

College of  
Chiropractors  
of Ontario

# FOOTPRINT

**JUNE 2024 | VOLUME 5: NO. 2**

## In this Issue



- 2 President's Message
- 4 A Word from the Registrar and CEO
- 6 Zero-Tolerance Policy & Revised Guideline for Suspension
- 7 By-law 4 Updated
- 7 Code of Conduct Updated
- 8 Registration Numbers Added to the Public Register
- 8 Registration Exam Update
- 9 Quality Assurance Update
- 10 Continuing Education Program
- 10 ICRC and Discipline Committee Updates
- 12 Consultation: We need your feedback!
- 12 2023 Annual Report
- 13 EDI Spotlight
- 14 Meaningful Engagement



# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



## Taking Our College to the Next Level

As one of the smaller Colleges, (tasked with precisely the same mandate as the other significantly larger Colleges), it is safe to say that we certainly try harder. But what exactly is it that we aspire to? Quite simply – demonstrated excellence in regulated health in the public interest. It is our *raison d'être*. The reason we exist. This is the litmus test that signifies to all stakeholders, particularly the Ministry of Health, that our registrants merit the privilege of self-regulation.

Why is it that we seek the lofty esteem of 'excellence'? When we do our job well, we earn the confidence and respect from other regulators and stakeholders that, above anything else, we prioritize the public well-being. And from that, it naturally flows that, as a College when we speak on issues salient to our registrants, our word carries with it the weight of a regulator who has a solid track record of acting in the public interest. We can be trusted to fulfil our mandate in any and all endeavours that we undertake. On this measure, it matters not that we are a smaller College; but it does matter a great deal that we are seen as doing our job well.

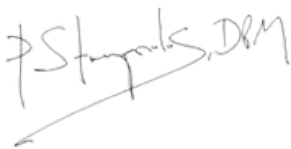
In the quest for demonstrated excellence, the College has implemented a few key initiatives over the past several years.

- **Raising our Public Profile Among Regulators** – our Registrar not only attends each and every Health Profession Regulators of Ontario (HPRO) meeting but she has also been elected from amongst all the College Registrars to serve on the HPRO Management Committee. This committee operates on behalf of the HPRO membership and is outward-facing to the Ministry of Health and other key stakeholders. Further, the Registrar and staff attend conferences within health regulation to learn more about issues of the day and how better to tackle them.

- **Raising our Profile with Members of the Public** – the College has a duty to get its message about its mandate out to the public. Toward that end we have expanded our social media presence, employed plain language in our written messaging, developed a robust Practice Advisory Service and we have implemented video instruction on how to access the College’s services – all to facilitate more seamless access to our resources.
- **Fostering a Culture of Duty and Ethical Conduct** – Aristotle long ago stated, “the whole is more than the sum of its parts”. It’s easy to understand how this saying quite aptly might apply to the synergy experienced when listening to an orchestra, or in watching the skillful execution of play by an accomplished soccer team... but a College, you ask? Most assuredly. Serving on Council or a committee of the College is not an undertaking that should be taken lightly. It requires a level of commitment that must be clearly understood from the outset. To set that compass properly, the Registrar has implemented and oversees an orientation process to drive home the tenets of self-regulation and proper governance in meeting that responsibility. These pillars are reinforced time and again through regular business meetings of committees where we hear from the Registrar, staff, legal counsel and other experts in health regulation about precedent setting cases, among other relevant topics. This spurs debate, reflection, collegiality and ultimately a deeper understanding of our important role as one part of a greater entity that serves the College. Again, each member of the College’s committees must do their part to ensure that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts.

I have written in the past about how self-regulation is a privilege that only a defined number of healthcare professions enjoy. We are envied by those who are not so fortunate. Ask anyone in such a circumstance. Over the past few years, we have made great strides at our ‘little’ College in demonstrating our commitment to serve the public. For that, we should be proud. Rest assured that we will endeavour to continue to strive to improve, as we must, to maintain, or gain – as the case may be, that trust that makes us worthy of that privilege. Only good comes from being a registrant of a College that is respected, and even admired, by its peers. We continue to try harder.

