



Ontario College  
of Pharmacists

Putting patients first since 1871

# 2023 ANNUAL REPORT

2019

2021

2023

2020

2022



# The Ontario College of Pharmacists, incorporated in 1871, is the registering and regulating body for the profession of pharmacy in Ontario.

The College's mandate is to serve and protect the public interest and hold Ontario's registered pharmacists and pharmacy technicians accountable to the established legislation, standards of practice, Code of Ethics and policies and guidelines relevant to pharmacy practice.

The College also regulates and accredits community and hospital pharmacies, holding them accountable to operational standards and relevant policies and legislation; pharmacies must be accredited by the College in order to operate in Ontario.

## The College fulfills its mandate to protect the public by:



Regulating the practice of pharmacy in accordance with relevant [legislation and regulations](#)



Developing and enforcing pharmacy [standards of practice, policies and guidelines](#) and the [Code of Ethics](#)



Ensuring only those applicants who have met the [registration requirements](#) are authorized to practice in Ontario



Promoting continued competency among pharmacists and pharmacy technicians through a [Quality Assurance Program](#)



Ensuring only those pharmacies that have met the [accreditation criteria](#) are authorized to operate in Ontario



Conducting routine [assessments](#) of pharmacy operations to ensure compliance with established standards and support continuous quality improvement



Managing the [complaints resolution process](#) related to pharmacists, students, interns, pharmacy technicians and pharmacies



Promoting patient-centred, collaborative pharmacy care that utilizes the skills and knowledge of all healthcare professionals

More details about the specific objects of the College are set out in section 3 of the [Health Professions Procedural Code](#).





Ontario College  
of Pharmacists  
Putting patients first since 1871

## **BUILDING MOMENTUM:**

*Highlighting our key accomplishments over  
the past 5 years at OCP*



**CLICK TO PLAY**





# Highlights from 2023

*The College is proud of the exceptional work of its staff and its standing and statutory committees who all play intrinsic roles in serving and protecting the public interest. In addition to their important day-to-day work in 2023, there were several key highlights worth noting during a time of exceptional change within the pharmacy profession.*

## ENABLING MINOR AILMENTS PRESCRIBING



Pharmacists were authorized to prescribe for 13 minor ailments on January 1, 2023, with six additional minor ailments added to their scope of practice in October of the same year. To support pharmacists in this new activity, the College created a mandatory minor ailments orientation module and made available treatment algorithms, FAQs and other resources. Following a request from the Minister of Health, the College also developed a list of potential additional minor ailments that could be added to pharmacists' scope of practice in the future.

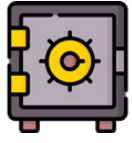
## SUPPORTING EXPANSION OF SCOPE FOR PHARMACISTS AND PHARMACY TECHNICIANS



On July 1, pharmacists, registered pharmacy students and interns were permitted to administer specified substances by injection and inhalation for treatment purposes. To support improved access to care during the respiratory illness season, pharmacy professionals were authorized to administer the RSV vaccine to patients five years or older and pharmacists were permitted to prescribe Oseltamivir (Tamiflu) in December. The College updated relevant guidelines to support pharmacy professionals in performing these expanded scope activities safely and with confidence.



## DETERING PHARMACY ROBBERIES



The Board of Directors approved a mandate in March 2023 that required all community pharmacies to obtain and use a time-delayed safe to secure narcotics and to post College-approved signage indicating the use of a safe onsite. The College continues to implement our broader Pharmacy Safety Initiative, which was developed in consultation with the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police and pharmacy partners who have been strong supporters of the time-delayed safes mandate and other crime prevention initiatives.

## ENHANCING MEDICATION SAFETY



The College continues to identify ways to enhance the AIMS (Assurance and Improvement in Medication Safety) Program and better support registrants in applying the benefits of the program in their pharmacies. A learning module was developed for Designated Managers to help them better understand the program and how they can work with staff to properly report, document, analyze and learn from incidents and good catches to help prevent such events from occurring in the future. Additionally, improvements were made to the incident-reporting processes to assist in better data collection and analysis.

## REGISTRATION AND QUALITY ASSURANCE REGULATIONS



The College submitted proposed regulatory amendments under the *Pharmacy Act* related to registration and quality assurance matters. These amendments were based on the College's original 2018 submission. Changes would include eliminating the pharmacy student class of registration, integrating pharmacy technicians into the two-part register and Quality Assurance Program, and streamlining the registration process. The government posted the proposed changes for consultation in late 2023 and we are poised to implement those changes in late 2024.

