrants at annual renewal and also collects more limited information if registrants update their profile information throughout the year.

Why collect Indigenous and Racialized Group Identity Data?

In 2022, CIHI updated its health human resource minimum data set to include race-based and Indigenous identity data elements. CIHI's intended use of these data is to inform actions and interventions to support equity-focused health workforce planning and policy development in Canada.

Indigenous Identity data will support the responses by government, CIHI, and professional regulators to the Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action, in particular Call to Action 23, which calls on government to increase the number of Indigenous health-care professionals and ensure their retention in Indigenous communities. As part of our ongoing commitment to Reconciliation, COTNS plans to collect this data on a voluntary basis and share the data with CIHI and government anonymously and in aggregate.

Registrants are not required to share race-based and Indigenous identity data with COTNS. The option to share this data is entirely **voluntary**.

What specific data is the Regulator planning to collect?

Only staff who are responsible for processing the data will have access to registrants' race-based and Indigenous identity data. Also, when sharing race-based and Indigenous identity data with CIHI, data will only be used in aggregate with other registrants' data and not on an individual level.

While completing their annual license renewal through the COTNS online portal, registrants will have the option to select up to 3 Indigenous and 3 race-based identities with which they identify, or to not provide the information at all.

REGISTER FOR PAYROLL DEDUCTION

Employees of Nova Scotia Health and IWK who would like to register to pay their annual renewal fees for **2026/2027** via payroll deduction must register with their employer:

IWK: e-mail payroll@iwk.nshealth.ca by **March 6**
NSH: e-mail Krista.Brien@nshealth.ca by **March 22**

Reminder: payroll deductions pay for renewal in the **following year**. If you are not yet signed up for payroll deductions, you will need to pay your 2025/2026 renewal fees yourself.

The College encourages all employees who are eligible to register for payroll deduction to do so. If you previously registered for payroll deduction, you do not need to register again.

Professional Practice

Continuing Competency Program Update

As shared with registrants in our December 2024 newsletter and our January 23rd, 2025, webinar, a recording of which can be found on our website, the College is updating the Continuing Competence Program. The new program reshapes the Competence Review portion of the program to move to an individualized competence assessment for registrants selected by Risk-Based Selection. Only those registrants selected and notified will be required to complete the Competence Review.

The Competence Review is a virtual peer-based behavioural interview with a trained peer assessor. Through this process, the College aims to confirm the continued competence of its registrants, and support registrants in identifying areas of strength and learning needs. The Competence Review will occur twice per year, with 20-30 registrants selected for each cohort. The first registrants selected will soon be notified, with the Competence Review scheduled for late winter.

Changes are also coming to the Competence Maintenance component of the CCP, which is the annual requirements all registrants must complete prior to renewal. Registrants were previously required to complete paper-based copies of their self-assessment and personal learning plan. Starting at the 2025/2026 renewal, all annual Continuing Competence documents will transition to online submission. The roll-out of this online system is already complete, with registrants uploading their learning goals to the portal in December 2024.

We encourage registrants to review the recorded webinar and our FAQ on Continuing Competence, which is posted on our website [HERE](#).

New Practice Support Resource

The College is pleased to announce that Rachel Avery has started in the new role of **Regulatory Program Coordinator**.

Rachel will be the primary contact for any registrants with practice support questions related to College Regulations, Standards, By-Laws, and provincial legislation.

You can contact Rachel with your practice support questions at rachel.avery@cotns.ca or 902-455-0556 (ext. 2). As this position operates part-time, emails and phone messages will not be checked daily. While we aim to respond to inquiries within 2 business days, delays of up to 5-7 business days may occur.

We Want Your Feedback on the Practice Standards!

COTNS is planning on revising the Practice Standards which were developed prior to 2024. We are looking for feedback from registrants on any of the following Standards of Practice:

- Record Keeping
- Conflict of Interest
- Informed Consent
- Assigning Service Components to Support Personnel
- Social Media
- Scope of Practice
- Virtual Care

If you have any feedback you would like to provide on the standards, please contact Rachel Avery at rachel.avery@cotns.ca



RE: YOUR EMAIL WITH THE REGULATOR

Registrants are responsible for providing up-to-date contact information to the College and ensuring that their e-mail account is configured to accept College communications. (If you haven't heard from the College recently, check your spam folder!)

Many registrants list their work e-mail addresses as their contact e-mail with the College. It is allowed for registrants to use work or institutional e-mails for this purpose, but this carries some risks:

- Using an e-mail account linked to a specific employer can result in missed notifications and difficulty accessing the Portal when changing jobs or on leave
- The College may send confidential or personal correspondence to a work e-mail, if this is the only e-mail address which the registrant has provided

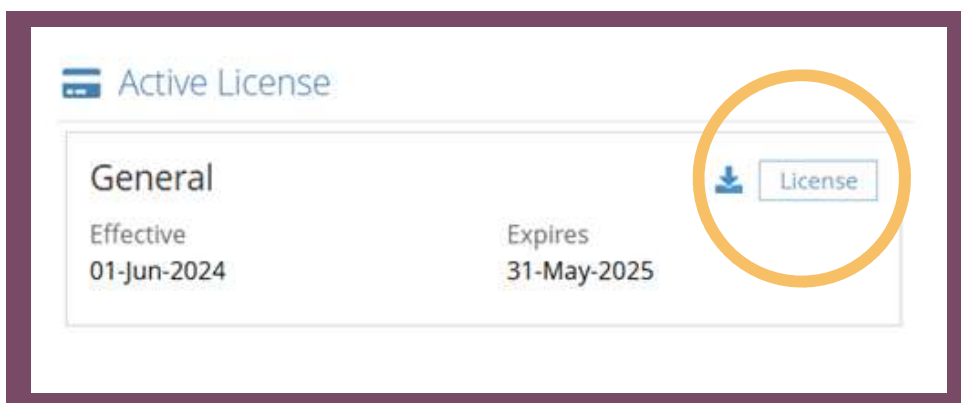
For these reasons, the College encourages all registrants to list a personal e-mail address (for example, through a service such as Gmail, Outlook, Hotmail, etc.) as their contact e-mail with the College.

Separately, many registrants have reported difficulties with university-based e-mail addresses. If using a university-based address for communication with the College, please regularly ensure that your account is still active.

ONLINE PROOF OF LICENSURE AVAILABLE

Registrants can now obtain a Confirmation of License through their online Portal. There is no fee to download this document. Please note that this Certificate is only current and valid as of the date of printing. Up-to-date proof of licensure of any registrant can be found using our Public Registry: [Search for an Occupational Therapist](#)

To download the document, on the main page of your online Portal, click on the "License" button underneath the "Active License" heading:



Having difficulties logging into the COTNS Online Portal?

Staff are available to assist. If you need to update your log-in e-mail or cannot re-set your log-in password because you do not have access to an old e-mail, please e-mail admin@cotns.ca or phone us at **902-455-0556** and press **1** to speak with Josef.

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