



ONTARIO
PHYSIOTHERAPY
ASSOCIATION

ANNUAL REPORT

2023

Strategic Plan 2022-2024

In 2023, OPA entered into our second year of our strategic plan. Strategic priorities for the Association were identified by engaging with physiotherapists, health system leaders, other health providers, students, educators, patients, and others in conversations about **what's most important for the future of physiotherapy.**

We heard how important it is to advocate, promote and communicate that physiotherapy matters to patients, communities and the health system, both public and private, and to build a plan for the future around that essential message.

The comprehensive strategic framework is guided by a long-term goal that builds on our vision:

“*Physiotherapy will be accessible to all Ontarians, across their lifespan, as an essential part of healthy communities, quality of life and function.*”

Priorities:

- Integrate physiotherapy into health system transformation
- Raise awareness of the value and purpose of physiotherapy
- Deepen practice excellence
- Enable thriving workforce and practice settings
- Build relationships and capacity to foster a community of advocates

Across all of these dimensions, we will work to strengthen inclusivity, diversity, equity and accessibility. At the centre of our plan is articulating the essential message that ‘physiotherapy matters’ through all that we do in each dimension.



Health System Transformation

ADVOCATING FOR SCOPE OF PRACTICE & ADVANCED PRACTICE ROLES



OPA has been working with CPA and the branches across the country on a scope of practice project to define a national scope of practice description and to lay the groundwork for a discussion on advanced practice roles in the career path of the profession.

We also met with other stakeholders, including the Advanced Clinician Practitioner in Arthritis Care advocacy group seeking to progress the recognition of the title and definition of advanced practice in Ontario.

OPA met with Dr. Karima Velji, Chief of Nursing and Professional Practice and Assistant Deputy Minister at Ontario's Ministry of Health, to advocate for the implementation of our full scope of practice as enabled in Bill 179 and the innovative roles physiotherapists can play to address the pressures facing the health system.

COMMUNITY PHYSIOTHERAPY CLINICS (CPC) ADVOCACY

The Community Physiotherapy Clinic program is one of the few publicly funded options for Ontarians who need physiotherapy in the community and OPA took the lead to develop solutions on priority issues impacting the viability of the program. We formed a working group of members with CPC Transfer Payment Agreements, with representation from small and medium sized clinics and large corporation-based clinics all from multiple geographic regions. A package of solutions was developed and discussed with the Ministry to improve the CPC Program.

OPA also had consultations with the Ontario Medical Association (OMA) that extended for nearly a year regarding the requirement for physician referral for the CPC program. **Our consultations resulted in the OMA advising that they do not oppose removal of the physician referral requirement from the CPC Program.**

Health System Transformation

SUBMISSION TO STANDING COMMITTEE FOR FINANCE AND ECONOMIC AFFAIRS PRE-BUDGET CONSULTATIONS

The OPA pre-Budget submission in 2023 highlighted key areas that would bring substantial returns through increasing capacity in Ontario's health care system and achieving the government's objectives, including:

- working up to full scope;
- facilitating successful entry to independent practice for international educated PTs;
- addressing program issues for community rehabilitation;
- and reducing red tape.

[Read OPA's submission](#)

HOME CARE MODERNIZATION

Rehab professional associations in home care (OPA, OSOT, OASW, CASLPO) met with the Ministry leads for Home and Community Care Branch about the status of rehabilitation in home care modernization and the progress on issues previously submitted by the Associations to the consultations. These included workforce and compensation issues including the inequities between professions and across different provider organizations and regions. We submitted responses to government consultations regarding home care modernization when opportunities emerged. We continue these critical conversations for rehabilitation professions in the evolving home care sector.

[Read OPA's submission](#)

Health System Transformation

AUTO INSURANCE

OPA, as co-chair of the Coalition of Health Professions in Auto Insurance, held meetings with the Ministry of Finance to make the case for red tape reduction through removal of Extended Health Benefits (EHBs) as first payor and to address complexities in the system that lead to unnecessary denials and disputes. We also worked on the development of a provider survey to quantify and qualify issues of red tape that impact access to services and add undue burdens to providers in that sector. The preliminary data was used in the submission on potential reforms and the survey extended to further strengthen our data points.

WSIB

OPA provided feedback to WSIB on the restructured MSK Program of Care (POC) focusing on enhancing access to physiotherapy, patient satisfaction, and outcomes, ensuring successful viability of the program by highlighting what would incentivize or disincentivize participation (and its impact on access to care), along with reducing administrative burden and complexity.