## EMERGENCY ASSIGNMENT REGISTRATION



In response to pharmacy pressures from the pandemic, in 2021 the College created an emergency assignment (EA) class. This registration class was extended through to 2024. To support consistency across health professions and codify the circumstances under which an EA registration class would be initiated in the future, the College has proposed amendments to the *Pharmacy Act*. The proposed amendments have been submitted to the government for approval.

## EQUITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION



The College's EDI strategy aims to identify and mitigate barriers to equitable pharmacy practice and regulation. A focus of the strategy will be on Indigenous cultural humility and reconciliation, with a recognition that improving the patient experience for Indigenous Peoples improves the patient experience for all. The strategy will also continue to address disparities in healthcare across all patient groups, including those living with disabilities, HIV, substance use disorder, or limited English fluency, those who identify as 2SLGBTQ+, and/or those who are ethnically diverse.

## SERVICE CHARTER



Following the approval of the 2024 Strategic Plan, the College began development of a Service Charter, which is a set of commitments that inform how we will uphold our values and conduct ourselves according to our regulatory principles. It tells registrants, members of the public and others what they can expect when interacting with the College. The Service Charter officially launched in January 2024.



# CELEBRATING THE HIGHLIGHTS

*from the past 5 years...*

*The past five years have been marked by important regulatory decisions and milestones during a time of rapid change for the profession and the Ontario health system. Guiding our work has been a Strategic Plan, established initially in 2018, to focus the activities of the College around three strategic priorities:*



**1. Better outcomes through collaboration and optimization of practice**



**2. Strengthening trust in our patient-focus as a regulator**



**3. Enhancing our capacity to respond to emerging priorities to advance safe, quality practice and regulatory excellence**





# CELEBRATING THE HIGHLIGHTS

*from the past 5 years...*

## GOVERNANCE RENEWAL

The Board has embraced important changes to support good governance practices and help strengthen public confidence. They include:

- A focus on competencies and specific skills for elected members rather than geographic distribution
- A reduction in the Board size
- A better balance of publicly appointed and elected members
- Separation of Board and Committee responsibilities
- Adoption of improved terminology that better represents the role of the Board and the relationship between the College and its registrants.
- New Board policies, including codes of conduct and conflicts of interest

In addition to a new governance approach, the Board also welcomed other oversight tools:

- A performance Scorecard, making OCP one of the first regulatory colleges in Ontario to adopt and publicly report on its performance using such a tool
- Evidence-informed risk-appetite statements to help guide Board decisions

## PANDEMIC RESPONSE

In March 2020 the world changed irrevocably and so did the way in which healthcare was delivered.

The COVID pandemic strained our health system. These challenges brought about important changes to our workforce and the way patients accessed certain services. As pharmacy was deemed an essential service, we met the demand by:

- Working collaboratively with system partners in meeting pharmacy professionals' need for guidance and resources
- Establishing an "emergency assignment" registration class of competent pharmacy professionals to help address immediate workforce pressures
- Enabling COVID-19 testing in pharmacies
- Authorizing pharmacists and pharmacy technicians to administer the COVID vaccine to help immunize Ontarians quickly and efficiently.

Thanks to an established technology infrastructure and creative thinking, the College also conducted practice assessments and responded to concerns and complaints using virtual formats.



# CELEBRATING THE HIGHLIGHTS

## *from the past 5 years...*

### PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT

To further enhance safe, quality pharmacy care, the College began to harness the power of data to inform decisions and drive continuous improvement and patient safety.

One major achievement has been the introduction of the Assurance and Improvement in Medication Safety (AIMS) Program. One hundred percent of community pharmacies are now successfully onboarded and have access to the medication safety reporting system, and all of them have completed their initial Pharmacy Safety Self-Assessment.

Another milestone was the introduction of Quality Indicators for Pharmacy. In conjunction with Health Quality Ontario (now Ontario Health), we developed a set of measures that could help us understand “the big picture” of key issues in the pharmacy profession and identify opportunities for optimal patient care. This initiative laid the groundwork for an increased focus on using data to help identify where, as a regulator, we can have the greatest impact on quality pharmacy practice.

### EXPANDED SCOPE

Since 2019, following a request from the Minister of Health, the College has worked collaboratively with the health system, the profession, and other partners to support changes to regulation and, consequently, expanded scopes of practice for pharmacy professionals.

