



ONTARIO  
PHYSIOTHERAPY  
ASSOCIATION

## OUR VISION

*Ontarians are Healthier and Stronger through Physiotherapy*

Together we are stronger as we work so that **all** Ontarians will have access to physiotherapy as an essential element of optimal health. In 2021, we focused our activities in the three core areas of our strategic plan: **mobilize and engage**, **innovation and excellence** and **advocacy for needed policy and system change**.

# Annual Report 2021

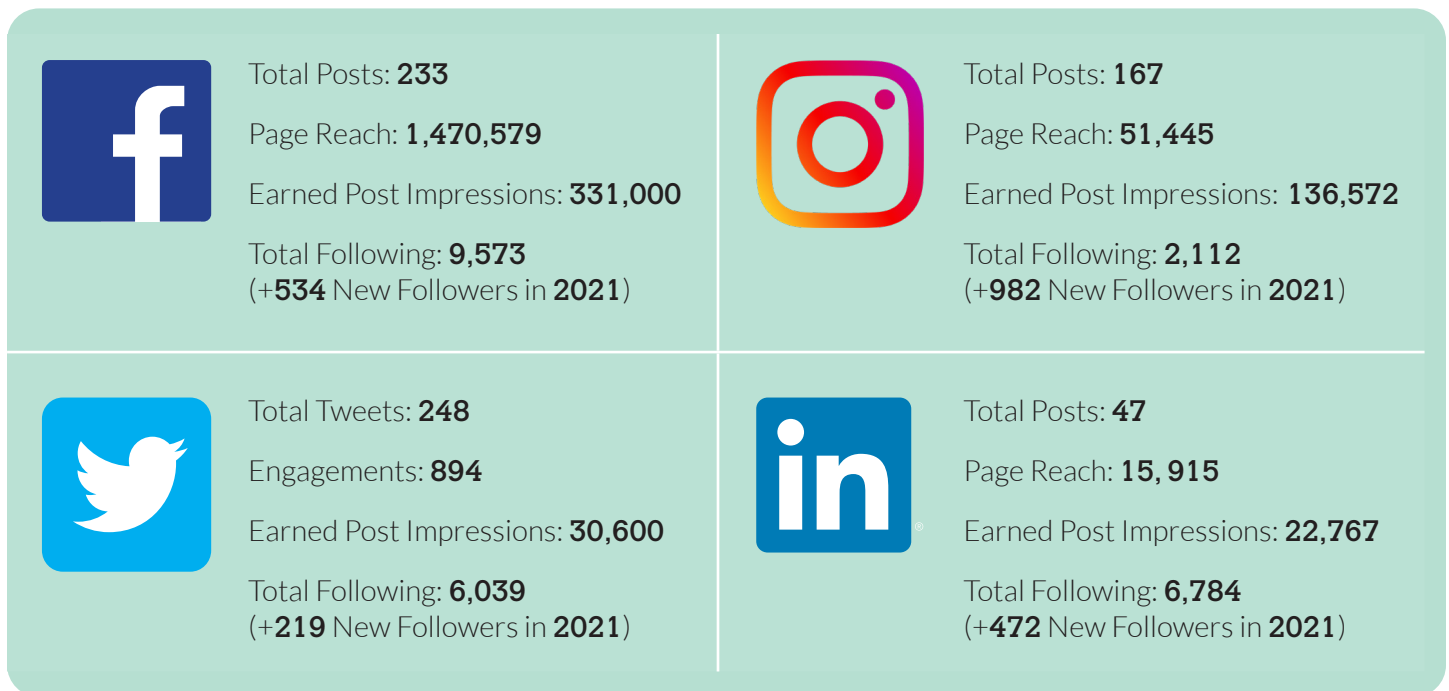


## OPA ON SOCIAL

Throughout 2021, OPA made a proactive effort to engage its members and the larger physiotherapy community including the public on our social media channels. We were able to increase content creation, posting and engagement. During a time when most information was being provided virtually, our social media channels offered another platform to provide advocacy updates, COVID-19 resources, and educate Ontarians on the benefits of physiotherapy.

### Reach, Engagements, Impressions and Following (organic and paid)

With an increase in following and engagement across all platforms, we look forward to further activity in 2022.



