

BRIEFING NOTE

TO: Board of Directors

FROM: Anna Jeremian, Manager of Registration
Derick Summers, Chair of Registration

DATE: May 17, 2021

SUBJECT: Exams Report

For Decision

For Information

Monitoring Report

Purpose:

This report is being provided to update the Board of Directors regarding the recent registration examinations sessions that was interrupted due to a candidate testing positive for COVID19. This report is for information only.

Background:

The National Contact Lens and Eyeglass Examinations are a non-exemptible requirement for a certificate of registration as a Registered Optician in Ontario. The College, in conjunction with the National Alliance of Canadian Optician Regulators (NACOR), typically conducts two national examination sessions in Ontario each year. All eligible examination candidates can complete the examinations anywhere in Canada.

The NACOR entry to practice examinations for Ontario were scheduled for May 1, 2021-May 6, 2021 at Seneca College. This was the second set of pandemic-adjusted registration examinations held at Seneca College. Unfortunately, at the end of May 5th NACOR was contacted by a candidate that had tested positive for COVID19.

For Consideration:

On learning this, NACOR took immediate steps to assess the risk of continuing the exam. On review, it was determined that this risk was too high. As a result, NACOR decided to cancel the remaining sessions.

This daily screening permitted NACOR to identify a candidate who, only after attending the examination on May 2, 2021, was advised later that day that they had come into close contact with another individual who tested positive for COVID-19. That candidate promptly informed NACOR and did not return to the examination site. The candidate contacted NACOR again on the afternoon of Wednesday May 5 to advise that they tested positive.

The safety of candidates, examiners and staff is of the utmost importance to NACOR, and the examination was held with strict infection control measures in place to reduce the risk of transmission, including:

- Daily screening of all candidates, staff and examiners
- Requiring all candidates, staff and examiners to wear masks and maintain a distance of at least 2 metres at all times
- Providing face shields, nitrile gloves and isolation gowns where necessary
- Outfitting ophthalmic equipment with face shields
- Limiting candidate cohorts to no more than 24 individuals
- Limiting the number of people in an examination room to no more than 10 individuals (including examiners, models and staff)
- Using head mannequins in place of live models to ensure physical distance could be maintained at all times
- Cleaning and disinfecting all equipment before the exam session and between each section of the exam.

Thus far, there have been no further reports of candidates or examiners testing positive for COVID19.

NACOR has reported that a high-level analysis indicates that of there were 123 candidates registered for the examinations (123 eyeglass/107 contact lens). Of those candidates:

- 86 candidates completed the entire examination.
- 23 candidates were impacted at the end of the May 5th session.
- 20 candidates were impacted by the cancellation of the May 6th session.

NACOR is in discussions with Seneca College to schedule a two-day session to complete the balance of examination session upon the required 14-day period recommended by public health.

Public Interest Considerations:

The decision to cancel the balance of the examination session is in line with the College's commitment to ensuring the health and safety of all involved in the registration examinations and to maintain public trust. The College and NACOR are committed to rescheduling the balance of the exam to ensure that new opticians can register with the College and maintain an adequate number of practicing opticians in Ontario.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Considerations:

The College and NACOR are working closely together to review the impact on those candidates that were affected by the interruption and/or cancellation and to develop equitable options to complete their exam session.

Recommendations/Action Required:

This report is for information only. No action required. The next regularly scheduled examination session is scheduled to take place on October 22-24, 2021 (location to be determined). This examination session is conditional on any orders that are made by public health authorities. The College continues to monitor developments relating to the COVID-19 pandemic and related public health announcements.