



College of Opticians of Ontario

Annual Report 2025



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LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The College of Opticians of Ontario (COO) operates on the traditional lands of many nations, including the Mississauga's of the Credit, the Anishnabeg, the Chippawa, the Haudenosaunee and the Wendat people. The COO acknowledges and respects that these lands are now home to many diverse First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples, who continue to experience the impact of colonization. The COO also acknowledges that Toronto is covered by Treaty 13 signed with the Mississaugas of the Credit, and the Williams Treaty signed with multiple Mississaugas and Chippewa bands. With the utmost respect and humility, we at the COO are grateful to live and work on these lands and are committed to educating ourselves in areas of cultural safety and humility in the delivery of equitable health care in Ontario.

REGULATING ONTARIO OPTICIANS

OUR MANDATE

The College of Opticians of Ontario (COO) is the registering and regulating body for the profession of opticianry in Ontario. The COO's mandate is to protect the public interest and hold Ontario's opticians accountable to the established legislation, standards of practice, code of ethics, policies, and guidelines relevant to opticianry practice.

ABOUT OPTICIANS

Opticians do not perform eye exams or prescribe corrective lenses, but they can fill your prescription for eyeglasses, contact lenses and low vision aids.

Only registered opticians, medical doctors, and optometrists are entitled to perform the controlled act of dispensing in Ontario.



2025 MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD CHAIR



Derick Summers, RO

2025, the third and final year of the current strategic plan, saw a continued focus on the strategic goals set in 2022 as great strides were made in achieving them. Improved efficiency, faster processing times, increased communication with registrants and the public, proactive networking with stakeholders on all levels were the hallmarks of a year spent leading by example and doing the work. Internally the COO continued to work on ensuring the administrative staff, the board, and the appointed members functioned smoothly and effectively offering training and education to assist in those roles. Externally the COO continued to reach out to the public and the registrants educating on its mandate to protect the public while also reaching out to industry and educators to ensure that public protection was at the forefront of future planning.

2025 also contained an opportunity to look forward as the COO met to explore and set the intentions for the next strategic plan beginning in 2026. The team gathered to review a fulsome environmental scan, hear from the ministry of health and other representatives both provincially and nationally, and work on identifying how the organization and profession could best meet the needs of the public moving forward. Some thoughts from the previous strategic plan were kept as some things are never fully accomplished and we can always do better, while other focusses like ensuring the voices of marginalized groups are heard and better preparing registrants to problem solve patient concerns were acknowledged as areas to concentrate on going forward.

The COO is an evolving and changing entity, it’s mandate remains the same – to serve and protect the public – and in these interesting times that mandate is only achieved through reflection, discussion, and proactive action.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized 'D' followed by a horizontal line extending to the right.

Derick Summers, Board Chair

2025 BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Derick Summers
Board Chair
RO, Board Professional Member



Kevin Cloutier
Vice Chair
RO, Board Professional Member



Greg Chitilian
Board Public Member



Omar Farouk
Board Public Member



Paul Imola
RO, Board Professional Member



Peggy Judge
Board Public Member



Stephen Kinsella
Board Public Member



Samir Modhera
RO, Board Professional Member



Alicia Munian
Board Public Member



Tonya Nahmabin
RO, Board Professional Member



Carlo Pacheco
RO, Board Professional Member



Mark Priddle
Board Public Member



Grazyna Sepczynska
RO, Board Professional Member



Carlo Sicoli
Board Public Member

ADMINISTRATION



Fazal Khan
RO, Registrar, CEO



Amy Stein
Deputy Registrar & General Counsel

APPOINTED MEMBERS



Jamuna Balaram
Community Appointee



John Battaglia
RO, Professional Appointee



Lindsay Beriault
RO, Professional Appointee



Jay Bhatt
RO, Professional Appointee



Elliot Borins
Community Appointee



Melissa Campbell
RO, Professional Appointee



Parneet Dhillon
RO, Professional Appointee



Rebecca Forte
Community Appointee



Elyse Jackson
Community Appointee



Parminder Kalsi
RO, Professional Appointee



Stephanie Kelly
RO, Professional Appointee



David Milne
Community Appointee



Patrick Mott
Community Appointee



Panos Petrides
Community Appointee



Rob Quinn
RO, Professional Appointee



Elisabeth Roche
RO, Professional Appointee

STRATEGIC PLAN 2023-2025

As we conclude the 2023-2025 Strategic Plan, we reflect on a period of meaningful progress in advancing the COO’s public interest mandate. Guided by the strategic priorities set by the Board, we strengthened our organization, enhanced our impact, and delivered initiatives that serve and benefit Ontario patients. The following highlights showcase some of the COO’s key achievements and outcomes realized over the life of the plan.