Pharmacists can now prescribe for a total of 19 minor ailments, administer RSV, influenza, and COVID-19 vaccines to patients two years of age and older, administer substances by injection and inhalation, conduct some point-of-care testing, and prescribe Tamiflu and Paxlovid as needed.

This work has prepared the way for potential additional expansion of scopes of practice of regulated pharmacy professionals in Ontario.

### INNOVATION AND LEADERSHIP

The College has continued to build its reputation as a regulatory leader and innovator:

- We built on the previously established opioid strategy for pharmacy and launched a new framework to help prevent the loss of narcotics in hospitals
- We advanced our cannabis strategy and mandated an education module on cannabis for pharmacy professionals
- We committed to promoting Indigenous cultural competency within the organization and in the profession, an important first step toward a broader commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion that is beginning to take shape.
- We started the pharmacy safety initiative in partnership with law enforcement partners, which helped pharmacies address the rise in robberies and theft of narcotics through the implementation of time-delayed safes

### REGULATORY FUNCTIONS

Since 2015, we have redesigned the Quality Assurance program, adding knowledge assessments and expanding assessments for hospital pharmacists. We introduced a new jurisprudence exam that reflects current practice realities and places greater focus on ethics and professionalism. We implemented changes to improve cost recovery in discipline matters. And we adopted new ways to educate registrants by way of expanded use of e-learning modules and digital media, new practice policies and tools, and new compounding and medication safety standards.

These endeavours were realized all while managing year-over-year growth in the number of pharmacists and pharmacy technicians registered with the College and the number of community pharmacies licensed to operate in the province.





# Welcoming an exciting new Strategic Plan

*to guide our work over the next 5 years*

*In March 2023, the OCP Board approved the 2024-2028 Strategic Plan which will guide OCP's operational and policy decisions over the next five years. The Board considered input received through engagement and participation of staff as well as active pharmacy professionals and system partners to inform the development of this new Strategic Plan.*

Each year, OCP will develop annual operating plans aimed at fulfilling its legislated duty while advancing four strategic goals and its regulatory principles.

The Strategic Plan 2024-2028 is fundamentally built on a commitment to serve and protect the public interest, and to do so by tackling priorities that are meaningful to our work as a regulator and relevant to the profession. The Plan draws inspiration from our mandate and commitment to work collaboratively with registrants, the public and system partners, and acknowledges the important role OCP plays within an integrated healthcare system and a profession that continues to evolve along with the needs of patients and communities across the province.

We are trusted to lead as a regulator and to make decisions that are guided by our values and regulatory principles. We are inspired to serve the public interest and to be of service to the public, partners and the pharmacy professionals we regulate. And we are driven by a purpose to ensure patients receive safe, quality and ethical care from Ontario's pharmacies and pharmacy professionals.

The 2024-2028 Strategic Plan – Trusted to Lead, Inspired to Serve, Driven to Protect – is a powerful expression of our commitment to the public, partners and the profession.

**TRUSTED TO LEAD.  
INSPIRED TO SERVE.  
DRIVEN TO PROTECT.**  
OCP's 2024-2028 Strategic Plan



# WHO ARE ONTARIO'S PHARMACY PROFESSIONALS AND WHERE DO THEY PRACTICE?



**18,312**  
pharmacists

Average age of  
pharmacists:  
**45**

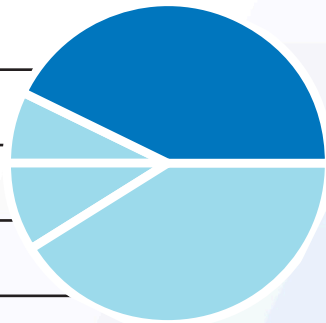
**5,895**  
pharmacy  
technicians

Average age of  
pharmacy  
technicians:  
**41**

Data shown is from 2023

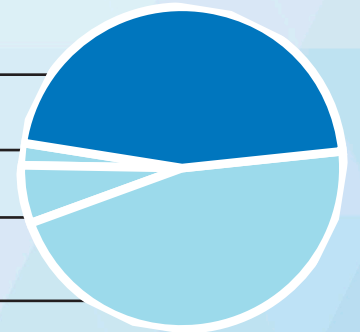
## Place of education for all pharmacists in 2023

Ontario **42%**  
USA **6%**  
Canada  
(outside Ontario) **9%**  
International **43%**



## Place of education for new pharmacist registrants in 2023

Ontario **46%**  
USA **2%**  
Canada  
(outside Ontario) **6%**  
International **46%**



## New Registrants in 2023



New pharmacist registrants\*:

**909**

New pharmacy technician registrants\*:

**431**



Pharmacy students and  
interns currently training  
or registered in Ontario:

**1,625**



New out-of-province pharmacy  
professionals registered in Ontario  
through the Agreement on Internal Trade: **130**

\*Includes registrants who re-registered with the College.





