



COBC Statement on COVID-19 Misinformation

The College of Opticians of British Columbia (COBC) has a mandate to serve and protect all British Columbians by ensuring that Licensed Opticians deliver qualified, safe, and ethical care to their patients and clients.

We know that the vast majority of BC's healthcare providers are following and supporting public health orders to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in our communities. However, we and other colleges share serious concerns about how the spread of misinformation regarding COVID-19 and immunization by some regulated health professionals may jeopardize the safety of patients and the public. This includes sharing of misinformation that is anti-vaccine, anti-mask wearing, or anti-physical distancing, or that otherwise undermines public health orders and guidance. We also have concerns about regulated health professionals promoting or sharing information about COVID-19 treatments that are not supported by widely accepted scientific evidence.

As a regulated health professional, you occupy a position of public trust due to your knowledge and training in a specific field of healthcare. Your ethical and professional responsibility is to provide information and advice that is factual, backed by science, and directly related to your professional designation/scope of practice. This responsibility extends to professional and personal opinions and statements about COVID-19 that you share with others, including on social media platforms, online, and in the media.

Unethical and unprofessional conduct by regulated health professionals, such as the spread of misinformation about COVID-19 and immunization, constitutes a danger to the public. COBC has the authority to take disciplinary action in these cases.

Your responsibility as a regulated health professional

When a patient/client asks for your advice or opinion on COVID-19 immunization or any medical or health concern related to COVID-19, we expect you to provide them with advice that is:

- within your scope of practice,
- in line with provincial public health guidance, and
- grounded in science and best practices.

If providing immunizations and related health advice is not within your professional role/scope of practice, you can direct patients/clients to a trusted source for more information or assessment of their personal situation.

- In BC, the recommended source of COVID-19 immunization information for your patients/clients is the [BC Centre for Disease Control \(BCCDC\) website](#). The [Immunize BC website](#) also has FAQs for patients.
- If the patient/client has medical questions or concerns about COVID-19 immunization in relation to their personal medical condition, or if they need more information, you can refer them to an appropriate regulated health professional who is authorized to provide immunizations, e.g., their primary care provider.