1

Reducing the risk of harm to patients from unauthorized practice

Between 2023 and 2025, the COO strengthened its efforts to address the unauthorized dispensing of optical appliances, using a range of regulatory and enforcement measures proportionate to the risk presented. Activities included educating opticians, optical business owners and other eyecare professionals about their respective responsibilities to ensure that prescription eyewear is dispensed only by individuals who are licensed to do so. Where education and compliance measures were insufficient, the COO escalated its response, resulting in the initiation of legal proceedings in one matter.

2

Strengthening public protection through timely complaint resolution

A key objective of the strategic plan was to improve the efficiency of the complaints process, with an initial target of reducing complaint processing timelines by 25%. Through sustained process improvements, additional resources, and a continued focus on efficiency, the COO significantly surpassed this goal by achieving an overall decrease of 53% between 2022 and 2025.

This achievement reflects the COO’s commitment to addressing conduct concerns more quickly while maintaining fair, thorough and transparent processes.

Protecting the Public

Unauthorized Practice Form

en français

Information about the unregistered person(s)

Name(s) of the unregistered person(s) (if known):

Name(s) of the unregistered person(s) (if known)

Description of the individual you have concerns with (i.e., gender, height, weight, hair colour, facial features, were they wearing a badge?, etc.): *

Description of the individual

Please provide the date(s) and time(s) of when you met with/encountered the unregistered person: *



STRATEGIC PLAN 2023-2025

3 Engaging equity deserving groups

Understanding equity and improving access to care for underserved populations was an important priority throughout the strategic plan. To better understand the barriers faced by diverse communities in accessing vision care, the COO undertook targeted engagement and outreach initiatives.

In 2024, the COO retained a consultant to assist us in better understanding the needs and challenges of First Nations, Inuit and Métis communities in Ontario in accessing vision care services and prescription eyewear. The insights gained will help inform future efforts to support equitable access to safe and effective eye care.

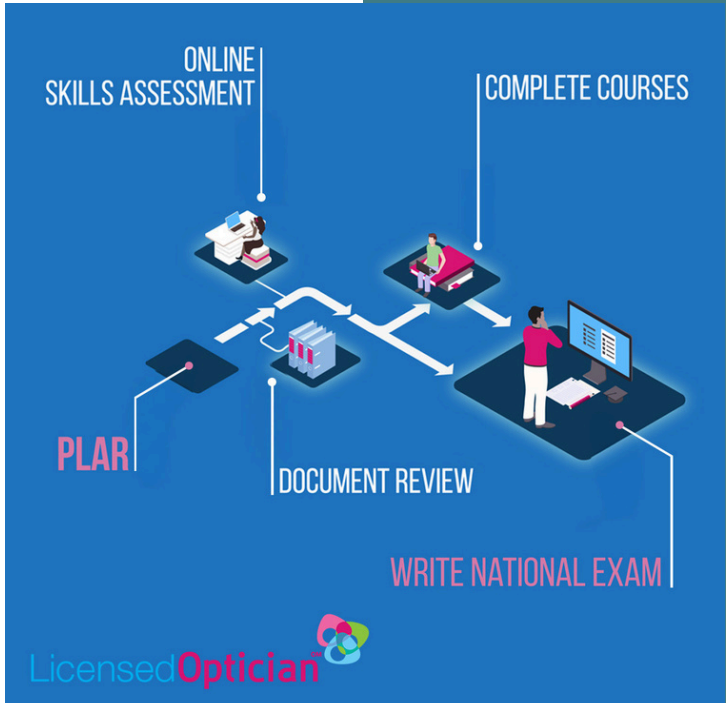
The COO also participated in community events to learn directly from equity deserving groups and better understand their experiences and needs. These included:

- Attending an event for low-income seniors in Durham Region in August 2024
- Participating, alongside the Ontario Opticians Association, in a health and wellness event at the Scarborough Ismaili Centre in November 2025



4 Prior learning assessment recognition (PLAR) awareness program

As part of its efforts to support a sustainable optician workforce, the COO collaborated with the National Alliance of Canadian Optician Regulators (NACOR) to promote the Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) process through a public awareness campaign. The initiative was designed to reach internationally trained optical professionals and raise awareness of pathways to registration in Canada. By highlighting opportunities for experienced professionals to have their knowledge and skills assessed and recognized, the campaign supports more efficient entry into the profession while maintaining the profession's rigorous standards of practice.