### Top Performing Content in 2021





## Top Performing Content in 2021 continued

**NEW TO PRACTICE (N2P)**

Professional Development & Career Pathway Mapping

*Free for all OPA members who are new to practice.*

**DATE:**  
Wednesday, June 30, 2021  
12 pm - 1 pm

Coach:  
Jasdeep Dhir (She/Her)




**OPA STATEMENT  
REGARDING  
PHYSIOTHERAPY  
COMPETENCY EXAM**

[OPA.ON.CA/ADVOCACY-POSITIONS/WHERE-WE-STAND/](https://opa.on.ca/advocacy-positions/where-we-stand/)

**#WEAREPT**

Thank you to the Incredible PT community, who is continuously showcasing its commitment to the profession across Ontario!



## BRINGING MEMBER VOICE TO OPA STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS IN 2021

With so many changes in the health environment due to the pandemic and other challenges, OPA initiated a strategic planning process. We gathered insights from members, non-members, learners, patients and other health professionals and system leaders through **interviews**, our **strategic planning survey** and our first **Strategic Hive**, which was a highly interactive workshop where we co-created priorities and actions for OPA. The discussions were broad-ranging and ambitious and will be used to finalize our strategic plan and inform operational planning.

## OPA AND ADVISORY COMMITTEES

We welcomed new members onto the Hospital Advisory and Home Care Advisory Committees. All of our Committees have shared their expertise to help inform strategy and activities, especially around the COVID-19 pandemic and health system transformation.



## STUDENT PLACEMENTS AND THE PANDEMIC

OPA facilitated targeted communications on behalf of the Ontario universities to help secure more offers for clinical placements. **Our members are the best** as many took on these requests and supported students, despite challenges for organizations and clinics during the pandemic.



## MEMBERS ENGAGING IN THEIR COMMUNITIES FOR THE PROFESSION

Districts adapted their AGMs and Executive Meetings to virtual where possible due to the pandemic.

- 15 members of the **Eastern Ontario District** joined together on Zoom for their 2021 AGM in February and the **Quinte St. Lawrence District** hosted their virtual AGM with 12 in attendance. **Kitchener-Waterloo District** also hosted a virtual AGM along with their virtual District Executive Meetings.
- The **Central Toronto District** welcomed approximately 35 people to their AGM with keynote speaker Dr. Kristin Musselman PT, PhD who presented on 'Development of a Canadian Strategy for Active Based Therapy'. A virtual recording was also presented at the AGM of the 2020-2021 MScPT Research Grant Winners.
- The **Windsor District** welcomed 16 members to two virtual meetings, the 'Second Wave, General Feedback Meeting' and their AGM.

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## PROVIDING LOCAL SUPPORT DURING THE PANDEMIC

- **Grey Bruce District** hosted two webinars: Sharmila Earnest, OT discussed the growing mental health crisis during COVID-19, practical ways to help clients, and local resources that are available. Sandra Mohr and Chelsea Mott, Respiratory Therapists presented on 'Respiratory Care: a COVID-19 perspective'. Attendees learned about post-COVID syndrome and the role of the physiotherapist in assisting clients with post-COVID respiratory difficulties.
- 50 members from the **London District** attended the Virtual Panel 'Post-COVID-19 Condition' focused on the effects of Post-COVID-19 condition or long COVID. Speakers Shannon McGuire, PT, and Allison Francis, PT shared how clients/patients are presenting and how physiotherapists can adapt to this population.
- The **Northern Ontario District** hosted 'Mindfulness Practices For Stress Management and Resilience During COVID-19 Pandemic Times' and 'Caring for Patients with Mental Health Issues - Stress Management for the Health Care Professional' to address growing mental health concerns for health care practitioners and their patients during the pandemic.



## COVID-19 PANDEMIC



### Information for Public Health Units on Home and Community Care Physiotherapists and Physiotherapist Assistants and COVID-19 Vaccination

OPA developed and disseminated a resource to help the more than 30 Public Health Units understand the practice of home and community care physiotherapists and physiotherapist assistants. In our outreach, we helped them in their local priority planning with vaccine distribution so that PTs and PTAs had access to the COVID-19 vaccine based on their appropriate risk level. [Read the resource.](#)



### Provisional Practice and Entry to Practice

Throughout 2021, OPA advocated and worked with all stakeholders provincially and nationally, including the College of Physiotherapists of Ontario, academic leaders, the Canadian Physiotherapy Association including the provincial Branches, and others to share resources and work toward expediting solutions to allow full entry to independent practice for candidates.

