

OPEN LETTER TO MEMBERS

The CATA's action taken to amalgamate the regions without consultation or a member-approved by-law just as registration renewal got underway for 2022 has created confusion. The OATA, like all AT Regional Organizations, is organizing a series of Virtual Town Hall meetings to provide members with facts for informed decision making.

The OATA will also be organizing additional Town Hall sessions to address Ontario Association business too including a setting the record straight discussion on recent, false allegations. We want you to hear the facts from us directly. We are facing unprecedented times for the AT profession. Let's do this together.

Dear Members,

For almost two years, the OATA, like all AT Regional Associations has been involved with the CATA working together on the Federation Project. We learned from the CATA letter, recently issued nationally to all ATs, that at the same time the national organization was working on its own plan that actually negates key decisions all thought had been discussed and agreed. The Regional AT Organizations are independent and are not “chapters”. There has been only good faith keeping the national-regional protocols in place.

The OATA is no longer constrained by a non-disclosure agreement with the national organization about the federation project or other long-standing efforts to find common ground between our organizations on critical matters such as statutory regulation. Now is the time for full disclosure and open discussion. The Board is committed to honoring its fiduciary duty to the entire membership, including protection of assets under management from such a takeover.

Please check the Town Hall event schedule and the update related to the OATA AGM and reporting.

Given the false allegations on management and fiscal control and accountability, the Board has requested the audit be extended and all director expense claims be reported on.

We can confirm no director has been engaged in misappropriation of funds, misuse of funds and that the Association's bank account is restricted by strict guidelines and oversight by the auditor, fund and bank manager. The Board will make the auditor and the audited statements available for 4-weeks, not just the required 10 days with pre-AGM notice, to be sure every member has access to factual responses related to the financial statements and stewardship.

This letter is long, but we wanted to provide you with all the facts of what has been occurring.

THE DISSIDENT GROUP AND THEIR CAMPAIGN

Over the last years or so very aggressive disinformation and harassment campaign has been conducted against the OATA Board and against those who work for the OATA. In particular, a small dissident group of OATA members, who now call themselves "Concerned Members of the OATA", have circulated a number of allegations relating to the conduct and performance of your Board of Directors. The OATA Board has responded directly to those allegations to those who have made them and has posted our responses and the correct information on the OATA website for all members to see. Regardless, this dissident group continues to repeat those allegations. We know that this group is ramping up its disinformation campaign before the forthcoming Annual General Meeting in order to incite enough members to be able to remove and replace the current Board of Directors and they will once again try to disrupt the AGM.

During the past many months this group has conducted itself as a group of experts in governance. Recordings and transcripts of "educational sessions" held by the group, have been provided anonymously to the OATA Board (and to the OATA Ombudsman). The group has clearly indicated that they are mounting a "hostile takeover" (their words) of the OATA and has freely discussed their strategy to do so. They brag about disrupting the

April 2020 AGM, and discuss plans to do the same for the next AGM, so no business can be conducted. They urged their members to make false claims of harassment against Board members and OATA contractors. They discourage members from serving on the OATA Committees, receiving OATA awards, or in any way assisting the OATA Board. They also indicated that they are knowingly and intentionally providing false or misleading information. We've often been accused of being unprofessional by these exact members, yet these actions themselves seem unprofessional.

WHAT'S GOING ON HERE?

It was our belief for months now, that the CATA was going to position itself to take full control of the profession nationally, and either de-register the OATA (and other provincial organizations) using the ratified by-law changes from the last AGM, or remove the by-law required to be a member of a provincial association. Given the most recent announcement, those fears were warranted. We feared there would be an attempt to remove the members of the BOD, to gain control of the OATA and its assets to supplement the current financial shortfalls of the CATA. Which again seems plausible given the last year's efforts.

Healthcare is regulated, delivered and funded provincially, there are big differences between the provinces and there is no way that a national organization can adequately advocate for and promote the profession in every single province and territory. Furthermore, the evidence is absolutely clear: Professional self-regulation is passé, it doesn't work and puts our profession at a disadvantage compared to our peer professions such as physiotherapy, massage therapy and chiropractic, that are statutorily regulated. To further that point, there are no national or provincial healthcare associations that have been able to achieve the recognition, public trust and status of a regulated health profession, through self-governance/regulation. Surely, the extra restrictions placed on non-regulated professions would have made that point!

Taking over, or getting rid of, the OATA is essential for this strategy to work. We are the largest regional AT association, with the resources necessary to successfully resist this strategy. The CATA also had to stop the OATA's pursuit of statutory regulation, otherwise its plan for national self-regulation would fail.

Taking over the OATA would also give the CATA access to the very substantial cash reserves the OATA has on hand that would allow the CATA to address its “challenging” financial situation. Under the current leadership, the CATA immediately set out to isolate the OATA from the other regional associations and began a campaign of disinformation relating to OATA governance and conduct.

Whether the group is knowingly and willingly advancing the CATA’s strategy, or whether they have been misguided, is unknown. What is known is that in the recorded sessions, the leadership of the group has freely admitted that they “are using” (their words) certain individuals as a front for the group, so that the leadership can maintain anonymity and protect themselves from exposure and any personal liability

Some of the leaders of the dissident group are not OATA or CATA members and some are no longer in active practice. For example, one of the organizers of the "education sessions" is a former President of the CATA, who has not been an OATA or CATA member since 2019 and practises chiropractic medicine in the United States. Another leader of the dissident group who complains about OATA governance has not attended an OATA AGM for at least seven years. Still another leader of the dissident group accepted an achievement award from this Board in 2019 and now encourages members to decline awards or bursaries awarded by the OATA, not to participate in OATA activities and committees, or assist the Board in any way. Several current CATA Board Members are providing support, money and/ or encouragement to the dissident group and have participated in the "education sessions". The current CATA president has in fact participated in a crowdfunding campaign to pay a lawyer to further their agenda of removing the OATA board.

The OATA Board members have been very hobbled in our ability to respond to the CATA’s strategy because of confidentiality constraints imposed by the CATA and because the OATA wanted to avoid having this intra-professional dispute do any more damage than it has already done to the reputation and standing of the profession in Ontario and to the OATA’s relationships with government and other stakeholders.

So, now that the CATA has released its “restructuring plan”, the Board has decided to provide to all OATA members the facts in response to the allegations that have been made. Should the majority of OATA members decide that the OATA should be dissolved, or go in a different direction, that's fine with the current Board. But the Board feels

strongly that such a decision should be based on fact and not on fictitious allegations or misrepresentations. What we don't want to have happen is to have a significant number of members after the fact say "I wish I had done something to stop this".

Please click through the website allegations and facts to help understand each accusation.

Here are the facts from the board's experience. We hope this gives you some insight into what the board has been dealing with. Additionally, we hope this gives you the information directly from the source to evaluate and question some of the narratives that you have been seeing. Should you have any further questions, please attend our Town Hall this Sunday, November 21 at 1pm. The session will be recorded for those who cannot attend in person. Additionally, will have another Town Hall on Nov 27th to further address other OATA business.

OATA Board of Directors

Andy Playter, Clare Richard, Drew Laskoski, Jason Piekarz, Matt Leech, Paul Murata, Tony Carbonette