STRATEGIC PLAN 2023-2025

5 Supporting a sustainable optician workforce in Ontario

Ensuring a strong and sustainable optician workforce is essential to ensuring Ontarians continue to have access to safe, high-quality vision care. Throughout the strategic plan, the COO monitored workforce trends to better understand the availability of opticians to meet the needs of Ontario patients, and to identify potential challenges affecting access to care. As part of this work, the COO tracked registration and attrition rates, noting a 6% overall increase in the number of registered opticians between 2022 and 2024. A large-scale patient survey was also conducted to assess access to opticianry services across the province. The results indicated that most Ontarians were able to access the services they needed, and with very high levels of overall satisfaction.

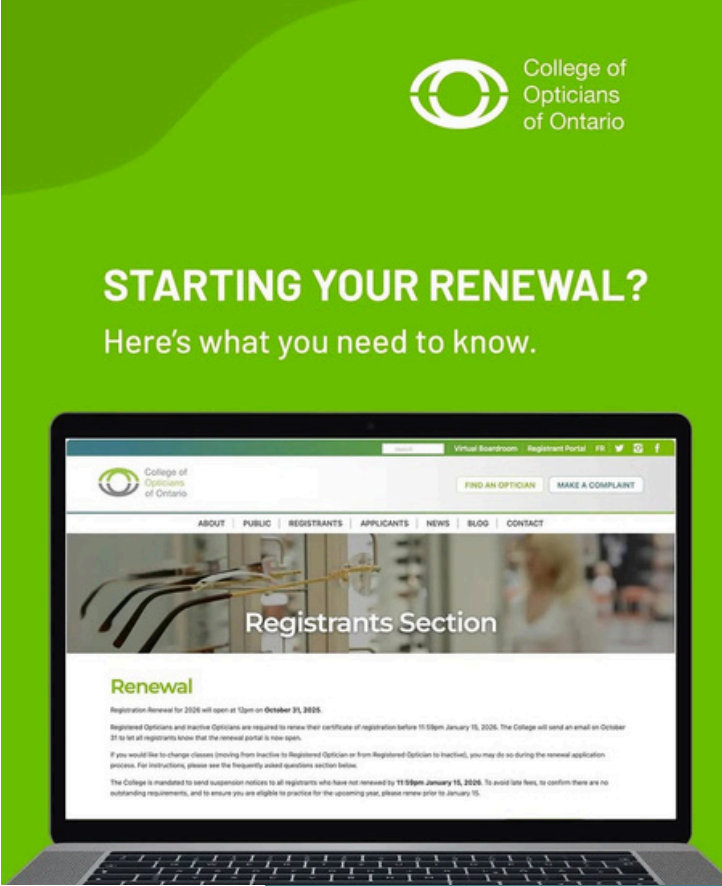


6 Adapting to evolving technologies and practice environments

In keeping with our goal of ensuring regulatory processes remain responsive to changes in practice, the COO undertook extensive consultation with registrants, educators, business owners and patients. Through surveys and focus groups, the COO gathered insights into emerging technologies, evolving service delivery models, and opportunities to better support registrants in their practice.

The feedback collected helped the COO modernize the following processes:

- **Online Applications:** A new online application portal was launched in 2024, significantly reducing application processing times
- **Renewal Portal:** Enhancements in 2025 reflected changes arising from the new Registration Regulation, including adding functionality to track currency hours and manage transfers between registration classes.
- **Streamlined Payments:** Enhancements to the COO’s payment portal to expand access to additional fee types, such as miscellaneous fees and accreditation fees.
- **Contact Lens Mentor Renewal:** A new automated renewal process simplified and accelerated mentor renewals, improving the registrant experience while supporting a sustainable supply of qualified Contact Lens Mentors.



STRATEGIC PLAN 2023-2025

7 Collaborating with other regulators

The Board continued its commitment to collaborating with other health regulatory colleges to advance shared public interest objectives and identify opportunities for greater efficiency.