Fraternally yours,



Peter Stavropoulos, DPM  
President



# A WORD FROM THE REGISTRAR AND CEO

## Modernization of Health Profession Regulation in Canada

It was with interest that I attended the board meeting of the Health Profession Regulators of Ontario (HPRO) this spring, a body of the 26 regulated health professions in Ontario of which the College of Chiropodists of Ontario is a member. Ontario's Minister of Health, Sylvia Jones attended our meeting as our guest speaker and shared a positive message from her Ministry focusing on access to patient care and scope expansion. Minister Jones highlighted the recent scope expansion for other healthcare providers including pharmacists that the Ministry supported. Minister Jones' message was a welcome one; indeed, it aligns perfectly with our College's Strategic Plan and, in particular, the College's commitment to the adoption of the Podiatry Model in the province. That model would see scope expansion for chiropodists and podiatrists alike and, as a direct correlation, would result in increased access to care for Ontarians. Minister Jones' message also aligns with the modernization of professional health regulation in Canada.

Modernization in British Columbia has recently caused the Ministry of Health in that province to amalgamate 11 of the health profession regulators into two separate regulatory bodies. One of the new regulatory bodies coming into force June 28, 2024, now includes the following healthcare professions in one regulatory body entitled the College of Health and Care Professionals of British Columbia with the merging of 7 former separate Colleges: Speech and Hearing, Dietitians, Occupational Therapists, Opticians, Optometrists, Physical Therapists, and Psychologists.

The other new regulatory body entitled the College of Health Professionals of British Columbia also comes into force June 28, 2024 and now includes the following healthcare professions: Chiropractors, Massage Therapists, Naturopathic Physicians, and Traditional Chinese Medicine Practitioners and Acupuncturists.

The following 4 Colleges in B.C. will remain independent in addition to the two newly amalgamated Colleges. Those independent Colleges are: the College of Nurses and Midwives, the College of Oral Health Professionals, the College of Pharmacists and the College of Physicians and Surgeons (including DPM podiatrists). An important note: there are no chiropodists registered in B.C. and the title "podiatrist" refers to individuals with the designation of "Doctor of Podiatric Medicine" who have board certification or registration as a DPM podiatrist in another jurisdiction.

The amalgamation in B.C. has naturally caused speculation in Ontario as to what such amalgamation could mean for Ontario and for the healthcare professionals in Ontario. Those of us working within professional regulation have not heard of any plans for an imminent amalgamation in Ontario of the kind that B.C. is experiencing. That said, with the legislative framework in Ontario for health regulation being over 30 years old, it's fair to say that there is some anticipation that legislative reform of some variety could arise in the near future. Whether such reform could include an amalgamation of health professions, and in what form that may arise, remains to be seen.


However, an important takeaway, when the recent amalgamations in B.C. are viewed together with the comments of Minister Jones against the backdrop of modernization, is that there is a general recognition that healthcare regulation is not and cannot be stagnant. It can – and should - morph and change to best serve the interests of the public its mandate is to protect and, similarly, scopes of practice of healthcare providers can also change with scope expansion being viewed as a key part of modernization of healthcare delivery in Canada.

When I wrote my thesis at the end of 2020 for my LLM, a Masters in Law, I focused on B.C.'s then-proposed health regulatory amalgamation and what modernized healthcare regulation was shaping up to look like in Canada. As a cornerstone of any modernization of healthcare, scope expansion is viewed as critical to capitalize on the existing knowledge and skills of healthcare professionals, attract other well-educated and skilled healthcare professionals from other jurisdictions and to ensure greater access to care for patients. In short, vocational rigidity has no place in modernized health profession regulation. Neither do rigid and inexplicable legislative restraints on registering highly trained and skilled healthcare providers such as Ontario's *Chiropody Act's* restriction on registering DPM podiatrists or preventing chiropodists from communicating a diagnosis, for example.

Whatever changes modernization in health profession regulation will ultimately bring to Ontario, we can be assured that those changes will include scope expansion for at least some healthcare providers and will also likely include attempts to harmonize healthcare professions and their scopes of practice within any given profession across Canada. The days of restricting the registration of highly qualified healthcare providers in Ontario are firmly in the past because there is no public protection argument that can possibly be made in support of such restrictions. In addition, there is nothing modern or forward-thinking about registration restrictions of the kind contemplated in the *Chiropody Act*. Finally, it's important to understand that modernization of healthcare regulation is much bigger than the College of Chiropodists of Ontario or its registrants and it will not be stymied or stalled by professional self-interest or protection.

