

Volume 1, Issue 1

October 2002

COTNS NEWS

Special points of interest:

- **Standards of Practice Revised**
- **Meet the Board**
- **Committee Updates**
- **Volunteers Urgently Needed**

Inside this issue:

Message from the Board	2
Meet the new Board Members	2
Governor-in-Council Appointees Needed	2
Practice Committee Update	3
Investigation Committee Update	3
Volunteers Urgently Needed	3
College News	4

Essential Competencies become new Standards of Practice

At the May 7, 2002 Board Meeting, the Board approved the Practice Committee's recommendation that the Essential Competencies for Occupational Therapy Practice in Canada replace our existing Standards of Practice. The Essential Competencies were published by the Association of Canadian Occupational Therapy Regulatory Organizations (ACOTRO) in December 2000. They identify the knowledge, skills and abilities required for safe, ethical and effective Occupational Therapy practice.

Thus, Nova Scotia joins a growing list of provinces to adopt the Essential Competencies as the provincial Standards of Practice.

The Essential Competencies will be used in the development of any new practice guidelines as well as consulted in the development of any College position statements. In addition, the Essential Competencies will provide the platform for the

Registration Update

Another annual renewal period has come and gone. Thank you to all who submitted your renewal forms quickly and accurately.

In April, the College mailed out 241 annual renewal forms to all our current members. Of those forms, 14 were submitted late (8 were subject to late charges) and 13 letters of surrender were received.

The College continues to receive a high percentage of incomplete forms. While the registration process goes smoothly for most people, incomplete

development of a peer assessment program.

In their existing state the Essential Competencies would be difficult to measure. Therefore, ACOTRO is busy developing 'performance indicators' which would identify specific, measurable behaviours, knowledge or attitudes which would make it possible to evaluate an individual's performance in relation to the Essential Competencies. Five of the regulatory agencies representing Ontario, Quebec, Alberta, Manitoba and British Columbia are working as Project Partners and are overseeing the project. COTNS is a member of the working group which is made up of all ACOTRO members.

Draft 'performance indicators' have been developed and revised based on the feedback of five focus groups. Validation of the indicators is now underway through distribution of a survey to 20% of OT's in Canada.

forms pose an extra cost to the College.

Registration certificates are only valid for one year. The College reviews the renewal form annually in order to simplify it; however, certain pieces of information must be provided each year in order to be eligible to renew your certificate. Each individual OT must take responsibility for his/her registration.

The College currently has 254 members. A full list of members will be posted on our website.

COTNS NEWS

COTNS BOARD

MEMBERS

Pauline Cousins—Chair
Cherie Lewis—Vice Chair
Ruth Duggan—Treasurer
Megan Russell—Secretary
Connie Morrissey

PRACTICE

COMMITTEE

Dave Brannen—Chair
Cynthia Stilwell
Diane MacKenzie
Denise Bond

INVESTIGATIONS

COMMITTEE

David Myatt—Chair
Cheryl Billard
Pauline Cousins
Janet de Saint-Sardos
Shirley Anderson
Gerald Cameron

Message from the Chair

The Board has been meeting periodically over the summer to begin to set priorities for the coming year. The AGM was very helpful to allow us as a Board to begin to identify priorities. Thank-you to everyone who attended or sent feedback.

The Board would like to proceed with the peer assessment committee whose focus would be the development and implementation of a peer assessment program mandated by the OT Act. In addition, the Board would like to convene a committee to address the issue of the Specialists Register. The focus would be on determining the

need for specialty designations, whether such designations are in the best interest of the public and the feasibility of regulating a Specialists Register. If you can help with these or other activities please give the office a call.

Upcoming Board meetings will occur on the following dates: November 12th, December 10th and January 14th. Meetings are held from 5:30 to 7:30 at the College office. Everyone is welcome to attend Board meetings. Please call the office in advance to make arrangements.

Welcome New Governor-in-Council Board Representative

CONNIE MORRISSEY

Connie is currently our sole governor-in-council appointee.

Connie has practiced law for more than 10 years in both New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. While she now serves as in-house counsel for one of the region's largest insurance companies, during her years in private practice, she represented numerous self-regulating professional bodies in New Brunswick, advising on matters

of policy and procedure as well as prosecuting disciplinary matters. She has also represented individual members of various professional bodies in disciplinary hearings.

