



# 2023–2025 Strategic Plan: An Overview of CPA and its Divisions

## Introduction

The following document provides a detailed overview of important work that has taken place with CPA and its Divisions over the past few years and highlights the work underway as a result of the current direction in the CPA’s Strategic Plan. Any questions about this document can be directed to [information@physiotherapy.ca](mailto:information@physiotherapy.ca).

## Outline

History of the CPA and its Divisions .....	1
Governance at the CPA .....	2
Legal Responsibilities .....	3
Division Governance .....	3
CPA of the Future .....	4
Divisions of the Future .....	5
Division Transformation Project .....	5
2023 – Determining Future State .....	5
2024 – Bridging Current to Future State Plans .....	6
2025 – Early Implementation .....	7
2026 – Full Implementation .....	7
APPENDIX A: Future State Long Term Accountabilities .....	8
APPENDIX B: Key Characteristics of the Future Accountabilities .....	9
APPENDIX F: Divisions’ Regulation .....	10

## History of the CPA and its Divisions

The CPA marked 100 years in 2020. Divisions have been an integral part of the Association for decades. The excerpt below is from the July/August 2020 issue of *Physiotherapy Practice* (pp 18–19).

*The history of the Divisions at the CPA tells a story of the evolution of the physiotherapy profession, as well as the health care in Canada. These special interest groups, as the Divisions were formerly known, shine a light on how physiotherapy's breadth and impact has made a difference for many people in many ways. With the role for rehabilitation among injured soldiers becoming fundamental in the First World War and, eventually, the Second World War, as well as the polio epidemic that posed a great risk to Canada's children in the middle of the 20th century, it is not surprising that the first two special interest groups within the CPA were Orthopaedic and Paediatric. In fact, the Paediatric Division was established within the CPA between 1956–1958, right at the height of Canada's polio epidemic. By the late 1970s, there were five more special interest groups, in addition to Orthopaedic and Paediatric... In the 1980s, the CPA Board transitioned the names of these special interest groups to Divisions, as we know them today... Today, the CPA has 14 Divisions that represent specific areas of clinical interest or practice.*

*There have also been a number of name changes reflecting the evolution of the profession and health care:*

- *Obstetrics → Women's Health<sup>1</sup> (1994)*
- *Directors of Physiotherapy → Physiotherapy Management (1996) → Leadership (2002)*
- *Cardiorespirology → Cardiorespiratory (1998)*
- *Gerontology → Seniors' Health (2002)*
- *International Health → Global Health (2013)*

## Governance at the CPA

The CPA is a national association that supports physiotherapy professionals in Canada. As part of its structure, there are several perspectives or “components” that each play a unique role:

- “Branches” are incorporated provincial/territorial associations
  - “Districts” are local components of the Branch
- “Divisions” are special interest groups that are part of the CPA. They are not incorporated
  - “Sub-groups” are national communities of Members that are related to a specific practice area
  - “Sections” are provincial/territorial components of a Division
    - “Units” are local components of Sections of a Division
- “Assemblies” refer to the National Student Assembly and National Physiotherapist Assistant Assembly

In addition, the CPA has:

- Board of Directors
- CEO
- Staff

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<sup>1</sup> Since publication in 2020, the Women's Health Division has become the Pelvic & Reproductive Health Division (2023).

All of these people and structures are intended to work together to serve the needs of the Members. How they work together is governance.

Governance is a series of “processes and structures used to direct and manage an organization’s operations and activities.”<sup>2</sup>

### *Legal Responsibilities*

In the Not-for-Profit Corporations Act that governs the CPA, Directors on the Board have a duty to comply with the Act, Articles and Bylaws. Under the Act and Bylaws, the CPA Board is required to “manage or supervise the management of the activities and affairs of” the CPA. The Board cannot do it alone, so it delegates the CEO to be responsible for the management of the affairs of the CPA; the sharing of this management power is governed by various laws, Articles, Bylaws, rules, regulations, policies, and contracts.

The Board achieves this through mechanisms such as:

- Bylaws, which are determined by the Members (typically via vote at the AGM) and must be consistent with the Act and Articles of Incorporation or Continuance
- Governing Documents (also called Rules & Regulations at CPA), which are determined by the CPA Board of Directors (typically via a vote at Board meetings)
- Board Policies, which are determined by the CPA Board of Directors (typically via a vote at Board meetings) and establish how the Association is governed/overseen by the combination of the Board and the CEO
- Operational Policies, which are determined by the CEO and establish how the Association is managed and run by staff and volunteers

Following an extensive consultation process with Branches, Divisions, Assemblies, and Members, the CPA’s current Bylaws were presented to, and approved by the Members at the June 26, 2021 AGM.

### *Division Governance*

As they are a part of the CPA, Divisions (like every other aspect of the organization, including the CEO) are under the authority of the CPA Board of Directors, per the Articles of Continuance and Bylaws, which are legally binding documents, per the Canada Not-for-Profit Corporations Act.