Accredited community pharmacies (total):

**4,942**

Community pharmacies providing non-sterile compounding:

**3,202**

Community pharmacies providing sterile compounding:

**79**

Data shown is from 2023



Accredited hospital pharmacies (total):

**235**

Hospital pharmacies providing non-sterile compounding:

**139**

Hospital pharmacies providing sterile compounding:

**111**

Data shown is from 2023

Drug preparation premises:

**6**



Data shown is from 2023

[Learn more](#) about the College's oversight of community pharmacies.



**Community Pharmacy Ownership in 2023**

**369**

small chains  
(3 to 19 pharmacies owned by a single corporation)

**67**

banner

**159**

franchise

**809**

large chains  
(20+ pharmacies owned by a single corporation)

**12**

banner

**0**

franchise

**3,764**

independently owned  
(1-2 pharmacies owned by a single corporation)

**1,881**

banner

**523**

franchise



**Place of Practice**

**Pharmacist**

**Pharmacy Technician**

Community pharmacy	<b>12,535</b>	<b>2,027</b>
Hospital and other healthcare facilities	<b>3,063</b>	<b>3,320</b>
No workplace recorded	<b>1,584</b>	<b>345</b>
Association/academia/government	<b>310</b>	<b>85</b>
Industry/other	<b>715</b>	<b>112</b>
Pharmacy corporate office/ professional practice/clinic	<b>100</b>	<b>6</b>

Data shown is from 2023

**Banner:** Pharmacies that are affiliated with a central office where they use a recognized name and may participate in centralized buying, marketing, professional programs, etc.

**Franchise:** Pharmacy that is owned by franchisee who enters a business relationship with a company (franchisor) for the legal usage of the franchisor's name and products.





# Maintaining Standards of the Profession

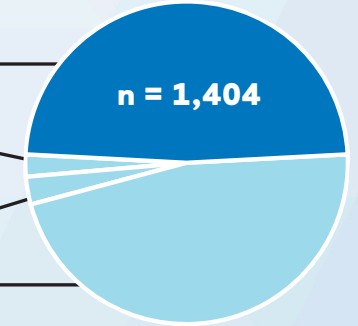
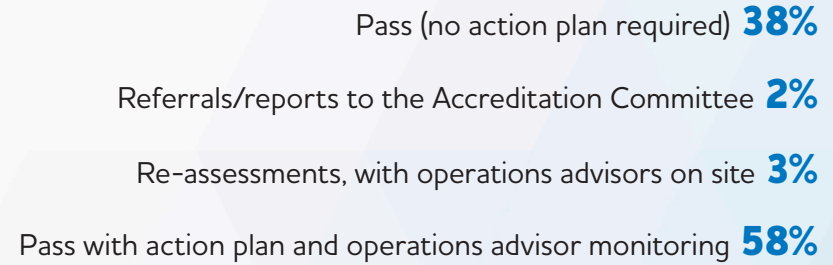


## PHARMACY ASSESSMENTS

Type of Community Pharmacy Assessment	2023
Routine	574
Change in ownership	221
New openings (first visit)	161
New openings (call back after six months)	352
Relocations	40
Re-assessments ordered by operations advisor	44
Re-assessments ordered by the Accreditation Committee	12
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,404</b>



### Community Pharmacy Assessment Outcomes in 2023



Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding

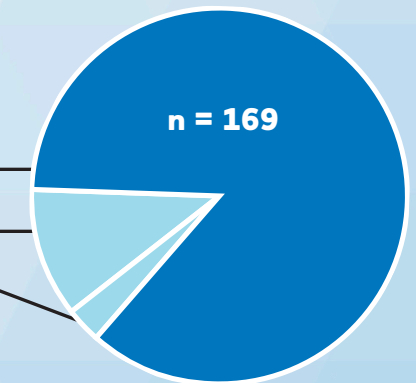
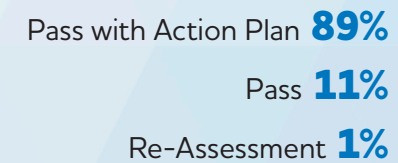