OPA elevated these issues to the Fairness Commissioner of Ontario (FCO) and the Assistant Deputy Minister responsible for health professions at the Ministry of Health on behalf of candidates and the public. We took every opportunity in letters and meetings with all levels of government and political leadership of all parties to share stories and impact statements from candidates and employers and make the case for needed solutions from the College to expedite entry to practice.

Though steps have been taken, the end of 2021 still found many candidates without a pathway to registration. We thank all members who have shared their stories and advocated for needed solutions. OPA remains committed to working with all stakeholders towards an expedited path to full registration for qualified candidates.

Read more about OPA's advocacy on the pathway to registration on our [website](#).



### Community Physiotherapy Clinics

OPA advocated to the Ministry of Health for needed supports to address unique pressures faced in this funding model due to the shutdowns and restrictions impacting service delivery during the pandemic. OPA was successful in achieving up to 25% of EOC allocations to be retained without claw back in the 2020-21 fiscal year.

OPA continued to advocate in 2021 for urgent changes to the program and additional supports for CPCs including writing to the Premier, other Cabinet Ministers and the Health Critics of the Opposition parties. [Read OPA's letter.](#)



### Small Business Supports for Ontario's Health Care Professionals

OPA wrote to the Premier and Finance Minister advocating for changes to the eligibility criteria for grant programs for small businesses to allow for the inclusion of health care professionals, including those that operate physiotherapy clinics. [Read the letter.](#)

We joined our voice with other health professional associations also part of the Coalition of Regulated Health Professional Associations (CORPHA), in writing to the Minister of Finance and Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade advocating for expanded eligibility to the Main Street Relief Grant for Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and the Ontario Small Business Support Grant to include health care professionals among small business owners to access these supports. [Read the letter.](#)



## VOICE OF ADVOCACY

### Extended Health Benefit Plans

Along with grassroots actions by members, OPA successfully advocated for the reversal of a policy change with Manulife's FollowMe Plan that removed physiotherapy coverage for seniors. OPA and CPA collaborated on a letter and meeting with the national senior leadership at Manulife. We were informed that our feedback was received and influenced Manulife's decision not to proceed with the policy changes maintaining access for affected Ontarians. We thank OPA members and the public for sharing their concerns with OPA and Manulife and advocating for changes.

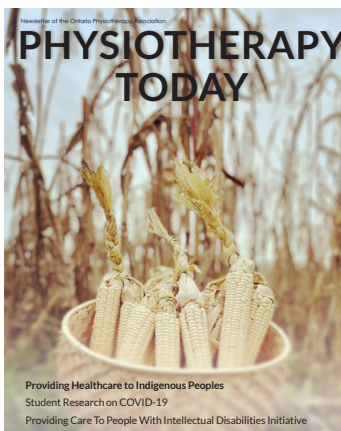
### Submission to Consultation on Healing Arts Radiation Protection Act

OPA participated in a consultation to enhance the Healing Arts Radiation Protection Act (HARPA) as part of the Ontario Government's new red tape and burden reduction measure exercise. OPA pointed out that sections within the very dated legislation impedes innovation and has been a barrier to physiotherapists being able to order x-rays under their own authority. [Read our submission.](#)

### Home and Community Care Modernization

OPA submitted and participated in two Ministry of Health consultations on proposed home and community care regulations and other implementation aspects of the Connecting Care Act, 2019. This legislation positions home and community care within integrated health system legislation and ultimately enables Ontario Health to fund Health Service Providers and Ontario Health Teams to provide more home and community care services in a more flexible way to meet the local community needs. OPA's submissions focused on issues, including funding, human resources and risk of growing administrative layers, which can impact access to quality care for Ontarians.

Read both of [OPA's responses](#) which focused on specific stated areas of interest of the Ministry in addition to the need to address health human resources (HHR) issues impacting recruitment and retention of physiotherapists in the sector.



### Diversity, Inclusion, and Anti-Racism

As a member organization, OPA continues on our journey to learn and live our commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion and to address racism against Black, Indigenous, and racialized communities in the healthcare system all year round.

