

2021 - 2022

OMSA

INCOMING STUDENT HANDBOOK



OMSA
AÉMO

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INTRODUCTION

Congratulations on being accepted to medical school and taking the first steps towards your future career as a physician! We would like to officially welcome you to medical school in Ontario.

Medical school presents many exciting opportunities to pursue your ambitions and learn alongside an amazing and diverse group of trainees. You will not only learn about the causes, symptoms, and management of illness, but will grow as a person, make life-long friends, and meet future colleagues.

Entering medical school is an exciting time for new students. The stress of the application and admissions process is behind you, and you begin to prepare for the adventure ahead. However, this transition can also bring about many questions. At some points, medicine may seem like its own language and its own little world, full of words and acronyms most people have never heard of. We hope this handbook can help to answer some of your questions, and provide a brief overview of things to look forward to in the next few years.

The goal of this handbook is to help you ease your way into medical school and introduce you to the medical student organizations at the provincial and national level. These organizations put on events, provide useful resources, and advocate on behalf of medical students. You'll learn about the services these organizations provide and how to get involved. You'll also be introduced to some of the other professional organizations which you might interact with and be supported by throughout your training and career. These organizations play a pivotal role in supporting medical education and the practice of medicine within Ontario, and we think it's important for students to understand their role early on. Once again, congratulations on your tremendous achievements thus far. We wish you the best of luck as you continue forward with your medical training!

Please feel free to reach out to us with any questions, comments, or concerns—we'd love to hear from you! You can also visit our website at www.omsa.ca.

IMPACT OF COVID ON MEDICAL EDUCATION

The transition to predominantly online medical education due to the COVID-19 pandemic has been monumental. Furthermore, the changes ushered in will likely persist in the future of medical education.

Nevertheless, there are some benefits of this transition!

In particular, many current medical students have found online learning allows us to contribute to the safety of our loved ones, the community, and ourselves in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. Additionally, there is greater flexibility, convenience, and efficiency to online learning from home, as with many students being grateful for the saved time due to life's minor inconveniences (commuting, meal prep). We as a student body, have also developed resourcefulness and independence in our education which will serve us immensely in our future careers as physicians.

While there are many benefits to online learning, there are obvious downfalls to this style of learning. There are some aspects of medical education which cannot be substituted for online learning like physical assessments and cadaver dissections. Many students are feeling the effects of social isolation, as are many other members of our communities. We miss the traditional experience of student life, like grabbing coffee and catching up with friends between classes, studying with a group of friends, and developing the strong social connections with classmates that are so difficult to form virtually. While these effects of online learning are very difficult to overcome, we are gaining so many crucial skills such as adaptability and resiliency through our education.

Online medical education has undoubtedly been difficult, and is not the way many of us envisioned beginning our medical school journey. However, it is crucial to remember that you've achieved what you have all worked so hard for – admission to medical school. Regardless of whether the learning is in-person or online, we will graduate as physicians, in just a few short years, who can proudly say we adapted to medical education in the midst of a global pandemic. We've witnessed how difficult this pandemic has been for our frontline healthcare workers, and we chose to continue to pursue a career in medicine and dedicate ourselves to our future patients. We have all worked so hard in pursuit of our dreams, and we will continue to face any challenges along this path with the resiliency that we've begun to develop over this past year.

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I find online education works well at this level of training. This model promotes more flexibility and autonomy for students.

”

“

“Most people seem to dislike online learning, but I personally enjoy it. It's the other aspects of online learning I struggle with, like the lack of social interaction with classmates.”

”

MEDICAL SCHOOL TO-DO LIST

- ✓ Join class groups on social media
- ✓ Apply for OSAP
- ✓ Apply for school scholarships and bursaries
- ✓ Consider acquiring line of credit
- ✓ Pay tuition fees
- ✓ Create weekly, monthly and annual budgets
- ✓ Find living arrangements
- ✓ Plan transportation and parking
- ✓ Consider acquiring life/disability insurance



OMSA

Ontario Medical Students
Association

AÉMO

Association des étudiant·e·s
de médecine de l'Ontario

The **Ontario Medical Students Association (OMSA)** is a student organization that represents over 3500 students from the six medical schools in Ontario.



 omsa.ca

 [@omsaofficial](https://www.facebook.com/omsaofficial)

 [@OMSAofficial](https://twitter.com/OMSAofficial)

 [@omsaofficial](https://www.instagram.com/omsaofficial)

OMSA strives to comprehensively **represent the voice** of medical students on important issues and to provide **opportunities to excel**.