In partnership with the College of Optometrists of Ontario, the COO advanced two significant initiatives:

1. Indigenous Eye Care: Engaged Indigenous communities to better understand their needs and inform the delivery of culturally relevant eye care. This work will support the development of aligned standards and guidelines that help registrants provide culturally safe and competent vision care.
2. Professional Conduct and Dispensing Practices: Collaborated on education and compliance initiatives aimed at promoting appropriate dispensing practices and addressing conduct concerns in interprofessional practice settings, supporting a consistent regulatory approach to accessing vision care.

The COO strengthened operational collaboration by entering into a shared office arrangement with the College of Respiratory Therapists of Ontario. The result has been cost savings for both colleges, which in turn supports sustainable registrant fees.



REACHING PEOPLE ACROSS ONTARIO

Sudbury-Ottawa-London-Toronto



WEBINARS

- 2 in collaboration with CASLPO



INDUSTRY EVENTS

- 1 industry roundtable
- 2 regulatory conferences (CNAR and SOAR)
- 3 tradeshows

ENGAGING REGISTRANTS & SYSTEM PARTNERS

- **March 23, 2025:** AOE Trade Show, Markham
- **April 3, 2025:** HPRO Board Meeting
- **April 6, 2025:** OOA Trade Show, Richmond Hill
- **April 15, 2025:** NACOR virtual meeting
- **April 28, 2025:** Free Registrant DEI Webinar
- **May 6, 2025:** COO Elections Webinar
- **May 8, 2025:** Industry Round Table, Toronto
- **May 15, 2025:** Seneca Program Advisory Committee meeting
- **June 22, 2025:** OOA Trade Show, Sudbury
- **September 21, 2025:** OOA Continuing Education and Tradeshow, Ottawa
- **October 5, 2025:** OOA Continuing Education and Tradeshow, London
- **October 20-23, 2025:** CNAR Regulatory Conference and NACOR Administrators Meeting, Calgary
- **October 30, 2025:** Seneca College Program Advisory Meeting
- **November 8, 2025:** OOA Student Night, Richmond Hill
- **November 9, 2025:** OOA Continuing Education and Tradeshow, Richmond Hill, ON



2025 ACHIEVEMENTS

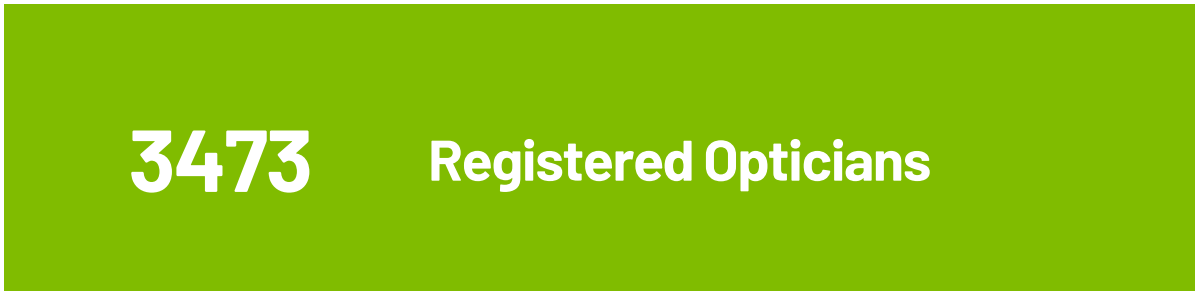


- **Revised** and amended the photograph submission requirements policy, Registration Appeal Panel Policy, and the Vulnerable Sector Check and Applicants with Charges or Findings Policy.
- **Granted** Legacy Retired Optician status to nine nominees.
- **Amended** the Continuing Education Accreditation Policy.
- **Refined** the process for hiring Peer Assessors, and the roles and responsibilities, and qualifications.
- **Streamlined** the portfolio review process.
- **Co-hosted** three continuing education webinars: A two-part series, Toward Accountable Action on Equity, Allyship, and Peacemaking in Healthcare and Addressing Elder Ageism in Healthcare.
- **Completed** a comprehensive review and updates to the Standards of Practice.
- **Conducted** a two-part effectiveness evaluation of the Board, consisting of a self and peer assessment and interviews with each Board member.
- **Evaluated** 15 governance policies on a set schedule and recommended amendments where appropriate.
- **Created** one single all-Ontario electoral district.
- **Revised** Standard Two: Professional Conduct and Jurisprudence Chapter One.
- **Aligned** the Professional Boundaries and Sexual Abuse Prevention and the Sexual Abuse Prevention Guidelines with the Spousal Exemption Regulation