The OPA Board of Directors received resources and training to help them approach their discussions and decision making through the lens of equity, diversity, and inclusion.

We celebrated Black History Month in February in our member i-blasts and on our Recent News blog.

At [InterACTION Online 2021](#), OPA provided five sessions under the theme of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Anti-Racism including a transformative panel discussion 'Sit and Let's

*Chat: A conversation with Black PTs and a call to action to end racism*' with Courtney Bean, Stephanie Lurch, Andrea Meade, Marquise Swaby and Stephanie Nixon.

2021 marked the first [National Day for Truth and Reconciliation](#). Our Autumn 2021 issue of *Physiotherapy Today* featured three articles on Providing Health Care to Indigenous Peoples from authors across the province.



We also shared resources during National Indigenous History Month to honour and celebrate the history, culture and diversity of the Indigenous peoples of Canada and amplify voices from the Indigenous community in Ontario to speak about their thoughts on equity issues in health care and their priorities moving forward.

## **Health Human Resources Survey**

OPA conducted the Health Human Resources in the Physiotherapy Profession survey to understand the current pressures within the profession in Ontario to determine if/what gaps and needs exist and to inform strategy and advocacy. Key findings illuminated barriers for recruitment and retention of staff, the impact of the delays in the national examination and vacancies on operations. This data will inform our next steps in developing a health human resource strategy for the physiotherapy profession in Ontario.

## **Providing Care to People with Intellectual Disabilities Initiative**

OPA has partnered with Special Olympics Ontario, an organization that provides sport and health programs to over 26,000 people with intellectual disabilities (ID) in Ontario, an initiative to better understand the experiences of OPA members in providing care to people with ID and member's potential needs for resources and training materials to support them in providing care to this population. This work will inform the development of educational materials and resources for physiotherapists working with individuals with ID.

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## **COVID-19 ACCESS AND HEALTH SYSTEM RESEARCH**

OPA partnered with the University of Toronto and St. Michael's Hospital in 2020 on an MScPT research project to describe the patient experience with Bundled Care transitions from acute care to clinic-based or home-based physiotherapy. This work was completed in 2021 and underwent the process of publication to contribute to emerging literature and evidence on patient experiences with Bundled Care.

### **OPA supported research in our community in many ways including:**

- Submitted letter of support for a CIHR grant application for research to examine mental health and resiliency of health care providers, including physiotherapists, during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Supported the recruitment of participants in over 15 studies on topics that impact the physiotherapy profession, some of which include:
  - o What should students learn about LGBTQ2I+ health in entry-to-practice Physical Therapy programs in Canada?
  - o Lessons Learned: Telerehabilitation Experiences of Ontario Physiotherapists in Outpatient and Community Settings during the 2020 COVID-19 Pandemic
  - o Understanding the Impact of the Pandemic on Physiotherapists working in Ontario Hospitals
  - o National Frontiers in Research Fund (NFRF) Project Strategies for increasing accessibility and equity in health and human service educational programs: national perspective
  - o Legislative Barriers and Legislative Changes for Physical Therapy during the Opioid Crisis in the US and Canada



## 'HERE WHEN YOU NEED US' MARKETING CAMPAIGN

Our 2021 'Here When You Need Us' public campaign reached over 1 million Ontarians with over 9.5 million impressions. Ads on Facebook generated 42,000 visits to our landing pages where they could learn more about safe in-person care and virtual physiotherapy offered throughout the province by PTs, PT Residents, and PTAs. The campaign ran in January, March-April and again from June-December.

Members submitted pictures, and joined us for a day of filming to ensure accurate and timely representation of the profession during the pandemic – with appropriate PPE.



### RECOVER FROM INJURY

Whether it's from a recreational activity, a workplace injury, or the toll of daily life, an injury can keep you from the activities you love.



### OVERCOME PAIN

Back pain, neck pain, headaches, shoulder and knee pain, arthritis, and more... physiotherapy helps manage and prevent both acute and chronic pain.