As those with the privilege of self-regulation must acknowledge, only that which can be justified on the basis of public protection will survive modernization in whatever form modernized health regulation will take place in Ontario. The message for healthcare professionals in the province engaging in footcare is clear: be prepared for, and accepting of, modernization and understand that modernization is meant to be progressive, not stagnant and never self-serving to the needs or wants of the healthcare profession. We are in exciting times for healthcare regulation with the potential for many opportunities for those who practice foot care, so long as we do not waiver from our commitment to public protection.

Sincerely,



Nicole Zwiers, LLB, LLM  
Registrar and CEO



## PRACTICE ADVISORY SERVICES

The Practice Advisor (PA) is available to answer registrants' questions about their professional services in Ontario. Providing professional practice advice on behalf of the College, the PA is available to support registrants with making sound and ethical clinical and business decisions that comply with legislative requirements, the Standards of Practice, and College policies and guidelines. The PA is also available to support the public and stakeholders with questions about the practice of chiropractors and podiatrists.

Registrants are encouraged to contact the PA to discuss unfamiliar circumstances and possible options for resolution. While practice advice does not replace registrants' own clinical and professional judgment, it is an option to discuss topics or clarify College policies or processes. Please note, the PA cannot provide legal, business-related, financial, or employment/labour law advice.

Contact the PA at [practice@cocoo.on.ca](mailto:practice@cocoo.on.ca).

## ZERO-TOLERANCE POLICY AND REVISED GUIDELINE FOR SUSPENSION



In February 2019, Council passed the Zero Tolerance Policy to address what it identified as a pervasive problem of inappropriate business practices in the profession. The statement was approved and implemented by the Executive Committee in May 2019.

More than five years have passed since the adoption of the Zero Tolerance Policy, and inappropriate business practices in the profession persist. The many Discipline Committee decisions that address violations of the Zero Tolerance Policy can be found on the College website and CanLII.

At its May 2024 meeting, Council committed to increasing the regulatory response to inappropriate business practices and enforcing the Zero Tolerance Policy. One of the changes Council approved was amendments to the Guideline for Suspension to enhance monitoring and compliance with Discipline Committee Orders and ensure registrants make themselves aware of their obligations while suspended. In particular, the Guideline was amended to require suspended registrants to sign a declaration monthly confirming they are complying with the Guideline.



## BY-LAW 4 UPDATED

By-Law 4 sets out the Code of Conduct for Council and Committee members. Among other things, the by-law addresses how to manage conflicts of interest.

When Council and Committee members engage in decision-making on behalf of the College, it is centrally important to maintain the integrity of all decision-making by protecting against any conflict of interest or perceived conflict of interest on the part of the Council or Committee member. To that end, Council and Committee members must prefer the best interests of the College over their own interests, personal or otherwise, to maintain the integrity of the decision-making and ensure the proper exercise of the College's authority. Members must review meeting materials in advance of any meeting to ensure no conflict or perceived conflict arises and, if such conflict does appear to arise, must indicate that they are in a real or perceived conflict of interest. That member must then absent themselves from all deliberations and decision-making of the Council or Committee.

At the May 2024 meeting, Council approved amendments to By-law 4 to streamline the procedure when concerns about Councillors or Committee members are raised and to add flexibility for the Executive Committee to take certain actions related to concerns about appointed Committee members.

## CODE OF CONDUCT UPDATED

The College relies on Council and Committee members to conduct College business to ensure the College can fulfill its public protection mandate. In conducting the business of the College, both Council and Committee members must engage in decision-making and the exercise of the College's authority as the regulator of chiropractors and podiatrists in the province. It is critically important that Council and Committee members follow the Code of Conduct to ensure that their work on behalf of the College is above reproach. Further, it is critical that neither Council nor Committee members engage in conduct that undermines the integrity of the College in any respect.