OMSA SERVES THREE MAIN PURPOSES:



TO ADVOCATE FOR MEDICAL STUDENTS

OMSA advocates by engaging with the Ontario Medical Association (OMA) and other stakeholders on provincial healthcare issues, creating position papers, forming partnerships, and highlighting grassroots initiatives from member schools.



TO BRING MEDICAL STUDENTS TOGETHER THROUGH EVENTS, GRANTS AND INITIATIVES

OMSA brings medical students together at events such as:

- **Ontario Medical Students Weekend (OMSW)**, a weekend in the fall to meet students from other schools and engage in workshops
- **Wellness Retreat**, a weekend in early spring to relax and tune out the noise of medical school
- **Leadership Summit & Annual General Meeting**, a weekend in late spring where students receive leadership training and attend our AGM to run and vote for elected positions and provide input into the organization's vision for the subsequent year
- **Day of Action**, a weekend in late spring where students learn about an advocacy topic selected by Ontario medical students through the OMSA Advocacy Survey. Students then use this knowledge and lobby MPPs at Queen's Park to provide solutions to issues
- **Ontario Student Medical Education Research Conference (OSMERC)**, a conference highlighting medical education research by medical and other health professions students across the province of Ontario and beyond



TO OFFER SERVICES TO BENEFIT MEDICAL STUDENTS

Such as conference, research, and innovator grants; opportunities for mentorship; and our Student of the Season series.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE



OMSA REPRESENTS A GREAT WAY FOR STUDENTS TO GET INVOLVED

The council consists of the President, President-elect, 7 portfolio VPs (Communications, Operations, Finance, Education, Advocacy, EDI, Student Affairs), and 12 VP Externals (2 from each school). VP externals are elected internally at each school and the President, President-elect, and portfolio VPs are elected at the annual OMSA elections in May.

Each portfolio also has a sub-committee of students from all years, selected through an application process annually in September.

2021 - 2022 OMSA/CFMS PRE-CLERKSHIP TIMELINE

SEP

- Register for OMSA & CFMS Memberships
- CFMS Annual General Meeting
- Apply for OMSA Committees
- Call for Nominations for CFMS Executive Board closes
- VP External Elections
- Ontario Medical Students Weekend

OCT

NOV

- OMA Fall General Council

DEC

- OMSA Conference Grant Deadline

JAN

- OMSA Event Sponsorship Application Deadline
- CFMS National Wellness Challenge

FEB

- CFMS Federal Day of Action
- CFMS-MD Financial Travel Award Deadline
- OMSA Wellness Retreat

MAR

- OMSA MSERG Application Deadline
- OMSA Innovator Grant Application Deadline
- OSMERC Education Research Conference
- OMSA Art of Medicine Award Deadline
- Hidden Heroes Award Deadline

APR

- OMSA Provincial Day of Action
- CFMS Spring General Meeting
- CFMS President, Portfolio VP, and Directors Election
- Apply for CFMS National Officer Positions

MAY

- OMSA Leadership Summit & Annual General Meeting
- OMSA Officer Election
- OMA General Council
- OMSA Conference Grant Deadline

HOW YOU BECOME A DOCTOR

Becoming a doctor is a long journey that only begins with getting into medical school. We have laid out the key milestones along the path to becoming a fully-fledged practicing physician.

STEP 1: GET YOUR MEDICAL DOCTORATE (MD)

This is what you will be doing for the next 4 (or 3) years. You spend the first half of medical school in class, pouring over lecture slides and trying to memorize every fact in sight. In the second half of medical school you go to the wards where you get to apply everything you learned and gain experience helping patients. With hard work and perseverance, you will be framing that MD degree in no time.

STEP 2: GET LICENSED

Before you get to work as doctor you need to prove your medical knowledge and abilities are up to par. This is tested via the Medical Council of Canada Qualifying Exam (MCCQE) part 1, a long multiple-choice exam. Part 2 tests your clinical abilities through several interviews with standardized patients and takes place once you are in residency.

STEP 3: COMPLETE RESIDENCY

The next step is getting certified. After finishing medical school you will start a residency program in your field of interest and learn from physicians with years of clinical experience. Some specialties include family, internal and emergency medicine as well as neurology, psychiatry and surgery. Residency can last for 2 years if you pursue family medicine or a minimum of 5 years if you pursue other specialties. Residency is the first time you will care for patients as a doctor and it will come with an unprecedented level of responsibility. Not to worry, your senior residents and staff will always be there to help and guide you when things get tough.