### MOVE BETTER

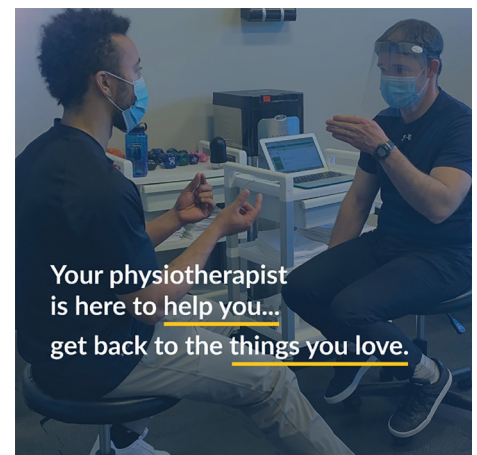
Helping you do the most you can every day. Physiotherapy can help you move better and take on those new hobbies and activities.



Left to Right: Nadia Bridgelal, PT, Claire Lee, PT and Beverley Biggs, PTA



Ruth Wentzell with PTs



Your physiotherapist is here to help you... get back to the things you love.





## INTERACTION ONLINE 2021

We welcomed almost 400 registrants to our first-ever virtual InterACTION conference on April 17. With 30 speakers, 3 keynotes, 2 PT panels and a celebration of Award winners, it was an energizing day full of connection and learning!

OPA proudly supported student attendance by offering a discounted rate of \$10 and two University programs paid for their students to attend.

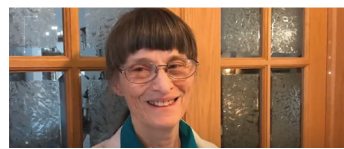
Thank you to our 15 sponsors who supported this event and continue to support the Association and the profession.



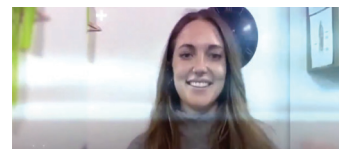
## OPA Special Award Winners



**Jasdeep Dhir** – Innovation & Advancement Award



**Carol Moore** – Leadership & Advocacy Award



**Mackenzie Holden** – Student/New Grad Leadership Award



**University of Toronto,** Ontario Internationally Educated Physical Therapy Bridging Program – OPA Special Award

Congratulations to our 50 year members: Rosemary Anderson, Wendy Cliff, Sandra Gold Millstein, Susan Ferguson, Cathie Macleod, Marsha Maynard, Janice Payne, Tema Stein, Krisztina Weinacht, Molly Verrier, and Karen Yantha.

## COVID-19 RESOURCES

OPA updated members on the COVID-19 pandemic throughout the year including:

- Changes to COVID-19 public health guidance and directives to make sure that members stayed informed and were aware of the implications of these changes on physiotherapy practice and service deliver across various sectors
- Extensions and changes to government financial supports for business and individuals
- Opportunities and processes on how to become vaccinated when eligibility expanded to physiotherapists across various public health units and regions
- Resources on virtual care delivery, redeployment, and mental health supports for health care professionals



## COVID-19 Educational Series Webinars 2021

OPA offered four webinars as part of our COVID-19 Education Series:



**#1** Understanding the COVID-19 patient - acute to long term recovery

**#2** Trailblazing during a Pandemic: The Role of Community Based PT in COVID-19 recovery

**#3** Wave 3 & Redeployment of Physiotherapists

**#4** Implementing COVID-19 Vaccine Policies in the Workplace

## COVID-19 Information & FAQ

OPA expanded our COVID-19 website pages, and updated a bi-weekly FAQ resource to ensure that members had timely information to address their key questions on the implications of the pandemic on their practice, and were aware of key supports and programs that they could access.

## Resource for Physiotherapists on Post COVID-19 Condition (Long COVID)

OPA, as part of the Interdisciplinary Long COVID Advisory Panel, contributed to the development of a resource on the role of rehabilitation in addressing long COVID, [Rehabilitation for Clients with Post COVID-19 Condition \(Long COVID\): Guidance for Canadian Rehabilitation and Exercise Professionals](#). This living document consolidates the best available evidence and resources to help inform safe clinical decision making for those who are providing services to people with Long COVID.

## Community Based Physiotherapy during COVID-19

The subcommittee of the Primary Care Advisory Committee published the fourth edition of the [Community Based Physiotherapy During the COVID-19 pandemic resource](#) to reflect emerging evidence. The resource also helps to educate system planners and organizations to understand the evolving role of physiotherapy to address the rehabilitation needs of patients who are experiencing residual health issues due to COVID-19.