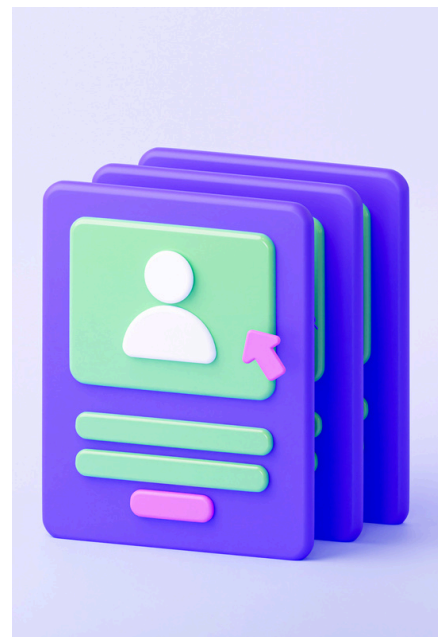
Given the importance of the Code of Conduct, amendments were made to broaden its language such that Council and Committee members cannot act in a manner that places their personal interests or any other interests above the College. Council and Committee members shall avoid engaging in conduct that interferes with the ability of the College to achieve its public protection mandate.

## REGISTRATION NUMBERS ADDED TO THE PUBLIC REGISTER

At its January 2024 meeting, Council voted to amend By-law 1, in principle, to add registration numbers to the Public Register, and to circulate the proposal to stakeholders for 60 days.

Council reviewed the feedback from registrants and stakeholders and voted to add registration numbers to the Public Register for transparency and to align the College with other RHPA regulators.

Members of the public are now able to search for registrants by registration number on the [Public Register](#).



## CONTINUING EDUCATION (CE) PROGRAM



### Continuing Education Modules

The College developed two new Continuing Education modules: Governability and Clinical Supervision. These modules support the College's commitment to professional development and high practice standards by informing and reminding registrants of the required practice guidelines, standards and other information. Council approved the modules and the CE initiative at its recent meeting, and the College is preparing for a fall launch. Stay tuned for more details.

### Inhalation Course

The College is organizing a two-day Inhalation course in 2025. Dates and additional details will be shared with registrants in the next issue of Footprint. Registrants are encouraged to contact the College if they are interested in finding out more information.

