

BRIEFING NOTE

TO: Board of Directors

FROM: Fazal Khan, Registrar

DATE: December 4-5, 2023

SUBJECT: NACOR Restructure

☐ For Decision

☒ For Information

☐ Monitoring Report

Purpose:

This presentation by Jodi Dodds, Executive Director of the National Alliance of Canadian Opticianry Regulators (NACOR), will provide an update regarding restructuring changes that NACOR (National Alliance of Canadian Opticianry Regulators) is considering for 2024.

Background:

By way of background:

- In 1995, the Federal government implemented the Agreement on Internal Trade (AIT) which required and facilitated the movement of labour across the country.
- In 1997 the National Accreditation Committee of Opticians (NACO) was founded to develop an agreement on how provincially regulated opticians could move freely across the country. To support this, an accreditation process was established to create consistency among educational programs.
- In 2002 the MRA (Mutual Recognition Agreement) was entered, allowing opticians to move between provinces.
- NACOR was formed in 2004 as a collaboration vehicle for provincial regulators and develop the National Examination through a sub-committee called the National Examinations Committee (NEC). The National Accreditation Committee was also struck to accredit opticianry education providers. This created a consistent educational experience as well as a standardized examination across the country.

The requirement for labour mobility served as the impetus for the formation of NACOR, an alliance of all provincial opticianry regulators (except Quebec at the time) to facilitate the development of consistent Entry to Practice Competencies for all Canadian opticians, a standardized educational requirement as well as a standardized Entry to Practice Examinations. This ensured a consistent patient experience and reduced jurisdictional irregularities.

As the competencies and examination were developed and were in a maintenance stage, NACOR took on other initiatives, creating regulatory tools such as the PLAR tool (Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition), used to assess foreign applicant skills and knowledge.

NACOR is a not-for-profit organization, structured with a board of directors consisting of representatives from each province, and administrative team and supporting committees. Membership is voluntary and NACOR holds no legislative power.

For Consideration:

NACOR has decided to revisit its governance structure and operating model considering factors such as:

- Regular turn over in provincial NACOR representatives (due to the nature of board appointments and/or the turnover of administrative staff) which is impacting regular business and continuity.
- Changing regulatory structures where opticianry regulators will no longer have a dedicated regulatory representative.
- Organizational shift from development of national tools to delivery of support services to regulators which does not align with a board style decision making structure.
- Challenges in funding models under new regulatory frameworks as well as the ongoing financial challenges faced by smaller provinces with respect to seat fees and travel costs for national meetings.

Under the restructuring, as outlined in the presentation by Jodi Dodds, NACOR would move away from the board structure and focus on its role as a service provider to the regulators. The core offerings being the administration of the National Exam and programs such as PLAR and Quality Assurance accreditation for those provinces who wished to avail themselves of these offerings.

NACOR would still facilitate regular collaboration on projects through the hosting of national meetings and subcommittees. The provinces would still be providing input on the national examination through their NEC (National Exams Committee) representative as well as participating in subcommittees to develop and refine Entry to Practice Competencies.

This issue has been discussed both at the Board and Executive levels of NACOR (where Ontario is represented by the Registrar) for the past 18 months. No significant concerns have arisen with the model under consideration thus far.

Public Interest Considerations:

The provincial governments encourage regulators to find ways to bolster public confidence. The restructuring of NACOR to an independent service provider and moving away from a governance structure with a board of directors made up of regulators will enhance the separation of the regulators from the services provided by NACOR.

Recommendations/Action Required:

This is an informational item. The board is being asked if there were any macro level concerns that they would like to raise to NACOR as they pursue their restructuring.