As noted by CPA’s legal firm Gowling WLG:

*“...a challenge with them [Divisions] is that things they [Divisions] do are technically things that we [CPA] do; so their acts or omissions are the Corporation’s acts and*

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<sup>2</sup> The Effective Not-for-Profit Board. Deloitte. <https://www2.deloitte.com/ca/en/pages/public-sector/articles/effective-not-for-profit-board.html>

*omissions. And so if they have some autonomy, and I'm sure that they do, that could create risks for the CPA."*

However, although authority is clear, accountability was not always as clear.

In conducting the CPA governance review in 2020–2021, one of the most fundamental matters was addressed was about the accountability of Divisions.

Per Article 8.1 in the most recent CPA Bylaws (as determined by the Members):

*"...the Board may authorize the...formation and dissolution of Divisions, Assemblies, and other groups from time to time... For greater certainty, unincorporated Branches, Divisions, Assemblies, and other authorized groups are part of the Association and are not distinct legal entities, and the powers and duties of Divisions, Assemblies, and other authorized groups are limited to those powers and duties that have been approved by the Board from time to time."*

Per the most recent Governance Documents (as determined by the Board of Directors), in section 21 of 1-B Board Procedures:

*"Divisions and Assemblies operate under the following general requirements:*

- a. Formation authorized by the Board*
- b. Powers and duties approved by the Board*
- c. Report to the Chief Executive Officer"*

The powers and duties approved by the Board are laid out in [Appendix F](#).

At the time the Board of Directors updated the documents above, they also removed all Board Liaison positions, including one that was in place for the Division Chairs Committee.

Instead, the Board receives its operational and management information from the CEO and the CEO ensures that the Board is kept informed as required. Where appropriate, the President or a specific Director may be invited to attend a specific meeting or topic area, but not as a formal multi-directional reporting mechanism.

Members of the CPA are always welcome to connect with the Board of Directors, including the President, independently. The Directors are listed [here](#) and individual Directors and the President can be reached via email at [president@physiotherapy.ca](mailto:president@physiotherapy.ca).

## CPA of the Future

In 2022, the CPA prepared an ambitious Strategic Plan that specifically mentioned Divisions.

*"CPA Divisions are aligned to a fully integrated fee approach and into the national structure. The CPA's Divisions are focused on supporting and delivering professional development and thought leadership. Divisions are a trusted source for Member engagement and professional development content, and Division Members play an important role in credible, evidence-based advocacy."*

This was shared with Branches, Divisions, and Assemblies at the November 2022 Component Summit in Ottawa, where participants spent several hours in small groups discussing and engaging with the Strategic Plan. The discussion also included referring more specifically to the operational thrust over the next 12–18 months to see the CPA modernize its business model and more specifically to elevate the CPA's Divisions.

## Divisions of the Future

In summary, the CPA is aiming to become an Association where Divisions and Assemblies are fully leveraged as the physiotherapy subject matter experts of the CPA. It is not simply about managing risk, but elevating the Association and profession with the incredible expertise that exists within the CPA's Divisions and Assemblies.

## Division Transformation Project

In order to realize the goal outlined in the 2023–2025 Strategic Plan, the CPA began a multi-year Division Transformation Project.

The following are annual areas of focus for the Division Transformation Project.

### *2023 – Determining Future State*

- Focused around three in-person DCC meetings, the CPA's staff, Board, Divisions, and Assemblies worked with an external consultant (Peter Wright of The Planning Group) to:
  - Define the outcome of what the new role and responsibilities of Divisions and Assemblies will be in future state
  - Conduct a professional association landscape analysis review to define best practices
  - Assemble a steering committee made up of Division representatives and CPA staff to inform the roadmap to transition. This included:
    - Gabrielle Sadler – Chair, Seniors' Health Division
    - Roxanne Azoory – Chair, Orthopaedic Division
    - Alex Grant – Co-Chair, Oncology Division
    - Devonna Truong – Manager, Division & Assembly Engagement; Past Chair, Women's Health; DCC Chair
    - Samantha Lee – Director, Division Operations
    - Elisa Beselt – Executive Advisor & Special Projects Lead
  - Review, analyze, and prepare recommendations for the transition, specifically around key characteristics of the future accountabilities between the CPA and its Divisions and Assemblies (see Appendices A and B)
- Important meetings/engagement in 2023:
  - March 2023 in Calgary with the DCC: facilitated session, led by Peter Wright of The Planning Group

- July 2023 in Quebec City with the DCC: facilitated session, led by Peter Wright of The Planning Group
  - A previous version of Appendices A and B were presented and feedback was sought
- November 2023 in Ottawa with the DCC: facilitated session, led by Peter Wright of The Planning Group
  - Appendices A and B were presented and feedback was sought
  - Discussion was focused around what needs to come next collectively for all Divisions (i.e., what questions remain) as well as for individual Divisions
- Steering Committee: met approximately every three weeks from June to November