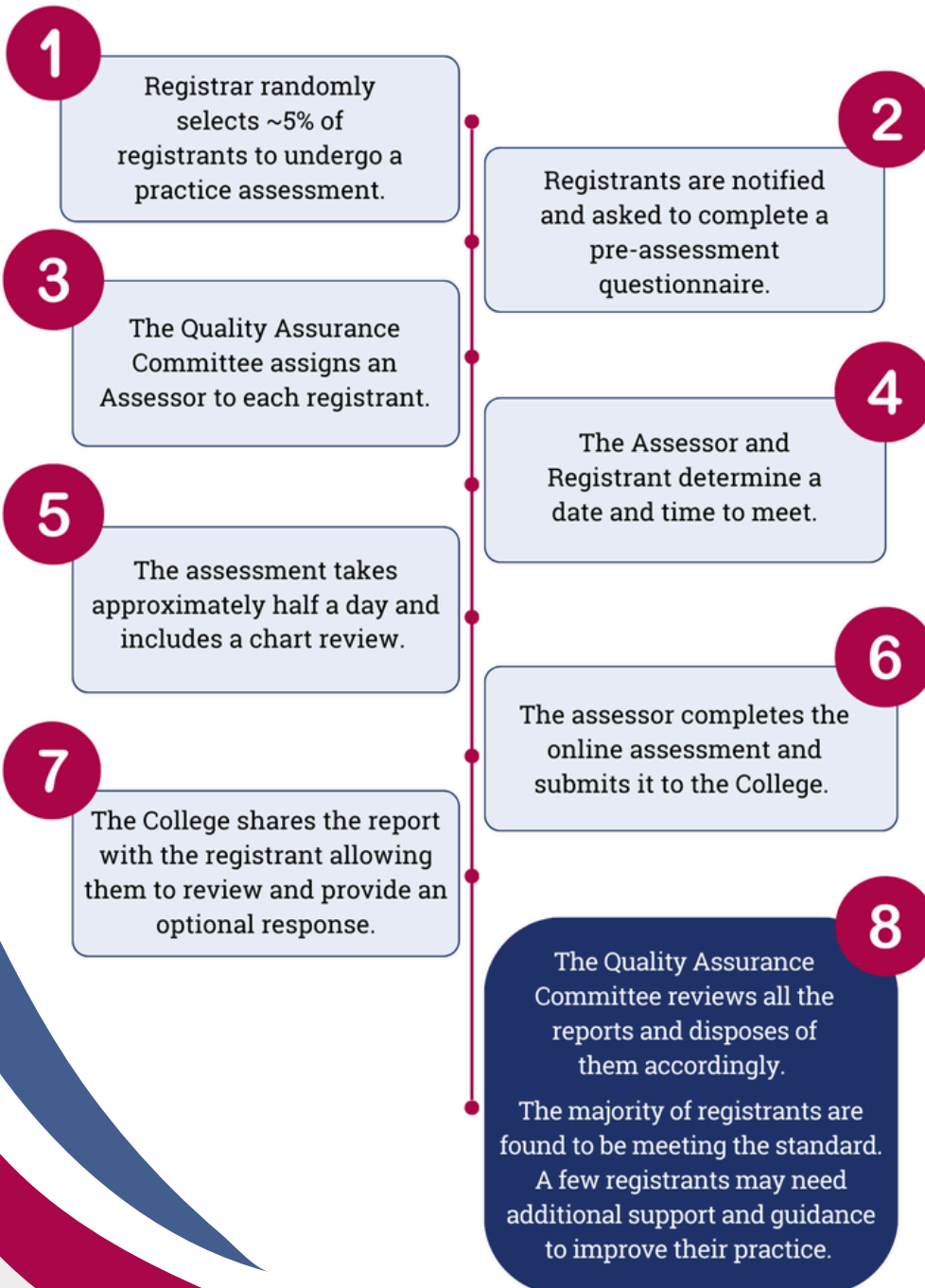




# QUALITY ASSURANCE UPDATE

Practice Assessments are a key component of the Quality Assurance Program, providing a supportive way for chiropractors and podiatrists to demonstrate their professional knowledge, skills, and judgment with an assessor. They are grounded in the assumption that chiropractors and podiatrists are practising competently while recognizing that the changing dynamics of practice environments and best practices create the need for continued learning and development.

## Practice Assessments: Step-by-Step Process



The College is improving the Practice Assessment process by integrating a more helpful and appropriate structure for those who conduct surgical procedures in their practice. The improvements aim to enable Assessors in providing additional feedback to Registrants that is specific and applicable to providing these types of procedures to their patients.

As with the overall objective of the College's Practice Assessment Program, the Surgical Suite Assessment Tool is being designed to help enhance Registrants' knowledge and encourage excellence in the delivery of care to the public.

**[Find more details about the Practice Assessment Program on the website.](#)**



## REGISTRATION EXAM UPDATE

The College held its spring registration exams on May 31, 2024 and the OSCE on June 1, 2024. This year, we were pleased to return to an in-person format for the written exams, while the OSCE continued its tradition of being conducted in person. 41 applicants completed the written exam, demonstrating their knowledge and commitment to the field. 38 applicants participated in the OSCE, showcasing their practical skills in a hands-on environment.

## ICRC AND DISCIPLINE COMMITTEE UPDATES

### Complaints and Reports

Between February and May 2024, the College received **six complaints** and opened **two Registrar investigations**, which is lower than last year. In the same period in 2023, the College received nine complaints and opened five Registrar investigations.

Between February and May 2024, ICRC panels **disposed of 11 matters** as follows:

- 8 cases – no further action was taken.
- 3 – referrals to the Discipline Committee.

There are currently **18 matters** that will be considered by panels of the ICRC.

### Discipline Committee

There are currently **11 cases** that have been referred to the Discipline Committee.

### Referrals are posted on the website.



Disciplinary matters are resolved by way of uncontested or contested hearings. Matters are resolved or disposed of when:

- All allegations are withdrawn or dismissed;
- No findings of professional misconduct and/or incompetence are made by a panel;
- Findings of professional misconduct and/or incompetence are made, and a penalty is ordered;
- Reinstatement requests are granted, not granted or abandoned; and
- Removal of information requests are granted, not granted or abandoned.

Between February and May 2024, the Discipline Committee disposed of **three matters**.

## Summarized Discipline Committee Decisions

[Read the Discipline Committee decisions on the website.](#)

### *COCOO v. John Infanti*

The registrant signed an agreed statement of facts admitting that he engaged in professional misconduct, including that he: contravened a term, condition of limitation on his certificate of registration; failed to meet or contravened the College's standards; contravening the Act, the RHPA or the regulations under those acts, and engaged in conduct that was disgraceful, dishonourable and unprofessional.

