



July 20, 2020

Elinor Larney
Registrar
College of Occupational Therapists of Ontario
10 Bay Street, Suite
Toronto, ON

Delivered by email

Dear Elinor,

Thank you for your letter of response to the Society's request for consideration of a College fee reduction for the 2020 – 21 fiscal year in recognition of the significant impact that the COVID-19 Pandemic has had on many occupational therapists' income or household income. I received your letter on June 29th and have had opportunity to share it with the Society's Board of Directors.

While we appreciate the attention and concerned discussion of this request by the College Council, we are indeed disappointed that within the context of the unusual set of circumstances the pandemic has placed upon occupational therapists, the Council could not see a way to support Ontario occupational therapists through this difficult time with even a small reduction of fees.

We do recognize the extension of the fee deadline to August 31st which, we understand, was intended to provide support through deferral of payment. While this is appreciated, in reality, this creates even more challenge for registrants as College, professional liability insurance, and professional association fees are now due within a one-month period. We pointed this out in our June 5th communication in the hope that at least some reduction might be considered to reduce the overall burden at this time. The associations have been unable to amend their registration deadlines because registered occupational therapists require professional liability insurance policy continuity and policies expire annually on October 1st.

As you know, our Board of Directors has grappled with this same issue. Certainly, organizations must balance their financial obligations to meet their mandates, but most not-for-profits, like the College and Society, maintain reserve funds to support organizations when unexpected expenses or challenges arise. Our policy, likely similar to COTO's, requires that a reserve be maintained but it does not restrict access or utilization of reserve funds for approved purposes, as long as there are plans for rebuilding the reserve. Ontario occupational therapists had hoped the Council would see fit to access funds from what appears to be a healthy unrestricted reserve in support of registrants who underwrite the financial resources of the Council.

We will, at this point, relay your decision to our membership and communicate the College's offer to address individual requests.

We can anticipate that our membership will share our disappointment. We hope the College will be transparent and forthcoming in sharing its rationale. Members see only the financial statements of the College and frankly, annual surpluses of \$245,369, \$393,719 and \$483,168 respectively in the past three years make it difficult to understand why even a modest \$50 fee reduction could not be accommodated.

We have been made aware that your decision is already known and that occupational therapists are mobilizing to respond. While the Society has not been involved, we will not discourage our membership from voicing their concerns. In fact, we encourage our members in all aspects of their practice to proudly let their voices be heard, to assert what they believe to be right, and to take responsibility (shared with their professional community) for advancing occupational therapy in Ontario.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Martha Bauer". The ink is dark and the signature is fluid and connected.

Martha Bauer, OT Reg. (Ont.)
President

cc. Allison Henry, Director, Health Workforce Regulatory Oversight