



IMPORTANT MESSAGE TO MEMBERS FROM THE OPA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

We are writing to inform members about a proposal we recently became aware of under consideration by the College of Psychologists and Behaviour Analysts of Ontario (CPBAO). This proposal, which was brought to our attention in May, has reportedly been passed by the CPBAO council and recommends a revision of the educational and training standards required for registration as psychologists and psychological associates in Ontario.

By way of background, the Office of the Fairness Commissioner (OFC), which oversees registration practices for regulated professions in Ontario, rated the CPBAO as 'medium to high risk' in its 2022 and 2024 assessments. The most recent report cited concerns related to frequent appeals to the Health Professions Appeal and Review Board (HPARB), labour market shortages, and the under-representation of racialized individuals among PhD registrants. Recommendations included more flexible pathways for internationally trained psychologists and regular review of HPARB outcomes.

We understand that the CPBAO proposal outlines several potential changes aimed at addressing the concerns raised by the Office of the Fairness Commissioner (OFC), which may include:

1. Changes to program accreditation standards,
2. The removal of the doctoral standard for psychology,
3. The removal of the 4-year period of supervision required for registration among psychological associates.

We acknowledge the OFC's concerns and understand the government's emphasis on improving interprovincial mobility. Differences in registration requirements across provinces, coupled with Canada's Free Trade Agreement, have created challenges including a rise in professionals with varied titles, training, and qualifications. This variation has led to public confusion and underscores the need for greater consistency and alignment across the profession.

The OPA is committed to discussing the identified issues with key stakeholders to further understand and advance appropriate alternatives. We recognize the need to expand the psychological workforce and address the Fairness Commissioner's concerns, however we believe there are more thoughtful and effective ways to do so, without increasing confusion or compromising the safety of psychological services to Ontario residents. We are also committed to fair and inclusive access to psychology training and are proud of the progress underway. We believe there is a path forward for retaining standards, addressing OFC's concerns and maintaining the integrity of the profession.

Simply revising or removing standards will not appropriately address challenges related to diversity, access, or the costs associated with mental health care; rather, it risks eliminating safeguards that protect Ontarians, while significantly eroding our professional reputation as experts in the field of mental health assessment and treatment. Like physicians and nurse practitioners, psychologists and psychological associates hold the protected act of diagnosis and require training that reflects this responsibility.

Since becoming aware of this proposal, we have been actively engaged in clarifying the facts, conducting outreach with key stakeholders, and developing materials to support the maintenance of the current appropriate registration standards. We are pleased to share that our advocacy efforts have facilitated meaningful connections and dialogue with stakeholders similarly devoted to upholding the overarching registration standards for psychology in Ontario. At the same time, we recognize that continued vigilance and advocacy will be necessary. We remain committed to promoting adherence to best practices in training, education, and supervision to ensure that psychologists in Ontario continue to be recognized for their high standards of competence and professionalism. As discussions around mobility and regulatory modernization continue, it is essential that any changes occur in partnership with key stakeholders, including the OPA. We look forward to continuing this important work.

Please be assured that we will continue to update the membership.

The Ontario Psychological Association and the Board of Directors