



Dear Registrant,

We have heard from a number of you this week with concerns for your personal safety and the safety of your patients. We are writing to provide you with an important update on the circumstances surrounding the COVID-19 virus.

### Ministry of Health Directive

This morning, the Ministry of Health (MOH) issued a directive that requires all health care providers in Ontario to **immediately cease all non-essential and elective services**, or reduce them to minimal levels, until further notice. Allowable exceptions can be made for time sensitive circumstances to avert or avoid negative patient outcomes or to avert or avoid a situation that would have a direct impact on the safety of patients. The full directive is [attached](#).

### What Does this Mean for Me?

As you know, earlier this week, the College of Opticians recommended that opticians suspend all non-essential in-person care. The MOH has now issued a directive to cease non-essential services, and accordingly **this is no longer simply a recommendation**. It is imperative that registrants follow this directive without delay.

### What About Remote Practice?

The directive does not address whether it is allowable for health professionals to continue to offer non-essential services via remote or virtual practice, and therefore we are not providing any guidance on remote practice at this time. We will continue to update you as more information becomes available.

### What is an Essential Service?

Under the MOH directive, opticians may continue to provide **essential services** only. What constitutes an essential service will be up to each optician's individual judgment. The College will continue to develop its FAQs to provide further guidance on what constitutes an essential service.

### What if My Employer is Still Telling Me to Report for Work?

If you work for someone else and are concerned that your workplace is not following the MOH's directive, it is imperative that you let your employer know that you are required to comply. You may have to make important decisions if you have been asked to perform duties that you do not believe comply with the directive. As opticians, your obligations as a health professional must come first.

### Recommendations to Dispensary Operators

If you are a dispensary owner, it is important that you recognize that this is not "business as usual," and take steps to implement the MOH's directive immediately. We recognize that there are professional, legal and economic consequences to these actions, and recommend that all dispensary owners inform themselves of their legal obligations as employers. Some cities (including the [City of Toronto](#)) have issued strong recommendations to close any non-essential retail services. If your dispensary has ceased operations temporarily during this period, [click here](#) for some suggested content to create a sign for your dispensary. We recommend that you post a notice to patients informing them how they can access their practitioner for urgent matters.

For updates and answers to other frequently asked questions regarding the COVID-19 virus, please [click here](#).

As always, please continue to reach out with your questions and concerns.

Kindly,  
Fazal and the COO Team