

COVID-19 Update #15: Amended Directive #2 Allowing Gradual Return to Practice

May 26, 2020 – 9:00 pm

Dear Registrant,

Today the Chief Medical Officer of Health has revoked [Directive #2](#) (issued March 19, 2020), which limited health care professionals to essential or emergency services.

In its place, an amended [Directive #2](#) has been issued, which allows for a **gradual** restart of health care services in accordance with the College's [Return to Practice Guidelines](#) and the Ministry of Health's [Health Sector Restart Requirements](#).

In addition to the Guidelines set out by the College, in order to begin offering care to patients, the Ministry **requires** health care professionals to:

- Complete enhanced COVID-19 screening of patients before every patient interaction, using a point of care risk assessment
- Use a surgical mask and perform hand hygiene before and after all interactions with and within 2 metres of patients **who screen negative**. Use of eye protection should also be considered.
- Use full PPE to minimize droplet and contact for patients **who screen positive**. The College recommends that Opticians defer non-urgent vision care until the patient is well.

The College's Guidelines have been updated on May 26, consistent with these Ministry requirements. Even if you have already familiarized yourself with the College's guidelines, it is important that you review the guidelines again; the changes have been highlighted in the document.

To promote continued physical distancing, opticians are encouraged to offer remote or virtual services, or to modify delivery of care consistent with the [Standards of Practice](#), where possible. Opticians should determine which services can be safely carried out in-person, based on the following principles:

- Considering real or anticipated capacities to provide the service
- Minimizing harm to patients and whether a delay in the service would cause the patient's eye health or ability to function to considerably decline if service was not provided
- Treating all patients with the same clinical needs in the same way and ensuring that provision of care decisions do not further disadvantage already vulnerable patients
- Ensuring patients/patient populations who have been burdened by limited health care services have the ability to have their vision care monitored and to receive appropriate care and follow up

We'd like to hear from you on whether you are ready to gradually restart your practice. Please complete the [College's survey](#) by Thursday, May 28.

Kind regards,

Fazal and the COO Team