

Information Update September 2009



Fees to Increase in 2010

Next year's annual renewal fee will increase from \$350 to \$425. The initial application fees will also increase from \$225 to \$300. These are the first fee increases since the college was established in 2000. The fee increase becomes effective next year in the 2010-2011 year (annual fees are due July 1, 2010) which provides time for registrants to plan for the additional expense.

Although the COTBC Board had originally approved an increase for the 2009 renewal, they delayed it to July 2010. Instead, the board approved a deficit budget (using funds from our reserves for operating expenses) for the current 2009-2010 to maintain critical services. A further delay is not possible nor deemed responsible by the board for the reasons outlined below.

Increase in registered occupational therapists

Annual increases in the number of registrants were accommodated over the past nine years through efficient delivery of services but having hit 30% in 2009, it has become necessary to increase staff and operational supports. These include:

- Hiring a deputy registrar as the current staffing level is no longer sufficient to sustain operations, maintain our responsiveness to registrant practice inquiries, and manage the growing workload. The deputy registrar will provide practice advisory support to individual occupational therapists and work closely with college committees to develop practice guidelines and other practice supports. We are pleased to announce the new Deputy Registrar Susan Mulholland will be starting on January 5, 2010.
- Maintaining and improving our responsiveness to the increasing number of registrants who contact us with ethics or practice questions.
- Building college's online capacity for increased services to registrants and the public.
- Increasing activities to improve access and registration for internationally educated occupational therapists.
- Increased legal counsel costs related to inquiry and discipline processes and advice on registration, practice standards and legislative changes.

Increase in public oversight and amendments to the *Health Professions Act (HPA)*

These amendments became effective in May 2008 and added new obligations to the college's responsibilities. In turn, these led to the following new and necessary activities for the college:

- Developing a Quality Assurance Program and the second component of the Continuing Competence Program. Hiring experts in this area and planning for

consultation with registrants is essential to implementing a program that is sound, fair, and specific to the BC context.

- Implementing new bylaws, policies and processes to comply with the significant changes to the *HPA*.
- Improving public information related to the role of the college, and public notice of inquiry and discipline decisions.

In the first ten years the college has avoided any fee increases, in part, by working collaboratively with other organizations; for example:

- Sharing office space and some support staff with the College of Dental Hygienists of BC.
- Organizing joint workshops with the College of Physical Therapists of BC to facilitate the development of the Continuing Competency Program.
- Holding the COTBC AGM and the BCSOT AGM on the same day to share room and AV rental, and other costs.
- Using 'just-in-time' consultants for specific college projects.
- Securing external funding to develop infrastructure to support college activities. For example: Canadian Institute for Health Information funding to develop our registrant database (register) and to provide accurate data for the annual report of Workforce Trends of Occupational Therapists in Canada.
- Securing government funding to support Internationally Educated Occupational Therapists seeking registration. For example: conducting a BC pilot of the Occupational Therapy Examination Preparation Program (OTEpp), an Ontario project lead by McMaster University OT researchers.
- Securing government funding to work with our partner OT colleges in other provinces to develop an assessment toolkit to determine the substantial equivalency of Internationally Educated Occupational Therapists to Canadian Educated Occupational Therapists. This prevents duplication and breaks down interprovincial/territorial barriers to occupational therapists' mobility in Canada.

The fee increase is projected to cover the college's increased operating costs, which have grown with inflation, and fund new required programs.

If you have any questions regarding the fee increase, please contact the registrar at: 1 (866) 386-6822 or (250) 386 6822 or email: kcorbett@cotbc.org