After finding the Registrant guilty of professional misconduct, the Panel made an order that included the following:

- An oral reprimand
- 8-month suspension (2 remitted)
- Mentorship

The registrant was also ordered to pay costs to the College in the amount of \$20,000.

### *COCOO v. Jennifer Seecharan*

The registrant signed an agreed statement of facts admitting that she engaged in professional misconduct, including that she: failed to meet or contravened the College's standards; practised the profession while in a conflict of interest; failed to keep records as required; signed or issued a document that contained a false or misleading statement; submitted an account or charge for services that she knew was false or misleading; charged a fee that was excessive; contravening the Act, the RHPA or the regulations under those acts, and engaged in conduct that was disgraceful, dishonourable and unprofessional.

After finding the registrant guilty of professional misconduct, the Panel ordered:

- An oral reprimand
- 10-month suspension (2 remitted)
- ProBE Ethics course
- Medical Record Keeping Course
- Mentorship

The registrant was also ordered to pay costs to the College in the amount of \$17,500

### *COCOO v. Thomas Hewak*

The registrant signed an agreed statement of facts admitting that he engaged in professional misconduct, including that he: failed to meet or contravened the College's standards; practised the profession while in a conflict of interest; failed to keep records as required; signed or issued a document that contained a false or misleading statement; submitted an account or charge for services that she knew was false or misleading; charged a fee that was excessive; contravening the Act, the RHPA or the regulations under those acts, and engaged in conduct that was disgraceful, dishonourable and unprofessional.

After finding the registrant guilty of professional misconduct, the Panel ordered:

- An oral reprimand
- 10-month suspension (2 remitted)
- ProBE Ethics course
- Medical Record Keeping Course
- Mentorship

The registrant was also ordered to pay costs to the College in the amount of \$20,000.



## CONSULTATION: WE NEED YOUR FEEDBACK!

You are invited to share your thoughts on proposed amendments to the College's By-law 1 (General) and By-law 2 (Fees), which will add outstanding fees to the annual registration renewal fee.

Registrants sometimes owe fees beyond the annual renewal. Unpaid fees create administrative and financial burdens for the College. To address this, By-law 1 and By-law 2 have been updated to require that all outstanding fees be included in the annual renewal fee, and therefore, registrants must complete all outstanding payments to renew their registration certificate. Additional simple language updates have been proposed - "member" will be changed to "registrant" to reflect the College's regulatory role better.

Ensuring financial stability by recovering all costs annually and enforcing payment of owed fees is in the public interest. This demonstrates the College's commitment to upholding its committee orders and maintaining professional standards.

Your feedback is important to us. **Please review the proposed changes and send your comments to [info@cocoo.on.ca](mailto:info@cocoo.on.ca) by August 3, 2024.**



## 2023 ANNUAL REPORT

2023 was a productive year marked by significant advancements in our regulatory practices as the College worked towards enhancing patient care and modernizing quality assurance.

The **2023 Annual Report** features messages from Registrar and CEO Nicole Zwiers and President Peter Stavropoulos, along with key data, Committee reports, and new standards, policies and initiatives launched over the year. It also underscores our commitment to ensuring the delivery of safe, high-quality foot care to all Ontarians.

Looking ahead, we hope to continue to support chiropractors and podiatrists in maintaining professional standards through meaningful collaboration with our registrants and community and healthcare partners, with the ultimate goal of protecting the public.

# EQUITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSIVITY (EDI) SPOTLIGHT



The College is active on X, LinkedIn and Instagram. We aim to reach out to registrants, healthcare professionals, community and health organizations and members of the public by sharing informative posts and videos and amplifying the messaging of its colleagues and partners. We also aim to share helpful information to promote the importance of foot health, clarify the role of chiropodists and podiatrists in healthcare and advocate for the safe, equitable delivery of foot care to Ontarians.



**“**

Foot health is an integral component of our overall health, yet our feet are often overlooked.

Ignoring even the most common foot problems could potentially cause much bigger issues like mobility challenges, chronic pain and musculoskeletal imbalances. Additionally, our feet can often provide early warning signs of as yet not detected underlying serious medical conditions such as compromised circulation of the blood, diabetes or kidney disease.

