



**Nova Scotia College of
Optometrists**

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Nova Scotia College of Optometrists response to the proposed Patient Access to Care Act

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed Patient Access to Care Act. We are overall encouraged with the theme of what the Government has proposed. I am confident as this day moves along you will receive viewpoints from many of the Regulators of the Health Professions in Nova Scotia. Due to time constraints, we did not have the opportunity to review this proposed Legislation with our College Board and legal counsel. Therefore, we will include our voice with the submission from the Health Regulatory Network response who you will be presenting this afternoon. However, one specific area that we hope for eventual clarification is in regard to the acceptance of candidates from jurisdictions outside of Canada. This would pertain to section 5 subsection 2, section 6 and section 8 (1) subsection d.

Optometry is one of the few regulated health professions who do not have an educational program within the province of Nova Scotia. Almost 50% of Canadian optometrists are educated in the USA. So, while we of course recognize the qualifications of graduates from the 2 Canadian schools of optometry we also accept the qualifications from 24 American schools.

Outside North America however the competency, skill set, and scope of practice can vary significantly.

We are a small College with 155 members. Our resources to assess the educational criteria of international applicants is limited. We do, however, recognize the importance of allowing new Canadians the opportunity to practice their chosen profession in our province. To this end, the NSCO, along with our provincial counterparts, have created a credentialing assessment program for non-North American trained optometrists.

In keeping with a Regulator's priority of protecting the public and requiring competency in its members, we request and hope that this Act will have provide individual Regulators the flexibility and opportunity in determining which applicants from non-Canadian jurisdictions are permitted to provide care to the residents of Nova Scotia.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'SS Pothier'.

Dr. Sheldon Pothier,
Registrar

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Carl Davis OD'.

Dr. Carl Davis,
Legislative Chair of the Nova Scotia
College of Optometrists.