



## New Partnership with Alberta College of Optometrists to Develop Advanced Procedures Exam

*OEBC and ACO are collaborating on the assessment of competencies for limited injections and surgical and laser procedures.*

April 16, 2024—Stouffville, ON—The Optometry Examining Board of Canada (OEBC) is thrilled to announce a significant milestone in the optometry profession. Based on input from and collaboration with the Alberta College of Optometrists (ACO), OEBC is developing a robust assessment of the competencies required to perform limited injections and surgical and laser procedures on the human eye and adnexa. This Fall, the national competency model will be updated to include the competencies required for this scope of practice.

With the development and administration of an advanced procedures examination (AP Exam), the provincial regulatory authorities will have assurance that certified optometrists can safely perform this advanced scope of practice.

The OEBC is committed to delivering a legally sound and reliable competency assessment for advanced procedures that will satisfy the ACO and the needs of its other members once the advanced scope of practice is authorized in its jurisdiction. The advanced procedures examination will be available for use in the Spring of 2025.

By allowing optometrists to perform advanced procedures, provincial governments will increase patient access, reduce wait times, and improve care. The advanced procedures include:

- Injection of diagnostic or therapeutic pharmaceutical agents for the human eye and adnexa
- Minor surgical procedures for superficial, non-intraocular conditions performed under local anesthesia (topical and injectable)
- Therapeutic laser procedures for ocular conditions, including peripheral iridotomy, selective laser trabeculoplasty, and Nd:YAG capsulotomy.

Advances in optometric education and training have outpaced the current regulated scope of the profession. The provincial optometric regulatory authorities in Nova Scotia, Newfoundland, and Labrador are also taking steps to have advanced procedures authorized in their jurisdictions. Our healthcare system needs optometrists operating to the extent of their training and certification.

“With national mobility within the profession, ACO is pleased to work with OEBC to ensure a pan-Canadian assessment. We are very excited to further elevate optometry in Canada,” says Dr. Kim Bugera, Registrar of the College of Optometrists of Alberta.

“Our outstanding exam team of Drs. Jonathan Arnel, Geneviève Raby, Corrine Motluk, and Dwayne Lonsdale are excited to work on this critical initiative,” says Kim Allen, CEO of OEBC. “They engage stakeholders and subject matter experts, as needed,” continues Allen. OEBC anticipates that, over time,

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the assessment of advanced procedures will become an integral part of the OEBC entry-to-practice examination.

The collaboration with the ACO outlines how to engage qualified practitioners and potential candidates, inform them of the project, and solicit their feedback and support.

“We look forward to this exciting challenge and opportunity to assist ACO in improving health care for Albertans and building the assessment foundation for the optometric regulatory authorities across Canada,” says Dr. Justin Boulay, Chairman of the OEBC Board.

## About

The **Alberta College of Optometrists** (ACO) regulates and licenses optometrists in Alberta. Its role is to guide and oversee its members under the *Health Professions Act* in a way that protects and benefits the public. The College also sets, maintains, and enforces Standards of Practice, registration requirements, the Continuing Competence Program, and the Code of Ethics to ensure that optometrists carry out their professional and public interest obligations.

The **Optometry Examining Board of Canada** (OEBC) is a national not-for-profit corporation that establishes and administers psychometrically valid and defensible assessments of competence in optometry in Canada on behalf of its members, the ten provincial optometry regulators.