



A MESSAGE TO OPA MEMBERSHIP

Are the proposed changes to college accreditation and training standards by CPBAO A DONE DEAL?

In June, we provided important information regarding proposed changes to revise the educational and training standards required for registration as psychologists and psychological associates in Ontario. Since then, we've received widespread feedback from members expressing serious concerns about the direction of these revisions. We share your reservations and are committed to exploring and advocating for creative approaches that enhance fairness, access and diversity, while also safeguarding the standards that have long protected Ontarians and defined our profession.

We'd like to share a brief update with our members on the steps we've taken since June. Our advocacy group has been working vigorously on outreach, information gathering, and holding meetings with key stakeholders including CPA, DCTs, Council of Professional Associations of Psychologists (CPAP) and most recently with the Office of the Fairness Commissioner (OFC). Our advocacy group has also been reviewing the literature, available data, and regulatory documents to identify our profession's recent improvements, as well as areas for continued growth.

So, are the changes to our professional standards really a done deal?

The OFC wants to see progress in addressing the concerns raised in the Commissioners report. However, we understand it is up to the College to outline how it plans to manage

the process of making improvements toward labor market shortages and promoting increased diversity of racialized members in the PhD class. The College has now invited the OPA to a meeting. We hope the College and Council will want to have a meaningful dialogue and exchange of ideas to help inform the College Council prior to a formal consultation. We have many ideas, and we know many of our members do, as well.

The mental health landscape has changed dramatically since COVID. OPA has helped reduce wait times in the province via our online referral platform. The CPS program wait times showed 74% of patients were matched to a first session with a psychologist or psychological associate within 3 weeks. Our profession has registered hundreds of clinicians from international jurisdictions in the last two years alone, and diversity in our own graduate programs continues to grow. Our preliminary evaluations demonstrated that between 56 and 86% of doctoral students in Ontario programs identify as BIPOC or come from marginalized communities. This growth and increased diversity in our field helps demonstrate our collective commitment to addressing the OFC's concerns. It also reinforces that significant improvements can be made without overhauling our standards.

We know there is also potential for psychologists to be included in the "As of Right" legislation, which, simply put, would allow duly registered health professionals from any Canadian jurisdiction to begin working in Ontario while applying for Ontario registration. It is our understanding that part of the rationale for removing the doctoral standard and the psychological associate pathway is to amalgamate all registrants under the title of psychologist to facilitate compliance should psychologists be added to this legislation. We recognize that inclusion in the As of Right Legislation may help to increase access and diversity further. We also understand that the CFTA has created pathways for interprovincial work while highlighting some of the differing registration standards across the country. At the same time, we strongly believe that creative and collaborative work with key stakeholders can resolve barriers, improve registration practices, and enhance our profession without requiring extensive changes to standards; Our ongoing consultation has further reinforced this shared perspective.

From our ongoing consultations, we understand that this is not a "done deal." As your professional association, our goal is to highlight the recent and ongoing efforts undertaken to accelerate registration and enhance diversity within our profession, while continuing to work with those involved to identify additional avenues to advance these important goals. We hope members and stakeholders will continue to liaise with us in generating ideas for growth while retaining the high standards our psychological associates and psychologists are known for both nationally and internationally.

Sincerely,

The Ontario Psychological Association and the Board of Directors