

BRIEFING NOTE

TO: COUNCIL

FROM: FAZAL KHAN, REGISTRAR, CEO

DATE: MAY 28, 2019

SUBJECT: 18.2 HOME ADDRESSES ON PUBLIC REGISTER

Purpose: To clarify College practice re posting home addresses on the public register.

Background:

The *Regulated Health Professions Act, 1991* requires all colleges to publish the “business address” of every registered practitioner on their website. This information is noted on each college’s “public register”.

The College will publish the home address of an optician if that is their primary business address. This is true whether the optician is practising opticianry from their home or whether they are running a non-opticianry business from their home.

College staff have reported that many opticians have been calling the College to complain about having their home address published on the public register when they are not working. This is sometimes raised as a safety concern. The College by-laws permit an optician designate another address (such as a P.O. box) to avoid having the home address published, or for the College to post “any other location for the [optician] known by the College” (by-law section 15.3(d)). However, opticians have expressed concerns about the expense associated with P.O. boxes, and in many cases do not have another appropriate address where they can be reached.

Both staff and opticians have noted that opticians rarely take their files with them when they leave an opticianry practice, so the public has less of a need to track down their former optician than they would in the case of another health professional. Of course, there may be other reasons why a member of the public would need to contact their former optician.

Finally, safety concerns have recently arisen where the College has had to act urgently to remove a home address from the public register to protect an optician. The Registrar has the authority to withhold information about an optician, including a home or business address, if publication could jeopardize the safety of any individual.

For Consideration:

The Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care has confirmed it does not require an optician's home address to be posted while the optician is not working. In light of this, and in light of some of the concerns raised about publication of home addresses, the College is seeking guidance on alternatives to publishing this information.

Where optician is not employed or self-employed, an alternative to publishing a P.O. box or last-known address (where neither of these is practical) could be to publish a notice to contact the College and to provide the College address.

Recommendations: That Council provide guidance to College staff regarding alternatives to publishing an optician's home address where the optician is not working.