OPA collaborated with our representatives on the WSIB working group to review the programs of care and on the development of a new, consolidated MSK POC. As a result of our recommendations as well as meetings with the WSIB, some changes were made to the POC and fees. The new WSIB POC was launched on April 3, 2023, and prior to this date OPA hosted webinars to communicate these changes and facilitate a smooth transition.

[See OPA's WSIB resources, including the webinar recording](#) on the new MSK POC.

Awareness of the Value of Physiotherapy

MEMBERS IN THE NEWS

Many of our members are great advocates for physiotherapy and demonstrate every day why **physiotherapy matters**, to their patients, as health care professionals and in their communities.

Launched in 2022, OPA continued to share Members in the News in 2023 with 7 stories. **Tiffany Tiu, André Riopel, Charlotte Anderson, Kristen MacDonell, Sharon Switzer-McIntyre, Raj Suppiah and Trent Health in Motion** were all featured in Members in the News with 375 clicks from our member emails to their articles, over 6,000 views on Instagram and 8,613 views on Facebook.

6,000 views

on Instagram

8,613 views

on Facebook



Awareness of the Value of Physiotherapy

NATIONAL PHYSIOTHERAPY MONTH (NPM)

Our members know why **#PhysiotherapyMatters**. We celebrated the value members brought to their communities in May by sharing stories about why physiotherapy matters during National Physiotherapy Month.

On May 9, we celebrated **Physiotherapist Assistant Day**, with 100 shares on Facebook, a reach of 1,753 on Instagram, and 51 likes on LinkedIn, the highest results for the month on social media.



WINDSOR DISTRICT CELEBRATES NPM

Windsor District collected 95 pairs of shoes for the Donate Your Kicks Campaign. These were distributed to the clothing closet at Hotel Dieu Grace Healthcare, allowing patients to have access to good footwear during their hospital stay which significantly helps to mobilize these patients on their rehab journey.



Deepen Practice Excellence

INTERACTION 2023

OPA was excited to welcome the physiotherapy community back in-person for two days of celebration, networking, and learning at our annual conference, InterACTION 2023!

We had 30 speakers presenting plenary, research and education sessions, and a successful networking event. Themes for our education programming were health justice, innovation, and health system transformation.

We connected students across the province at our Student Social on Friday Night.



Deepen Practice Excellence

OPA AWARDS & CAMPAIGN

We celebrated OPA Award Winners and 50-year members at our InterACTION 2023 Awards Dinner. Each Award Winner was featured in their own video, and a compilation video was created for the three 50-year members.

The Board of Directors awarded two OPA Special Awards in 2023 for Outstanding Leadership to Paulette Gardiner Millar and Dorianne Sauv .

The winners were further celebrated with the videos hosted on our Awards landing page with **1,563 visitors in 2023** and information about the winners was circulated to all members.

[Check out](#) the 2023 Award Winners and 50 year members, **Angela Dye, Carol Merton** and **Karen Zalan's** videos.



Deepen Practice Excellence

WEBINARS

Traumatic Brain Injuries

OPA engaged with the Neurotrauma Care Pathways team at the University Health Network about disseminating the updated Canadian Clinical Practice Guidelines for the Rehabilitation of Adults living with TBI and organised two professional development webinars.

[View the TBI webinar slides](#)

WSIB Webinars

OPA collaborated with the WSIB and hosted two successful and well-attended webinars on the new MSK Program of Care (POC) that was launched in April 2023. We hosted these webinars to ensure our members receive key information on new program structure, implementation, and what that means for them and their practice.

[Access the recording](#)

WOUND CARE

OPA initiated a process to review and update our Wound Care course to reflect current best practice guidelines to support acquisition of knowledge and development of clinical skills needed for patient and wound care management. This work will extend into 2024.

NEW LONDON DISTRICT AWARD

The London District created the Jal Tata Award at Western University which will be awarded for the first time in 2024.

Enabling a Thriving Workforce & Practice Settings

SCOPE RESOURCES - PHYSIOTHERAPISTS & KINESIOLOGISTS

OPA developed a resource to help provide clarity on roles and responsibilities for physiotherapists and kinesiologists. The resource aims to increase understanding of these two regulated professions in the physical rehabilitation sector in Ontario, with key differences in scope of practice, core educational requirements and complexity of conditions they assess, treat, and manage. The resource was reviewed and had input from physiotherapy academic leaders, the College of Physiotherapists of Ontario, the Canadian Physiotherapy Association, and the Ontario Kinesiology Association.