### *2024 – Bridging Current to Future State Plans*

- Appropriately communicating information about this project to Division volunteers and Members
  - With the support of Division Chairs and Assembly Presidents, Division and Assembly volunteers were informed of the project and invited to individual Division transition meetings to hear more and share their vision for the direction of their Division or Assembly
- Building customized individual Division and Assembly transition plans, where we will coordinate and understand the major annual focus of each Division or Assembly
  - Between April and July 2024, the CPA (supported by Peter Wright, The Planning Group) conducted individual 90-minute meetings with 13 Divisions (Chairs and their senior volunteers) and 2 Assemblies (Presidents and their senior volunteers) to:
    - (a) focus on shared understanding of current state and Division/Assembly priorities;
    - (b) begin to build understanding of the short- and long-term implications of the transition on each Division/Assembly;
    - (c) understand the most important constraints.
    - There were also follow-up meetings for a few Divisions
- Note: the CPA was unsuccessful in scheduling an individual transition meeting with the remaining Division
- Providing each Division and Assembly with an individual, customized transition plan that will help the CPA coordinate and understand the major annual focus of each Division/Assembly in areas such as: credential programs, major advocacy thrust(s), major research thrust(s), event and programming growth, adoption of educational and other CPA platforms, and the transition to aligned branding, websites, education delivery, etc.
- Ensuring CPA's staffed departments are efficient and aligned with the CPA's Divisions and Assemblies in all areas (e.g., advocacy, research, professional development, finance, human resources, etc.)
- Establishing how a single Membership fee for accessing all Division/Assembly benefits will work (both as Membership revenue and but also as program expenses)
- Note re: Steering Committee composition for 2024
  - Roxanne Azoory going on leave and being replaced by Lenerdene Levesque, also of the Orthopaedic Division
  - Gabrielle Sadler resigned as a volunteer in September 2024; next steps are TBC

- Important meetings/engagement in 2024 (to date):
  - April 2024 in Vancouver with the DCC: facilitated session

### *2025 – Early Implementation*

- Begin to implement the individual transition plans
- Prepare for introduction of single fee structure in 2026
- Implement the new volunteer program
- Roll out marketing/communications initiatives
- Build up the capacity of a Professional Development/Education team within the CPA
- Note that more detail will come with the creation of the 2025 operational plan

### *2026 – Full Implementation*

## APPENDIX A: Future State Long Term Accountabilities

<b>Future State Long Term Accountabilities</b>												
<b>Nationally Managed Areas with No Autonomy for CPA Divisions</b> Anything Requiring Legal Authority including/and...												
Financial collection, dispersal and payment	Member Registration & Fee Setting		Contracts and legal agreements		Primary Contact with Regulators & Governments		Relations with CPA International Peers		Hardware, Software, Web Technology & Cyber Security		CPA Divisions Volunteer Development	Data Analytics and Member Satisfaction Tracking
<b>Areas Managed by CPA Divisions' Volunteers with Full Standardization (non-content) and Support Across Divisions</b>												
Relations with International Peers	CPE Format, Storage, Delivery	Topical discussions and networking	Mechanisms for Competency Assessment	Contact and Relations with Provincial Chapters	Relations with Canadian Peer Organizations	Member Comms and Marketing	Naming and Branding	Volunteer Recruitment, Coordination, Meetings & Commitments	Event Planning and (non-legal) Execution	Website Management	Member Attraction & Retention Efforts	
<b>Areas Which Should be Unique to CPA Divisions and Guidance &amp; Support Available from National Office</b>												
Bi-Lateral CPA Divisions' Relations	Content to Support Government Relations		In-Kind Sponsorships & Donations		CPE Content	Competency Assessment Criteria	Accreditation Design within Skeleton Framework		Relations with External Experts and Researchers	Mentorship Programs	Website Content	



## APPENDIX B: Key Characteristics of the Future Accountabilities

### Financial/Membership Structure

- All CPA Members can access all value from all Divisions and Assemblies, except for extraordinary items (accreditation, conferences, etc.); therefore, CPA's Membership fee includes access to all CPA and CPA Division/Assembly resources
- All Divisions/Assemblies will have some level of a CPA staff resource
- Transition to new financial structure will be prudent and appropriate for each Division/Assembly, the Branches, and the CPA

### Volunteer/Organizational Structure

- No fiduciary governance for CPA Divisions/Assemblies
- Eliminate using terms like boards, presidents, treasurers, etc.
- All staff/contractors of Divisions/Assemblies are employees/contractors of the CPA and all volunteers fit into the CPA volunteer structure (coordinated by Human Resources)
- Volunteer structure of CPA Divisions should be formal and nearly identical
- Committees should suit the needs of each Division/Assembly
- Committees and sub-committees have Chairs and Members; includes standardized titles to avoid confusion of governance and still allow recognition for volunteers

### Communication Structure

- All communication will be coordinated in a main CPA calendar regardless of sender
- Members will receive communications regarding:
  1. National level advocacy, interests, activities from CPA comms
  2. Communications (e.g., email, social, etc.) related to being (any combination of) a student, assistant, technologist, practice owner, leader, corporate employee, academic, retired, job seeker, private practitioner, public practitioner, government employee, from CPA and directly from the Division/Assembly

## APPENDIX F<sup>3</sup>: Divisions' Regulation

Linked [here](#).

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<sup>3</sup>Appendix F is referred to as such (and out of sequence) as it is a legacy document (last remaining piece from old governance materials). It will be updated as part of the Division Transformation Project.