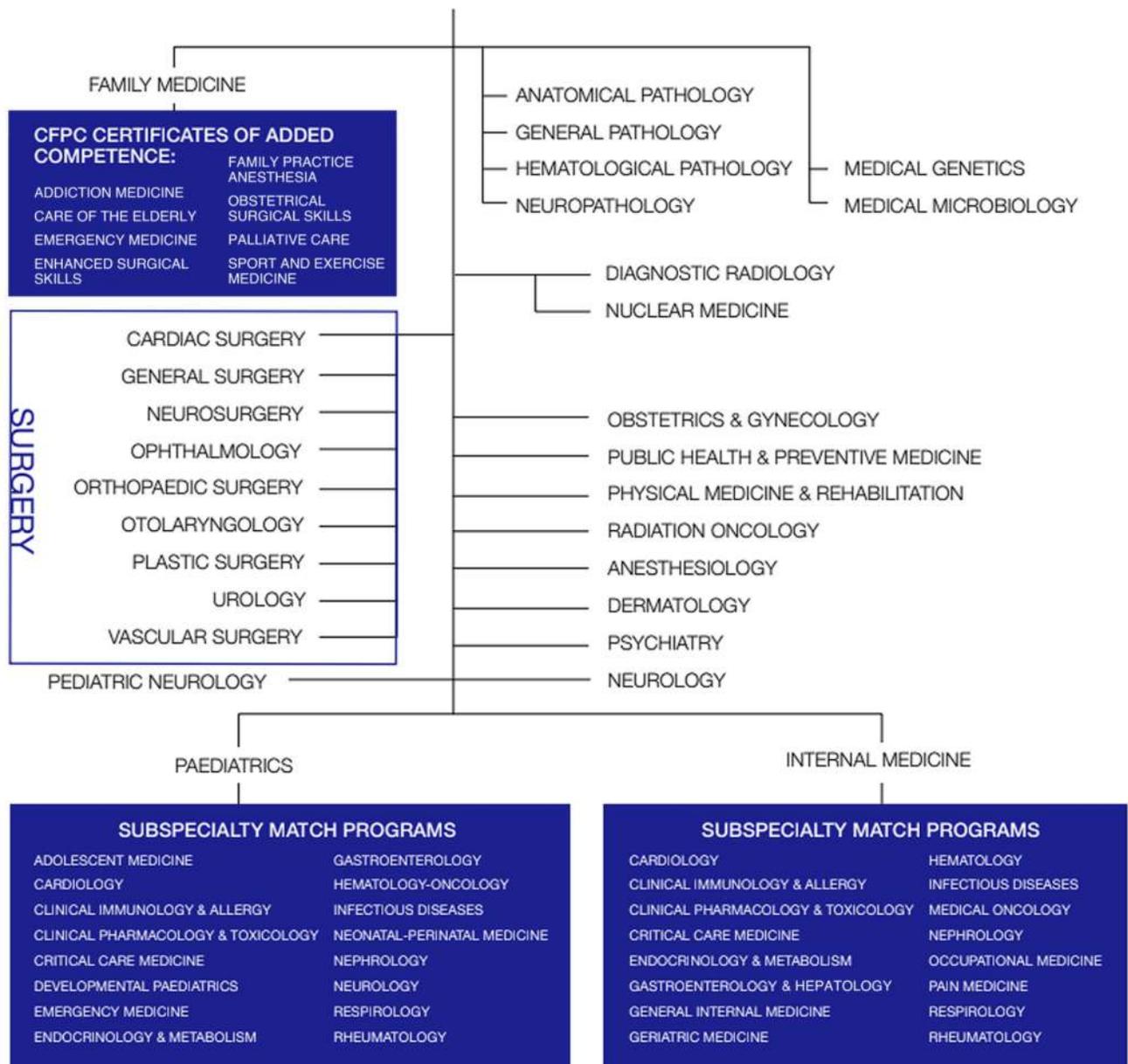
STEP 4: GET YOUR BILLING NUMBER

After completing residency and getting certified you will apply to the Ministry of Health for an OHIP billing number. Once obtained you will be able to submit claims to the Ministry of Health for insurance services. Congratulations! Now you can independently put all your hard-earned skills to use!