### Type of Hospital Pharmacy Assessment

Type of Hospital Pharmacy Assessment	2023
Routine	161
New opening	3
Relocation	2
Re-assessments ordered by operations advisor	3



### Hospital Pharmacy Assessment Outcomes in 2023



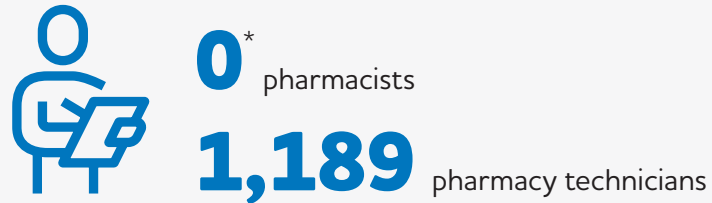
Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding

[Learn more](#) about pharmacy operational assessments.



## QUALITY ASSURANCE PROGRAM

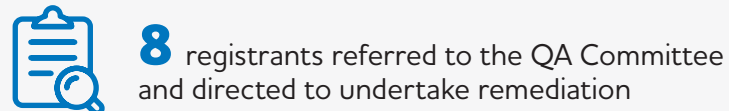
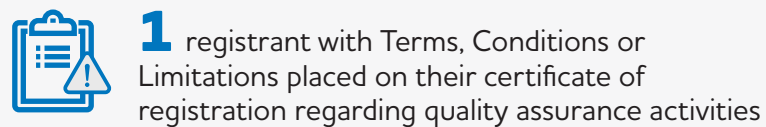
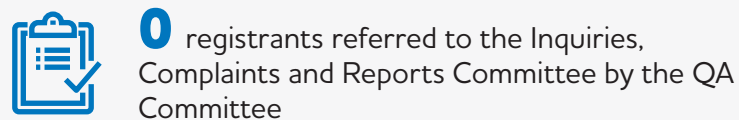
### Self-Assessments Completed as Part of the Quality Assurance Program in 2023\*



### Knowledge Assessments Completed as Part of the Quality Assurance Program\*



### Quality Assurance (QA) Committee Activities in 2023



[Learn more](#) about the College's Quality Assurance Program.

\*The College transitioned to Knowledge Assessments for pharmacists in 2022.

## PRACTICE ASSESSMENTS

### Community Pharmacist Practice Assessments in 2023

Routine assessments:

**925**

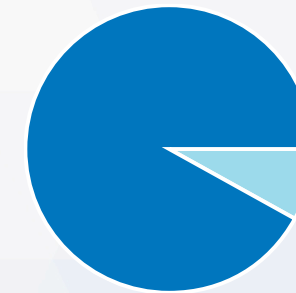


### Community Pharmacy Technician Practice Assessments in 2023

Routine assessments:

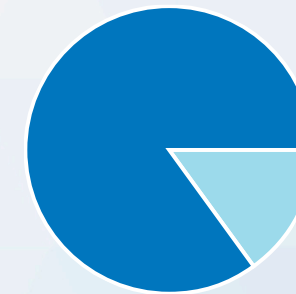
**225**

[Learn more](#) about the College's Practice Assessments.



**92%** passed with self-directed learning

**8%** required additional coaching and reassessment



**87%** passed with self-directed learning

**13%** required additional coaching and re-assessment

### Hospital Pharmacist Practice Assessments

**235** routine assessments



**99%** passed with self-directed learning

### Hospital Pharmacy Technician Practice Assessments

**134** routine assessments



**100%** passed with self-directed learning

**Did you know?** Additional indicators related to quality assurance activities can be found in our [College Performance Measurement Framework](#).





# Registering Qualified Professionals





## Emergency Assignment Registrations in 2023



Pharmacists granted emergency assignment registration:

**447**

Pharmacy technicians granted emergency assignment registration:

**105**

[Learn more](#) about emergency assignment registration.

## Jurisprudence Exam

Of the **1,414** candidates who took the Jurisprudence Exam in 2023:



**911** applied to be pharmacists



**503** applied to be pharmacy technicians



**94%** passed the exam

[Learn more](#) about the Jurisprudence Exam.

