

# BRIEFING NOTE

**TO:** Board of Directors

**FROM:** Fazal Khan, Registrar and CEO

**DATE:** June 3-4, 2024

**SUBJECT:** Relationship with Public and Beneficiaries Policy (2-09) Monitoring Report

For Decision                       For Information                       Monitoring Report

**Purpose:**

To provide the Board with a monitoring report on the Relationship with Public and Beneficiaries Policy, in accordance with the monitoring report schedule approved by the Board.

**CEO Interpretation and Evidence:**

The Relationship with Public and Beneficiaries Policy 2-09 (Appendix A) was approved by the Board in December 2018.

The information contained in this monitoring report represents compliance with a reasonable interpretation of the policy. The monitoring report covers the period from May 2021 to May 2024.

The next Relationship with Public and Beneficiaries Policy Monitoring Report is due in May-June 2024.

Policy Requirement	Interpretation and Evidence
<p>Engagement with the public is consistent with the RHPA and regulations and:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) Reflects the value the organization places on the public</li> <li>(b) Uses open and transparent processes for public involvement</li> </ul>	<p>To expand its public reach, the College live streams all Board meetings on YouTube. To further this effort, the College has invested in its social media efforts on platforms such as Facebook and Instagram to educate and inform the public on the role of the College and its registrants as well as information on what level of care they can expect to receive.</p> <p>The College is committed to ensuring a public focus on policy development by investing in recruiting additional public members, aside from those appointed by the government.</p>

	<p>The College continues to post all proposed changes to regulations, fees and/or information on the public register for stakeholder feedback in accordance with our statutory obligations. In addition, stakeholder feedback was also sought on several occasions where not required by law, in order to ensure that registrants and the public had an opportunity to provide input on matters that were likely to impact the public. This included proposed changes to the Quality Assurance program and by-law amendments relating to governance reform. A full list of public consultations is available on the <a href="#">website</a>.</p> <p>The College continues to be focused on understanding as many viewpoints as possible prior to and during its policy development process. To this end, in 2021 the College engaged Leger Marketing to conduct an in-depth survey of 1000+ Ontario patients as part of the environmental scan leading up to the 2022-2024 Strategic Planning session. This broad scan also included the registrants, associations, educators, optometry and the government.</p> <p>In 2023, the College once again engaged Leger Marketing to conduct a public survey, this time at a national level with 2000 participants. This larger survey was done in collaboration with NACOR and our provincial counterparts. This survey assessed issues such as quality of care and access.</p>
<p>The organizational environment is professional and safe, and enables communication and engagement by the public and others with the College</p>	<p>All feedback surveys are conducted anonymously to encourage candour and ensure confidentiality. In addition, contact information is always made available for anyone who wishes to reach out with additional questions or comments.</p>

	<p>COO leadership staff have undergone Cultural Safety and Humility training as part of the Indigenous engagement project.</p> <p>We apply a relational lens with a focus on plain language to all communications.</p> <p>We have invested in facilitated engagements with equity deserving public groups, using community members to assist us in engaging respectfully with these groups.</p>
<p>The organization ensures a culture that is reflective of a commitment to provide fair, transparent, prompt/timely and courteous service</p>	<p>The College employs a formal Style Guide to formalize its existing standards for customer service and ensure they were consistent, relational, timely and transparent.</p> <p>All departments post expected timelines for replies which are updated based on busy periods.</p> <p>All staff has received training in relational writing and communication, and a consultant was engaged to conduct a relational audit of College communications to ensure they are professional, relational and easy to understand.</p>
<p>The process for addressing a member of the public's requests, concerns and complaints is fair, objective, respectful and timely.</p>	<p>As noted, the College has adopted a formal Style Guide to ensure that customer service standards are formalized, consistent, relational, timely and transparent.</p> <p>Staff in relevant departments have also participated in training in customer service delivery, including de-escalation techniques and trauma-informed approaches.</p>
<p>Establishment of a clear understanding by the public of what may be expected from the services offered by the College</p>	<p>College hours and contact information for each department are posted to the website. In addition, individuals who send inquiry emails to department email addresses receive an auto-reply letting them know when they can expect a response.</p> <p>Social Media platforms are utilized to further disseminate timely updates to the public.</p>

<p>Reasonable plans to ensure that persons may use French in dealing with the College</p>	<p>The College has made all application policies and materials for students, interns and opticians available in French, and is in the process of making additional documents available relating to other areas of service.</p> <p>French services are available to any applicant or registrant to the College, and translation services are used when necessary.</p> <p>The College continues to hold French-language examination sessions at La Cité College in Ottawa. The College has requested that bilingual examiners be available at the Seneca (Toronto) and Georgian (Barrie) exam sites to allow French speaking candidates the option to access the exam throughout the year if additional attempts are required.</p> <p>In 2023, a dedicated French version of the COO website was launched.</p>
<p>Providing services with appropriate consideration of client differences: cultural, geographic, language and other differences</p>	<p>Steps are taken in all departments to ensure services are provided in ways that are accessible and with consideration to individual differences. Translation services are engaged where required to ensure that persons wishing to make complaints to the College can do so in their own language. In addition, accommodations are made for anyone who requires assistance in making a written complaint to the college, including using recording devices or other methods of ensuring access.</p> <p>As part of its commitment to Cultural Safety and Humility, the College, in collaboration with the College of Optometrists of Ontario, have engaged Counsel Public Affairs to engage the Indigenous Community to better understand the experiences of the community when seeking eye care. The end goal of this engagement is to develop a standard of practice around cultural safety and humility to guide opticians as they engage with patients from diverse cultural backgrounds.</p>

Ensuring confidentiality	All information received at the College is kept strictly confidential, unless required by law. Any requests to disclose information in accordance with allowable exceptions are reviewed by legal counsel.
Ensuring a process exists to encourage persons who believe they have not been protected under this policy to express their concerns	All concerns received at the College relating to customer service or public relations are reviewed carefully and brought to the attention of the Registrar, CEO and/or Deputy Registrar to ensure steps are taken to address and respond to the concerns directly.

**Public Interest Considerations:**

Does the Registrar, CEO’s interpretation and application of the Policy serve or impact the public’s interest or trust in the College?

**Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Considerations:**

Does the Registrar, CEO’s interpretation and application of the Policy impact the College’s commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion?

**Risk Management Considerations:**

The policy being monitored falls into the Operational Boundaries policy category. In reviewing this monitoring report, the board should consider whether it is satisfied with the Registrar, CEO’s interpretation and application of the policy to manage risk relating to the COO’s relationship with the public and other beneficiaries (stakeholders).

**Recommendations/Action Required:**

The Board is asked to consider the following questions:

- 1) Was the Registrar, CEO’s interpretation of the Relationship with Public and Beneficiaries Policy reasonable?
- 2) In the Board’s opinion, did the Registrar, CEO comply with this policy?