MEDICAL SPECIALTIES

Medical school is the first step in a career in medicine. After completing medical school, most students will go on to complete a residency program to be certified by either the College of Family Physicians of Canada (CFPC) or the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada (RCPSC). Below is an outline of all the residency programs which can be entered directly from medical school, as well as the medicine and pediatric subspecialties and the CFPC Certificate of Added Competence programs.

MEDICAL SCHOOL GRADUATE



DEAR FIRST YEAR ME

ON MANAGING THE WORKLOAD

“

“Medical school can be challenging and sometimes overwhelming. Reach out to your trusted peers, reach out to your supports as much as you need. If you need to order take-out most of the week, give yourself a break. This is a demanding path and you just need to take care of yourself however you can to make it through this stage of your career.”

- A. Lamei, McMaster Class of 2023

“You are about to try to drink from a fire hose - it will NOT feel like undergrad when you learn one topic per lecture and have enough time to digest that. You will feel much less overwhelmed if you accept that you will not be the perfect 98% student from undergrad, rather focus on what you think will make you a better clinician and don't get bogged down by the minutia. Be kind on yourself and enjoy the journey - it's not worth sacrificing your sanity to get every point available :)”

- H. Nessek, University of Ottawa, Class of 2024

“Ask the silly questions! In class, in small group sessions, and even as you get ready to start the year. There is a lot of new language and theories and no one comes in understanding all of these things so please please ask away.”

- N. Varah, NOSM Class of 2021

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“

“Take days off when you need them & carry no shame with that. It's still school but it's also kind of a job now - take those mental health days!”

- J. Thompson, NOSM Class of 2024

“Live in the moment, enjoy life while you can. It seems like a long ways to go but 4 years goes by fast so learn to enjoy everyone and everything around you! The knowledge piece will come!”

- Anonymous, University of Ottawa Class of 2021

”

ON THE DANGERS OF COMPARISON

“

“Do not compare yourself to others in your class. You are all deserving and were chosen for a reason. Everyone will have different study methods, do not worry about “keeping up” with another. Everybody has a different timeline when it comes to preparing for exams. Enjoy the journey!”

- Anonymous, McMaster Class of 2023

“Don't worry too much about what everyone else in the class is doing. It's always going to feel like other people know more, are studying more, are doing more research, getting more involved in the class. Trust me when I say that everyone feels that way, it's not that people are doing more, they're just doing different things than what you are. If you've gotten here, then you know what studying method works for you, you know what types of things you are interested in getting involved in, and you have just as much information as everyone else. Make sure to take time to relax and have fun, you're going to be just fine!”

- Anonymous

”

ON LIFE OUTSIDE OF SCHOOL

MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLNESS

Medical school is a marathon, not a sprint. It's important to pace yourself, not get overwhelmed and continue to partake in activities that relieve stress and bring you joy. Instead of studying 24/7 try to keep a balanced lifestyle that includes time for hobbies, friends, and family. *Have some free time?* Join an interest group, try to pick up an instrument, do some intramural sports, or explore the lively city around you.

Here are some support resources specifically for medical students, and physicians:



Physician Health Program, helpline for all residents, students, and physicians, provided by the Ontario Medical Association (OMA), confidential and toll-free: 1-800-851-6606.



PARO 24-Hour Helpline, for residents, medical students, their partners, and their families, confidential, toll-free and accessible anywhere in Ontario 24/7: 1-866-HELP-DOC (1-866-435-7362).

Here are additional support resources you may find helpful:



Good2Talk, helpline for post-secondary students in Ontario, confidential and toll-free 24/7: 1-866-925-5454



Barrett Centre for Crisis Support, confidential and toll-free 24/7: 1-844-777-3571

If you need help and want someone to talk to make sure you reach out to your friends, colleagues, and faculty.

Remember we are all in this together and need to support one another.



Here are a few other organizations that you will encounter during your medical training that offer various supports and services to medical students. More information on these organizations is provided in the following pages.