[Access resource](#)

PRIMARY CARE PROJECT

In 2023, CPA and OPA facilitated and connected physiotherapists in the primary care sector in a submission to a major grant initiative (\$150 000) from Team Primary Care, an initiative funded by the Foundation for Advancing Family Medicine, the College of Family Physicians of Canada, and the Canadian Health Workforce Initiative. The project team was awarded the grant to enhance team-based primary care by developing competencies for this sector, and creating educational modules based on those competencies. The educational modules will be hosted by CPA for access by all physiotherapists and will be completed in 2024.

Thanks to the team working on this project: **Jordan Miller, Lisa Carroll, François Desmeules, Amy Hondronicols, Chad McClintock, Kadija Perreault, Julie Richardson, Emily Stevenson, Andrews Tawiah, Patty Thille, Kevin Varette & Sarah Wojkowski.**

[Read the project description](#)

Enabling a Thriving Workforce & Practice Settings

MARKET RANGE SURVEY

OPA, in collaboration with provincial and territorial Branches across Canada and the Canadian Physiotherapy Association (CPA), engaged itracks, a Canadian research company, in developing a critical national survey examining market fees for private practice clinics. This work will continue into 2024 and will be used to inform advocacy work and the development of a recommended fee guideline.

EMERGENCY REGULATION CONSULTATION

OPA submitted feedback to the Ministry of Health and the College of Physiotherapists of Ontario's consultation to their proposed amendment of the general regulation to establish an Emergency Class of registration. Our key feedback focused on ensuring that the Province and regulatory College have tools in place to address health workforce issues in an effective and expedited manner during the time of emergency, while also ensuring that any proposed regulatory amendments not add complexity that negatively impacts the safety of the public, creates confusion for employers and health system managers, or has unintended negative impacts on health human resources during an emergency situation.

[Read OPA's submission](#)

CPO CONSULTATION ON COLLECTION OF DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

OPA submitted feedback on CPO's public consultation on the collection of demographic information from College Registrants. OPA highlighted that there needs to be a robust explanation of the purpose of collection, policies related to storage, use and dissemination, procedures for correction, and who has ownership of the data. Demographic information encompasses sensitive information about identify, and each question posed to the College members should have a consultation process.

[Read OPA's submission](#)

Community of Advocates

MEMBERSHIP

4590

physiotherapist
members

627

physiotherapist
student members

54

physiotherapist
assistant members

158

PTA student
members

MEETING THE FEDERAL MINISTER OF HEALTH



At CPA's Congress in 2023, OPA's CEO, Dorianne Sauv , and President-Elect, Courtney Bean, joined representatives from CPA and physiotherapy leaders from across the country to meet the Federal Minister of Health, the Honourable Jean-Yves Duclos.

They spoke about the importance of including physiotherapists in national health system and workforce planning, and shared innovative solutions by physiotherapists to increase capacity in all areas of health care, including primary care, home care, long-term care, chronic pain management, MSK care pathways and emergency department capacity.

Community of Advocates

MEMBERSHIP VALUE PROJECT

In 2023, OPA initiated a project to engage with the physiotherapy community at large, including members and non-members, to understand what they value and want from the Association. A working group helped design an engagement strategy, and the consultant team held interviews with people from across the physiotherapy career span. Knowledge gained from this process has informed strategic initiatives for 2024, including a focus on how we communicate with members and non-members about OPA's advocacy efforts. OPA will continue this project work in 2024.

ENGAGING WITH STUDENTS

OPA held visits to academic institutions to engage with physiotherapy, physiotherapist assistant, and internationally educated physiotherapist students. We visited the Masters programs in physiotherapy at the University of Toronto, Western, Queen's, McMaster, and the University of Ottawa, as well as the Ontario Internationally Educated PT Bridging Program at U of T, and Humber College's OTA/PTA program.

The Eastern Ontario District awarded student scholarships and bursaries: Motahareh Karimijashni was the 2022/23 University of Ottawa, PHD Scholarship winner, and the PTA Bursary was awarded to Aube Fournier-Morin from La Cité.

DISTRICT ENGAGEMENT

The Eastern Ontario District hosted their AGM in February and a Speaker Education Night with presenter Julia Hussein, PHD, from the University of Ottawa Human Kinetics Program who discussed her research projects, ideas for future research in motor learning and control.

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