



COLLEGE OF OCCUPATIONAL THERAPISTS OF NOVA SCOTIA  
7001 Mumford Road, Halifax Shopping Centre,  
Box 11, Halifax, NS B3L 2H8

## **DRAFT**

### **POSITION STATEMENT: PANDEMIC PLANNING**

#### **Preface:**

An Influenza pandemic is a worldwide epidemic in which a disease spreads easily and rapidly. While the timing and location of an influenza pandemic outbreak is difficult to predict, the reality is that research at the level of the World Health Organization indicates that influenza pandemic planning must be considered to be an imperative health issue by governments, health systems, health providers and consumers.

The College of Occupational Therapists of Nova Scotia, as well as individual occupational therapists have a role to play during an Influenza Pandemic. Demands for care may result in health providers having to weigh the provision of such care against competing obligations to their own health and that of family members and may result in occupational therapists being reallocated from their usual roles and settings.

This document reflects the College of Occupational Therapists of Nova Scotia's position on an Influenza Pandemic.

Occupational therapists have a professional obligation as well as the legal requirement to provide clients with safe, competent and ethical care. This professional obligation extends to a public health emergency such as a pandemic.

The College recognizes that occupational therapists possess a number of skills which can contribute to the execution of local pandemic plans. It is the position of the College that occupational therapists should consider the following key issues in relation to their professional roles and responsibilities.

- To become and remain informed regarding the provincial and local pandemic plans, particularly regarding the role of occupational therapy and to ensure that current and relevant information is available for ongoing decision making.
- To maintain and make available resources appropriate to the practice setting and provider role, for purposes of personal and public safety, as well as to participate in the implementation of any safety precautions, such as infection prevention and control.
- To consider personal competencies relevant to the provision of care during a pandemic and develop a plan for decision making and involvement.
- To make decisions regarding provision of care based on consideration of a profession specific Code of Ethics or within an ethical framework.
- To work within the legislative structure of the Occupational Therapy Act when considering new roles and responsibilities.

## Page 2 – Position Statement: Pandemic Planning

- To comply with government directives announced pre, during and post pandemic.

During a pandemic the role of the College is:

1. To ensure effective communication with registrants – The overall goal of communication during a pandemic will be to maintain the role of the College as an organization committed to public protection and the advancement of safe, competent and ethical occupational therapy practice. Meeting this goal will require an emphasis on providing occupational therapists with resources specific to the pandemic and developing collaborative partnerships to ensure that the College has links to relevant information and decision making.

2. To provide advice on regulatory issues and standards of practice – The ability to provide professional practice consultation is an essential role of the College which will continue during a pandemic. It is essential that the College support occupational therapists while maintaining protection of the public.

3. Maintain a mechanism to register qualified professionals and to conduct other business as required to address regulatory issues.

This document has been based on documents shared by the College of Occupational Therapists of Ontario and the College of Registered Nurses of Nova Scotia. The College of Occupational Therapists of Nova Scotia acknowledges their contributions to our Position Statement.

November 19, 2009