SNAPSHOT OF THE PROFESSION

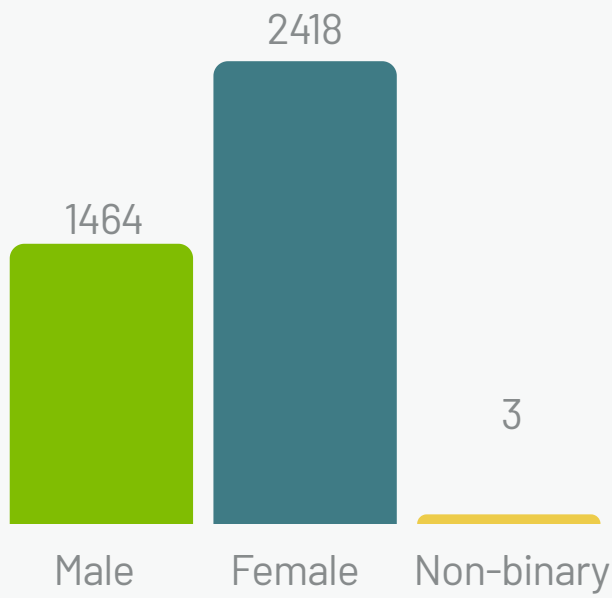


OUT OF THE
3885 registrants

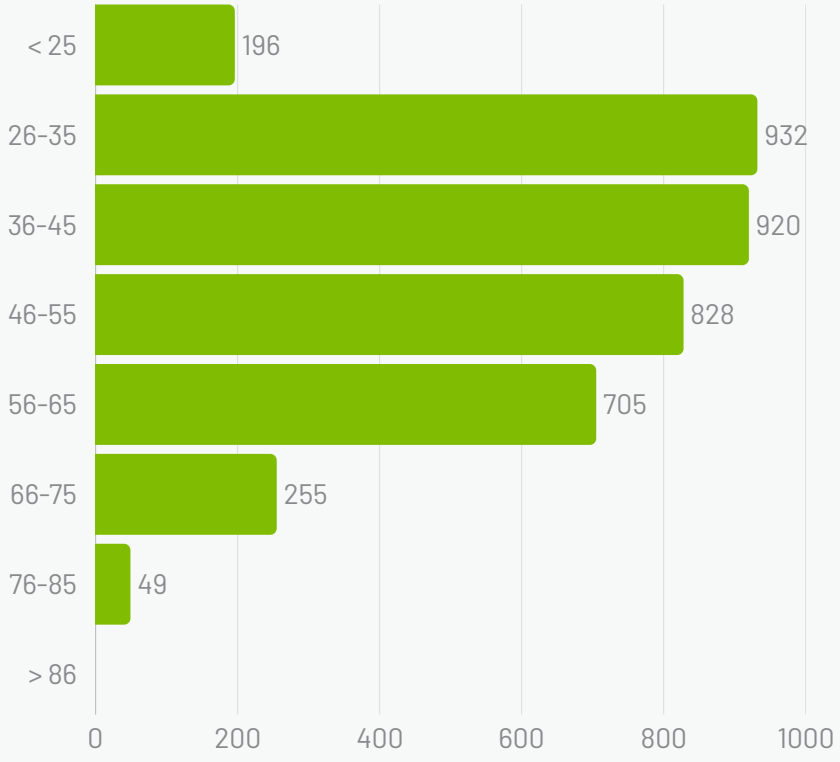


DEMOGRAPHICS

GENDER

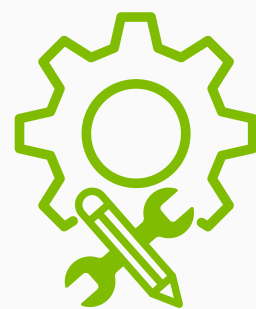


AGE



NEW REGISTRATIONS

237 INTERNS



225 NEWLY APPROVED REGISTERED OPTICIANS

134
Ontario
educated

6
Labour
Mobility

64
Canadian
education
(outside Ontario)

21
Internationally
educated



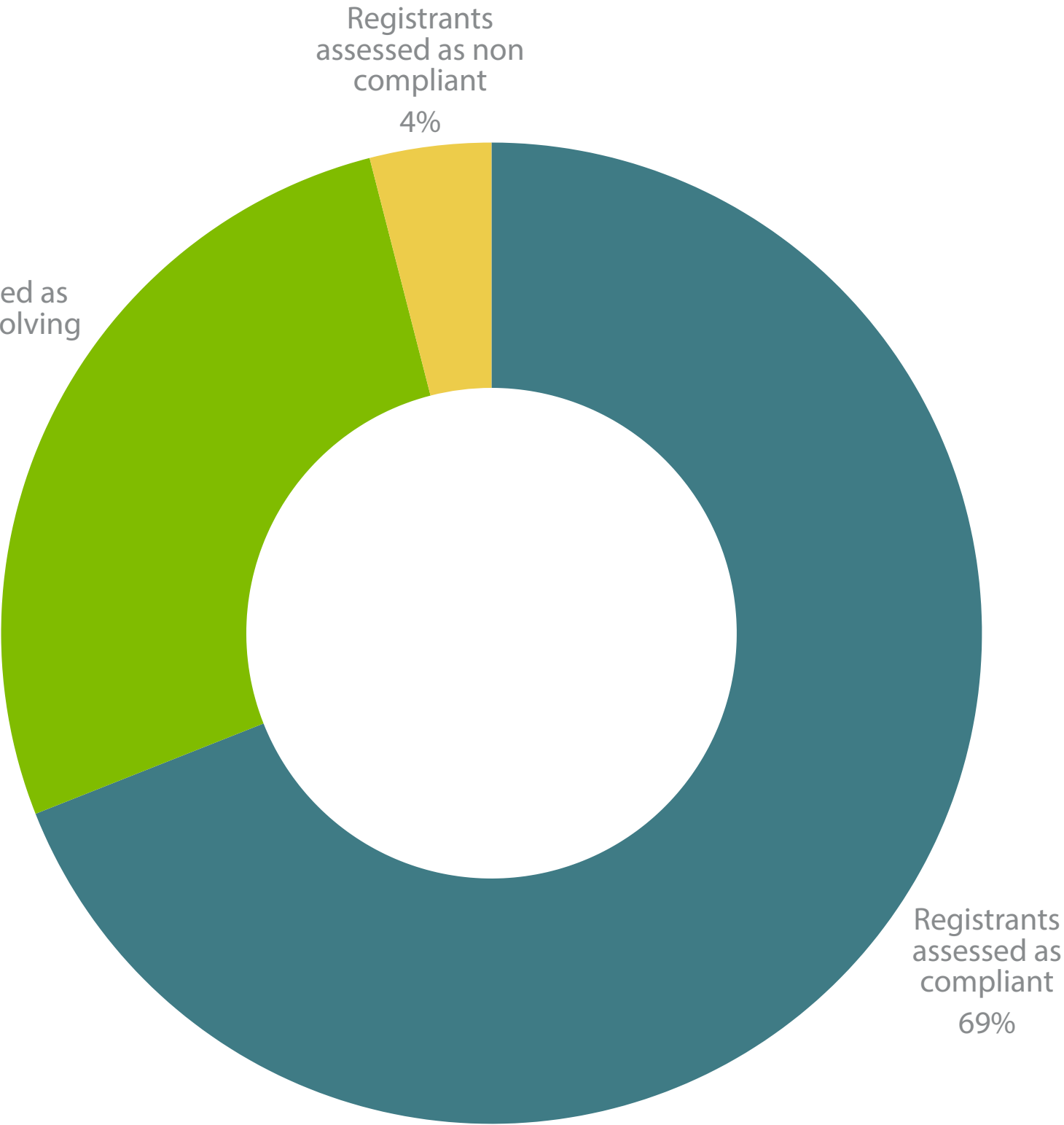
MAINTAINING PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS

The COO supports opticians in lifelong learning through the Quality Assurance (QA) program, where opticians evaluate their practice and engage in professional development. The Competency Review and Evaluation (CRE) Process allows the QA Committee to monitor participation in the QA program. Registrants are randomly selected for an audit of their previous year's Professional Portfolio and/or to participate in a Peer and Practice Assessment.