CANADIAN FEDERATION OF MEDICAL STUDENTS (CFMS)

ONTARIO MEDICAL ASSOCIATION (OMA)

CANADIAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION (CMA)

MD FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

CANADIAN RESIDENT MATCHING SERVICE (CARMS)

ASSOCIATION OF FACULTIES OF MEDICINE OF CANADA (AFMC)

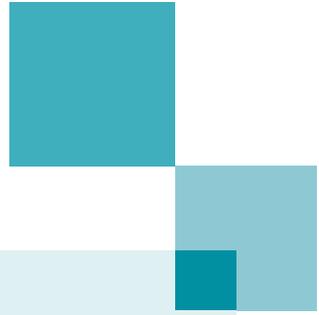
**PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATION OF RESIDENTS OF ONTARIO
(PARO)**

RESIDENT DOCTORS OF CANADA (RDC)

COUNCIL OF ONTARIO FACULTIES OF MEDICINE (COFM)

COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS AND SURGEONS OF ONTARIO (CPSO)

CANADIAN MEDICAL PROTECTIVE ASSOCIATION (CMPA)



Student Special Offer

What it is

The Student Special Offer is exclusively designed to help medical students that are members of the OMA or an Atlantic Medical Association/Society save on insurance.

- Up to **\$4,000 per month** Disability insurance
- **\$100,000** of complimentary Group Term Life Insurance



All for the cost of
**a coffee and
bagel each
month!**

This is why you need it

\$160,000 average medical student debt

\$200,000 is what you would end up paying over time without insurance to cover your health expenses, rent, phone bill & more

14 months is the average length of a disability claim for members

8 out of 10 members choose OMA Insurance Solutions

Special features



75% off Disability Insurance premium throughout medical school



Complimentary Group Term Life Insurance while in medical school



No Medical Questions or Exams



Portable Worldwide automatically transitions with you into residency and practice

Start saving today!

Apply online at OMAinsurance.com/SSO or email us at info@omainsurance.com





Unsure of what comes next? We're here to help.

MD Financial Management and Scotiabank are committed to providing expert advice and tailored solutions to meet your personal and financial goals.

We know your needs change from day to day. Paying bills, managing debt, preparing for residency and saving for the future — we understand the many challenges you face now and will face throughout your medical career.

Together, we're here to support you every step of the way.

Let's chat
earlycareerassociates@md.ca



Scotiabank.
Healthcare+



What is CaRMS?

We are a national, independent, not-for-profit, fee-for-service organization that provides a fair, objective and transparent application and matching service for postgraduate medical training throughout Canada.

What do we do?

After medical school, you'll need a residency position to continue your medical training – and that's where CaRMS comes in. Like any other job, residency positions have an application process. CaRMS facilitates that process and, at the end of it, we run a match that gets you your best possible outcome.

How does the match work?

After your application and interviews are complete, you tell us where you want to train, residency programs tell us whom they want to train – and our algorithm does the rest, matching applicants to programs based on both parties' preferences. For more information on how the algorithm works, visit carms.ca/algorithm.

What's next?

We'll give a presentation for your school before your application year to tell you everything you need to know to prepare for your residency match. In the meantime, visit carms.ca to learn more.

On behalf of the Professional Association of Residents of Ontario (PARO), we would like to say **WELCOME** as you start medical school.

You probably aren't thinking about residency yet, but it will be here faster than you think.



About PARO

PARO is the official representative voice for Ontario's doctors in training. We are the go-to organization for everything residents need to navigate into, through, and out of residency training in Ontario. Our priorities are:

Optimal training so that residents feel confident to succeed and competent to achieve excellence in patient care.

Optimal working conditions where residents enjoy working and learning in a safe, respectful and healthy environment.

Optimal transitions – into residency, through residency and into practice – so that residents are able to make informed career choices, have equitable access to practice opportunities and acquire practice management skills for residency and beyond.

PARO and Medical Students

Throughout your time at medical school, residents will be an important part of your clinical and educational experience.

Teaching – residents play a vital role in medical student teaching. PARO helps our members enhance their teaching skills to help you be successful.

Working – residents will supervise you in your clinical role during clerkship.

Transition into Residency Resources – PARO has developed extensive resources to help medical students transition into residency. Check out myparo.ca for just a few of our tips and suggestions.

PARO Events – our local PARO site teams plan welcome events to support your smooth transition into residency.

Leadership
PARO invites medical student ambassadors to our General Council meetings to encourage future leaders. Keep an eye on your email for instructions on how to apply.

Confidential Helpline (1-866-HELP-DOC)
In partnership with the Distress Centres of Toronto, PARO provides a 24/7 Helpline available to medical students, residents, partners and family members. Helpline volunteers are trained to understand the common stressors of residents and medical students.