Prioritizing foot care via proper hygiene, well-fitted and supportive footwear, and timely attention to any issues is key to securing comfort, functionality, and sustained wellness.

Foot Health Awareness Month serves as a reminder to all of us to pay close attention to our feet to improve our overall quality of life.



**Peter Stavropoulos, DPM**  
President, College of Chiropodists of Ontario

During **Foot Health Awareness Month** in May, the College highlighted the importance of foot health and the crucial role foot care specialists play in our communities. The College promoted the **"Find a Chiropodist or Podiatrist"** feature and shared valuable foot health tips and resources on social media. [Watch this short video!](#)

# EQUITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSIVITY (EDI) SPOTLIGHT



Historically, and even today, 2SLGBTQIA+ people are more likely to experience health disparities due to stigma, discrimination and social isolation. Many hesitate to reach out for help or access health services due to past negative interactions with the health system. Neglecting seemingly negligible health concerns for a long time can lead to more severe health complications and long-term illnesses.

**Pride Month** is a time to celebrate the resilience and achievements of 2SLGBTQIA+ community members. It's also an opportunity to recognize these health disparities, acknowledge the experiences of 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals within the health system and address these injustices and inequities. All patients should have access to safe, compassionate foot care.

The [Rainbow Health Ontario \(RHO\) Service Provider Directory](#) is an important tool designed to help people find health and social service providers committed to competent and welcoming care for 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals.

**National Indigenous History Month** in June honours the rich cultures, traditions, and contributions of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Peoples across Turtle Island. It's also a moment to reflect on the history of oppression, discrimination and trauma that continues to impact Indigenous people's health outcomes even today, especially in remote, Northern communities.

First Nations people in Canada have [higher rates of lower limb amputations](#), often younger and with more diabetic foot infections. You may also remember reading about Registrar Nicole Zwiers' eye-opening conversations with the Chiefs of Ontario Council in a [past issue of Footprint](#). Addressing barriers to healthcare access is the first step towards bridging the gaps in the system and making sure Indigenous patients have access to the care they deserve.

The National Collaborating Centre for Indigenous Health (NCCIH) offers excellent learning resources on Indigenous health and cultural safety in healthcare. Read about the [social determinants of health](#) and barriers to healthcare faced by Indigenous populations.



The College is committed to continuing to raise awareness about topics and issues that affect the foot health and overall well-being of Ontarians. These health awareness events and campaigns give us opportunities to share important messages with our registrants, the public, and other healthcare organizations. They help us reaffirm our commitment to the delivery of safe, compassionate healthcare for all patients, ensuring no one is left behind. We encourage registrants to take the time to learn about providing culturally safe and patient-centered care, and ultimately, create welcoming spaces for all their patients, staff, peers and colleagues.

# MEANINGFUL ENGAGEMENT

Over the past few months, the College has been actively involved in various outreach events, demonstrating its commitment to continued collaboration and engagement with its registrants, and community and healthcare stakeholders. Registrar and CEO Nicole Zwiers, alongside the Health Profession Regulators of Ontario (HPRO), met with the Minister of Health to discuss shared priorities. Ms. Zwiers has been appointed to the Management Committee of HPRO. The Registrar participated in a Fireside chat at the Council of Licensure, Enforcement and Regulation (CLEAR)'s Regional Symposium, discussing navigating regulatory leadership changes, and presented at the Ontario Society of Chiropractors 2024 Annual Conference about the role of professional regulation on the practice of footcare in Ontario. The College also hosted a successful Spring Town Hall with active participation and excellent questions from registrants.



Nicole Zwiers (far-right) and other members of the Health Professional Regulators of Ontario (HPRO) meet with Hon. Sylvia Jones, Minister of Health.

*(Image courtesy of HPRO, June 2024)*

## Stay Connected!



The College is committed to increasing its presence on social media and engaging with members of the public, registrants and healthcare stakeholders. Please follow us on LinkedIn, X and Instagram for important updates about changes to standards and guidelines, renewal deadlines, important decisions arising from Council meetings, and stay up to date on trending healthcare topics.

Please ensure your email and contact information on your profile is current and accurate, and that you regularly check your spam folder for emails from the College. [Sign in to the Registrant Portal](#) to review and update your profile.



**College of  
Chiropractors  
of Ontario**