Registrants assessed as compliant after resolving deficiencies
27%

- Registrants assessed as compliant **69%**
- Registrants assessed as compliant after resolving deficiencies **27%**
- Registrants assessed as non-compliant **4%**

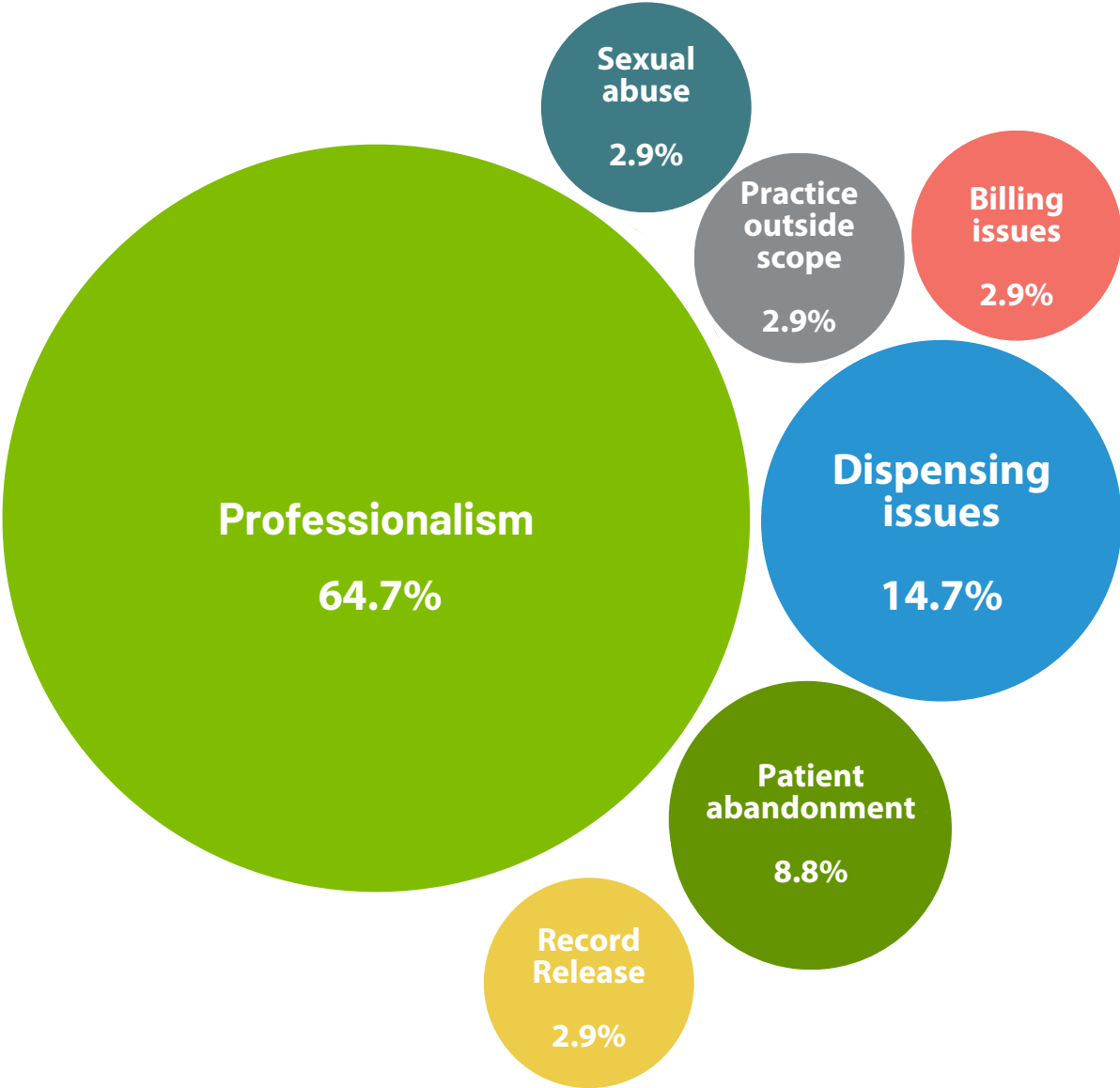


PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT AND PATIENT SAFETY

INQUIRIES COMPLAINTS & REPORTS

The ICRC plays a vital role in maintaining the integrity of the profession by reviewing concerns about opticians’ conduct and practice. These concerns may arise from public complaints, reports from the Registrar, or referrals from the College’s Quality Assurance Committee.

In 2025, the COO received the following types of complaints:



* **Patient Abandonment:** When an RO closes a business without notifying patients, patients may be left without access to their records and/or any outstanding orders. The complaints received in 2025 had one or both elements.

UNAUTHORIZED PRACTICE

As one of its strategic priorities, the COO continues to address the harm posed by unlicensed practitioners. Unlicensed practitioners who may not be properly trained to provide services and who are not bound by the standards of practice for Registered Opticians pose a risk to patients, who may not be aware that they are receiving services from an unlicensed individual.