## Registration Committee Requests and Outcomes in 2023



**155**

total requests considered



**130**

fully granted



**15**

partially granted



**2**

deferred



**4**

withdrawn



**4**

denied

### Practice Assessment of Competence at Entry (PACE) in 2023



Number of candidates who attempted PACE:

**354**

Number of successful candidates on their first attempt:

**92%**

[Learn more](#) about the Jurisprudence Exam, PACE, SPT and general registration requirements.

### Structured Practical Training (SPT) in 2023



Number of candidates who commenced SPT:

**375**

**Did you know?** Additional indicators related to registration activities can be found in our [College Performance Measurement Framework](#).



# Addressing Concerns





## COMPLAINTS AND REPORTS

### Number of Complaints and Reports Opened in 2023



Complaints opened:  
**526**



Reports opened:  
**71**

[Learn more](#) about how the College addresses complaints and reports.

## HEALTH PROFESSIONS APPEAL AND REVIEW BOARD

### Requests at the Health Professions Appeal and Review Board (HPARB) in 2023

**32** new requests for review received in 2023

**16** from pharmacy professionals

**16** from complainants

**17** decisions received from HPARB

**15** upheld

**2** referred back to Inquiries, Complaints and Reports Committee

## DISCIPLINE

### Distribution of Disciplines Finding by Type in 2023

Contravene relevant Acts	<b>14</b>
Dishonourable, disgraceful, unprofessional	<b>22</b>
False or misleading document	<b>21</b>
Fail to maintain Standard	<b>21</b>
Falsifying records	<b>6</b>
Failure to keep appropriate records	<b>8</b>

[Learn more](#) about the College's discipline process.

### Discipline Orders by Type in 2023

Revocation	<b>0</b>
Suspension	<b>23</b>
Terms, Conditions and Limitations on a Certificate of Registration	<b>23</b>
Reprimand	<b>1</b>
Undertaking	<b>23</b>

There were 35 discipline orders issued in 2023. More than one type of discipline order may be issued together.

### ICRC Decisions



Total number of decisions issued by the Inquiries, Complaints and Reports Committee (ICRC):

**594**

### Discipline Committee Activities



Number of registrants with allegations referred to discipline:

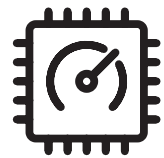
**22**

**Did you know?** Additional indicators related to complaints, reports and discipline activities can be found in our [College Performance Measurement Framework](#).



# Supplementary Information

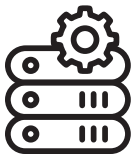
In addition to this annual report, a number of documents are made publicly available as part of the College's [commitment to accountability and transparency](#).



## COLLEGE PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT FRAMEWORK (CPMF)

[Read the CPMF](#)

The College Performance Measurement Framework (CPMF) is an annual submission to the Ministry of Health that is intended to strengthen the accountability and oversight of Ontario's health regulatory colleges by providing information that is transparent, consistent and aligned across all colleges on their performance in serving the public's interest. The CPMF consists of seven domains: Governance, Resources, System Partners, Information Management, Regulatory Policies, Suitability to Practice, and Measurement, Reporting and Improvement. Within each domain, specific components such as standards, measures, evidence and planned improvement activities set out expectations and requirements for the colleges to include/respond to in their submitted reports to the Ministry.



## STRATEGIC PLAN

[Read the Strategic Plan](#)

In 2023, we completed our existing Strategic Plan and prepared to launch our new 2024-2028 Strategic Plan which includes Values that express who we are and how we operate, a set of Regulatory Principles to guide our work and decisions as a regulator, and four Strategic Goals that we intend to achieve as we fulfill our mandate.



## COLLEGE SCORECARD

[Read the College Scorecard](#)

The College Scorecard reports on the College's progress against the CPMF domains and priorities defined in the strategic framework. Produced on a quarterly basis and released at each scheduled Board meeting, the Scorecard is a valuable accountability and quality improvement tool for the College.



## 2023 SUMMARY FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

[Read the Summary Financial Statements](#)

The Summary Financial Statements include summary statements of the College's financial position, cash flows, operations and net assets for the previous fiscal year. This document is prepared by an independent auditor.



## DISCIPLINE DECISIONS

[Read the Discipline Decisions](#)

The College publishes decisions of the Discipline Committee in *Pharmacy Connection*. A notation and summary of each discipline finding is also available on the pharmacy professional's profile on the [Find a Pharmacy or Pharmacy Professional tool](#) on the College's website. Once complete, the full written decision for each hearing is available on <https://www.canlii.org/en/>.





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[ocpinfo.com](http://ocpinfo.com)