Questions? 1-877-979-1183 paro@paroteam.ca myparo.ca



The Council of Ontario Faculties of Medicine (COFM)

[The Council of Ontario Faculties of Medicine](#) is the Committee of six Ontario Deans of Medicine and leads medical education and research to promote health for Ontario and beyond and trains the next generation of healthcare professionals and scientists.



Queen's University Gastroenterology

COFM is an affiliate group of the [Council of Ontario Universities \(COU\)](#) - an organization that works with its members, Ontario's publicly assisted universities, to find consensus on a range of university issues and advance them with government and other stakeholders. COFM serves a similar role, working together to advise University Presidents and Principals on health-related education and research, collaborate with government and partner on provincial initiatives.

COFM works with government and stakeholders to provide leadership on key healthcare issues, such as the supply of the right number, mix of and distribution of physicians in Ontario.

As an example, more than a decade ago, one in 11 Ontarians couldn't find a family physician; there were lengthy wait times for specialty care, especially in rural areas. [Today, a strategic partnership of Ontario universities and government has brought care closer to the homes of people across the province.](#)

[We've graduated 1,900 family doctors over the past 10 years](#), transforming family medicine and improving access for patients.

COFM has a number of subcommittees and working groups that advise COFM on issues related to undergraduate, postgraduate, distributed, and family medicine education, admissions, research, continuing professional development and the Truth and Reconciliation Circle that is addressing the Calls to Action related to medical education and research.



Northern Ontario School of Medicine

The input and voice of medical students and trainees is of significant importance within each Faculty of Medicine and on COFM sub-committees. Representatives from the [Ontario Medical Students Association](#) and the [Professional Association of Residents of Ontario](#) are appointed annually to a number of COFM committees. All provincial undergraduate and postgraduate policies receive input from learners.

Major issues are discussed at COFM in order to develop a collaborative approach to implementing solutions, in areas such as:

- Health and physician human resource planning, ensuring the physician supply and distribution meets the needs of the public and the healthcare system.
- Improving equity, diversity, inclusion and decolonization within medical education and research.
- Building sustainable research, innovation and discovery in areas such as biomanufacturing and vital research to protect the health of Ontarians.

Below are the COFM Sub-Committees:

1. Truth and Reconciliation – COFM Circle
2. UE:COFM (Undergraduate Education)
3. PGE:COFM (Postgraduate Education)
4. PGM:COFM (Postgraduate Management)
5. FM:COFM (Family Medicine)
6. DME:COFM (Distributed Medical Education)
7. CPD:COFM (Continuing Professional Development)
8. Research:COFM
9. MAC:COFM (Medical Admissions Committee)



CPSO

Serving the people of Ontario through effective regulation of medical doctors

All doctors in Ontario are required to be members of CPSO to practise medicine. Our role and authority are set out in the Regulated Health Professions Act (RHPA), the Health Professions Procedural Code under the RHPA, and the Medicine Act.

WHO WE ARE:

College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario (CPSO) regulates the practice of medicine to serve the public interest.

WHAT WE DO:

We issue certificates to practise, develop policies, monitor and maintain standards, investigate complaints, and conduct discipline hearings. We provide clear and useful guidance to the public and the profession about medical regulation in Ontario.

THE COLLEGE AND YOU

Don't wait to make the College an important part of your professional life. You will be a member of the CPSO and held accountable to our high standards throughout your career. Get informed early and get involved where you can. You are the future of medicine and medical regulation.



eDIALOGUE

NEW!

CPSO's official publication for doctors is now available in a digital format. The mobile-friendly site features all the same content as the print magazine and more. Stay up-to-date by signing up to receive email notifications when new content is added.

cpsodialogue.ca

HAVE A QUESTION?

EMAIL US: OUTREACH@CPSO.ON.CA

STAY CONNECTED WITH US:

WWW.CPSO.ON.CA





When you
need us, we
will be there
for you.

The CMPA is an integral part of the healthcare system in Canada.

We support over 100,000 physicians with:

- Medico-legal protection
- Advice and assistance
- Patient compensation
- Physician-to-physician support
- Resources to help manage risk and advance safe medical care

We look forward to welcoming you to the Association!



Please feel free to reach out to us with any questions, comments, or concerns—we'd love to hear from you!

Email us at:

education@omsa.ca

You can also visit our website at

www.omsa.ca

OMSA

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