In 2025, the College opened 22 unauthorized practice matters. 20 cases were resolved satisfactorily with various actions taken, including education or confirmation of compliance.



2025 DISCIPLINE DECISIONS

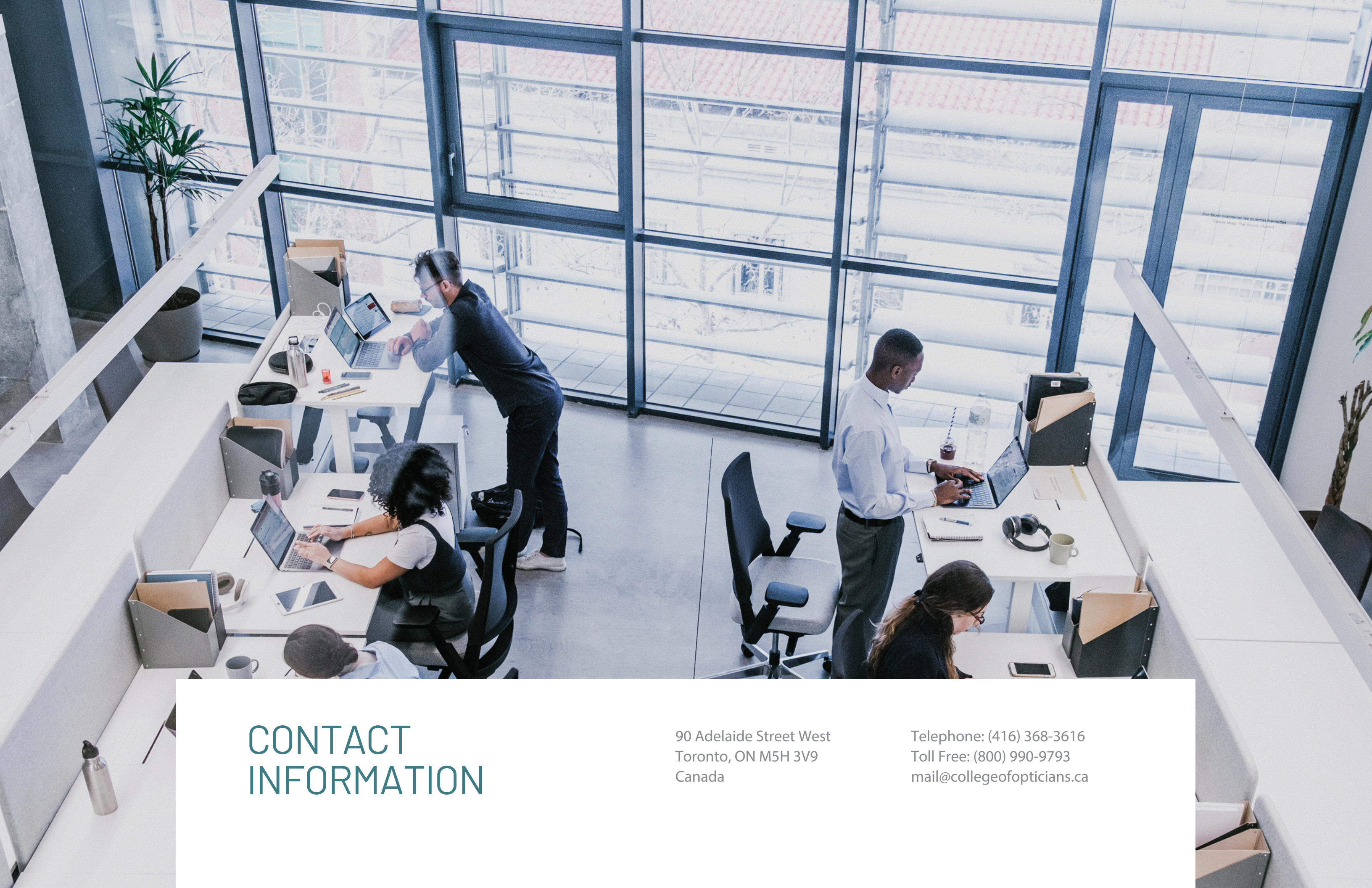
[Click here to see decisions made by the Discipline Committee in 2025.](#)



FINANCIAL REPORTS

The summary financial statements include an overview of the College's financial position, cash flows, operations, and net assets for the fiscal year, prepared by an independent auditor.

[READ OUR FINANCIAL STATEMENTS](#)



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