## WOUND CARE MANAGEMENT PROGRAM



In 2021, 9 individuals completed the Introduction to Wound Care Management online course, and 2 individuals challenged and passed the quiz. Since the program began, 43 physiotherapists have completed the quiz increasing our capacity to meet health care needs in this area.



## BRINGING EDUCATION TO YOU ONLINE THROUGH DISTRICT COURSES

- **Quinte-St. Lawrence District** hosted a webinar, 'How I Ran Away with the Circus' with Vincent Turpin, PT.
- **Central Toronto District** welcomed 18 attendees for their 'Virtual Course- Persistent Low Back Pain' with Dr. Bahram Jam.
- The **Northern Ontario District** welcomed attendees virtually to 'Oxygen Administration and Titration: Practice Guidelines for Physiotherapists' twice in 2021 due to its popularity.
- The **Northern Ontario District** also hosted **Physio North**, a virtual half day conference with presentations:
  - o 'Movement System Diagnosis in Physical Therapy' with speakers Dr. Kathleen Gill-Body, PT; Dr. Laura Plummer, PT
  - o 'Evidence Based PT Clinical Practice Guidelines for Hip Fracture' with speaker Andre Riopel, PT
  - o 'The Words We Use', a session on how the language we use and the stories we share can explain complex problems to patients without eliciting fear and anxiety

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## STUDY OF THE DAY

47 librarian curated "Study of the Day" posts (+12 from 2020) were shared on Facebook and Twitter about the latest and most relevant research and physiotherapy news with 67,482 impressions on Facebook and 22,163 impressions on Twitter.

Study of the Day posts with greatest reach on Facebook:



**STUDY OF THE DAY (September 7):** This editorial published in the Journal of Orthopedic & Sports Physical Therapy challenges the assumption that manual therapy is always a passive treatment with little value. The authors argue that manual therapy can also form an integral part of highly active treatment strategies.



**STUDY OF THE DAY (March 23):** This systematic review in the British Medical Journal explored the relationship between physical activity and depression. In reviewing 111 reports including over 3 million adults from 5 continents, researchers found subclinical depressive symptoms were reduced after exposure to physical activity that met public health guidelines.



# Value for membership

**4887**

physiotherapist members

**847**

physiotherapist students

**57**

physiotherapist assistant members

**371**

physiotherapist assistant students

## VALUE FOR MEMBERSHIP – WITH OPA YOU ARE AT THE TABLE

Rehabilitation Care Alliance (RCA) Steering Committee and advisory groups	RCA Subject Matter Expert Group (Ambulatory based rehabilitation), Community Rehabilitation Position Paper	Alliance of Professional Associations for Community-Based Therapy Services (APACTS)
Co-chair of the Coalition of Health Professional Associations in Automobile Insurance Services (The Coalition)	Coalition of Regulated Health Professional Associations (CORHPA)	University of Toronto Academic Practice Leaders Committee
University of Toronto Ontario Internationally Educated Physical Therapy Bridging Program Advisory Committee	Humber College OTA PTA Advisory Committee	Financial Services Regulatory Authority of Ontario's (FSRA) Health Providers Industry Advisory Group
Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB)	Association of Family Health Teams of Ontario (AFTHO) annual conference participant and exhibitor	Alliance for Healthier Communities exhibitor

## BEING INFORMED FOR SUCCESS

OPA members had exclusive access to up-to-the-minute information with 82 OPA Updates emails in 2021. Our website was updated with dedicated and easily accessible COVID-19 pages and we shared member experiences about the pandemic in our print newsletter, *Physiotherapy Today*.

With news on OPA's advocacy initiatives during the pandemic, professional development and access to public and member-only resources, members were kept informed.

OPA job, classified and courses emails continued to bring timely information to our members' inboxes.