The Province is currently advertising for the remaining 2 positions. If you know of anyone who would be interested in serving on the COTNS Board (who is not an Occupational Therapist) please encourage them to apply to the Department of Health.

Welcome New Occupational Therapist Board Representatives

RUTH DUGGAN

Ruth graduated from Dalhousie University with her Bachelor of Science in Occupational Therapy in 1988 and a Master of Science in Occupational Therapy in 2002. She has over 14 years experience working with people of all ages in hospital, home, community and work settings in both Canada and Kuwait.

Ruth is currently self-employed, providing services within Nova Scotia.

MEGAN RUSSELL

Megan is a 1999 graduate of the Dalhousie School of OT. She has been employed at the QEII since graduation, gaining experience in several clinical areas of occupational therapy practice including stroke, geriatric assessment and general medicine. Prior to occupational therapy, she worked in administration and accounting positions following completion of two years of undergraduate studies at St. Mary's University.

Practice Committee Update

The Practice Committee advises the Board of Directors on current occupational therapy practice issues. Following are examples of our work: 1) provided COTNS with recommendations regarding Essential Competencies for Occupational Therapy; 2) worked with the Registrar to develop this newsletter; and, 3) drafted practice guidelines for occupational therapy support personnel and the disclosure of third party reports which are pending Board approval.

We are currently developing practice guidelines regarding documentation and client records as well as examining the requirements and

procedure for refresher education when re-entering the profession.

In addition, we are setting priorities for the upcoming year and welcome input from members.

The practice committee is open for new members. Contact COTNS for more information. Future meetings are scheduled for Oct. 15, 2002, Nov. 19, 2002, and Jan 21, 2003. All meeting times are 5:30 - 7:30pm and are held at the COTNS office in the West End Mall.

Complaints Committee Update

The College received one complaint in the 2001/2002 registration year. The matter was settled at the investigation committee level with the member agreeing to a written caution and conditions for licensure.

Through the handling of this complaint, the College was able to identify some key areas where further policy development is required. A standing investigation committee was

appointed by the Board in order to facilitate the process and to work on the development of policies and procedures to ensure complaints are handled in a timely, efficient and fair manner for all parties concerned.

One of their challenges will be developing ideas around the education of COTNS members on the Complaints process.

Call for Volunteers

As you are all aware, the College depends on the hard work of its volunteers. Recruiting individuals to serve on College Committees is always a difficult task. Committee work is your opportunity to have a voice at the College and to help shape the direction of Occupational Therapy in Nova Scotia. We encourage all to volunteer. For those OT's outside of the Halifax region who are interested in serving on committees, please contact the College office.

1. Peer Assessment Committee—This Committee is mandated by the OT Act, Section 64 to develop and administer a Peer Assessment Program.

2. Committee to examine Specialty Designations—This is a special committee to be appointed by the Board to examine the feasibility of establishing a Specialty Register and to examine issues around an OT's ability to identify areas of preferred practice.

*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](http://www.cotns.ca)

Office Staff

Joy Moulton Office Manager

Gayle Salsman Registrar

Office Hours:

Monday 9:00–1:00

Tuesday 8:30–2:30

Wednesday 3:00–5:00

Thursday 8:30–2:30

Website to be Launched

COTNS is proud to announce that our new website will soon be up and running. Our scheduled launch date is for OT Week. An announcement will be made during OT Week, October 20th–26th, 2002.

You will be able to visit us at: www.cotns.ca

We encourage all to go to the website to obtain information about the College. Please share this information with colleagues and clients alike.

Reminders

Malpractice Insurance Update

Most of our members carry their malpractice insurance through CAOT which expires in the middle of our registration year. In the past, CAOT has provided us with a list of members purchasing malpractice insurance through them. However, with the onset of the Privacy Act, CAOT is no longer able to provide us with that information. It will now be up to each individual member to provide the College with proof that he or she has renewed his or her insurance. An original or photocopy received by mail or fax would be accepted.

Proof of malpractice insurance renewal must be received in the College office no later than January 2, 2003.

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.