## DISTRICT GRANTS AND AWARDS

- The **Eastern Ontario District** awarded **Musanda Mandefu** from Cité Collégiale, a PTA-OTA bursary and awarded Leyla Sefiddashti the University of Ottawa PhD Scholarship.
- **Larissa Carlucci** and **Meghan McGrath** received the **Quinte St. Lawrence District** Service Award.
- The **London District** OPA-CPA Book Prize Literary Achievement Award for excellence in student research was awarded to the study 'Knowledge Dissemination in Upper Extremity Fractures and Carpal Tunnel Syndrome: Education, Activity Advice, and Referral Infographics.' The award winners are **Estee Black, Jenna Crocker, Moriah Thorpe, Felix Drechsler, Sasja Drechsler, Lesley Kukoly** with supervisors Prof. Jackie Sadi, Prof. Cathy Pasternak, Dr. Laura Churchill, Dr. Kenneth Faber. Each award winner received a PDF certificate, letter of congratulations, and a \$25 Amazon gift card.
- The **Central Toronto District** awarded their University of Toronto MScPT Student Research Grant 2021-2022 to student researchers **Dayna Bercovitch, Sarah Mulvihill, Hillary Ng, Sajan Patel, Andi Reppas-Rindlisbacher,** and **Brandon Sum** with advisors **Gayatri Aravind, Nancy Salbach, Lyndsay Aitken,** and **Meagan O'Neill.** The research was titled 'The Impact of COVID-19 Social Restrictions on Exercise Participation, Physical Activity, and Health of Older Adults with Balance and Mobility Limitations Attending Community- Based Exercise Programs'.
- During the Month Of November, in support of Men's Health and Mental Health, **Windsor District** ran a fundraiser in honour of Joe Grossi, a dedicated physiotherapist in the district who passed away.



Musanda Mandefu from Cité Collégiale  
- PTA-OTA bursary winner

## ENGAGING FROM DAY 1 – OPA AND STUDENTS AND NEW GRADS



OPA presented to all five Ontario physiotherapy university programs and the Ontario Internationally Educated Physical Therapy Bridging Program on the role the Association plays in professional life and on issues impacting practice.

OPA supported entry to practice PTs with a fully accessible, online New Grad Toolkit for 2021 graduates.



## LOCAL ENGAGEMENT OF STUDENTS AND PHYSIOTHERAPY RESIDENTS THROUGH DISTRICTS

- The **Eastern Ontario District** sponsored the University of Ottawa 2<sup>nd</sup> year student graduation ball, held outdoors on August 21, 2021.
- First year Queen’s University physiotherapy students attended the ‘*Diversity of Practice Panel*’ offered by the **Quinte-St. Lawrence District**. The District also supported students and physiotherapy residents with a virtual townhall on the Clinical PCE and surveyed the district to learn more about the impact of clinical PCE delays.
- The **York Region & Scarborough District** and the **Central Toronto District** co-hosted ‘*PT Panel Night*’ welcoming all first and second year PT students. With approximately 40-55 students in attendance speakers, Lisa Whiler, Christina Samy, Natasha Lohues and Arjun Patel focused on a range of topics: paediatric, neurological, orthopaedic and pelvic focused physiotherapy as well as private practice.
- The **Windsor District** hosted a New to Practice Meet & Greet in February and a PCE Town Hall in December.

## NEW TO PRACTICE

New to Practice (N2P) members benefited from four mentorship coaching sessions and additional resources:

### Professional Development: Mapping Your Road Trip to Success

Coach: Jasdeep Dhir, BSc(PT), MCISc (MT), TDPT, FCAMPT, Assistant Professor, McMaster University

### Virtual Practice 101 – Conducting Virtual Sessions Successfully

Coach: Amy Hondronicols, PT

### Understanding Contracts in Private Practice – Compensation & Negotiations

Coach: Daryl Yardley, PT, MCISc (Manip)

### Private Practice Contracts – A Legal Perspective

Coach: Marty Rabinovitch, B.A.H., LL.B. Lawyer



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## Join Us

Become a member or get involved: [opa.on.ca/membership/](http://opa.on.ca/membership/)

## Get Involved



Find us on Facebook at [facebook.com/OntarioPT](https://facebook.com/OntarioPT)



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Watch us on YouTube at [Ontario Physiotherapy Association](https://OntarioPhysiotherapyAssociation)



Join us on LinkedIn at [Ontario Physiotherapy Association](https://OntarioPhysiotherapyAssociation)



Follow us on Instagram at [instagram.com/ontariophysio/](https://instagram.com/ontariophysio/)

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