



Opticians Association of Canada
Association Des Opticiens du Canada



EYESITE NEWSLETTER
National Edition

Winter 2007

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Con Ed With A Twist

In a turnabout of the traditional model of continuing education, the students will teach the professionals! The OAC and its provincial partner OBC: Opticians of British Columbia will be presenting two evenings of con ed lectures in collaboration with Transitions and with Douglas College at Douglas' Coquitlam campus. The evenings will consist of a presentation from Transitions followed by students of Douglas college who will be delivering Power-Point presentations based on research projects they have undertaken this year. This is a unique opportunity for opticians to refresh their understanding of topics they studied during their own training and for students to gain some insights from those already licensed, on the practical application of what they've learned. The seminar will take place in early April. Watch the OAC website for confirmed dates.

Vision Canada Optical Services
Launches Buying Group

Vision Canada Optical Services Buying Group was launched on January 1, 2007 as a combined project of Vision Canada and an existing buying group called Regard Action.

Regard Action is a unique cooperative of opticians and optometrist that was formed in Quebec. Currently Regard Action has a membership of more than 160 optometrists and opticians.

Regard Action has recently entered into an agreement with Vision Canada to administer a buying group on its behalf under the name Vision Canada Optical Services (VCOS). Membership in the VCOS is open to all opticians and optometrists who practice outside of Quebec.

Although a new group VCOS now has access to the deep discounts that have been negotiated through Regard Action for its members. As a member of VCOS

- you will receive a single statement each month with invoices attached for ease of reconciliation.
- You will write a single cheque to VCOS instead of multiple cheques to multiple suppliers.
- You will receive an end-of-the-year rebate based on your volume of purchasing.

For information on how to become a member of VCOS call Gaston Boucher at (450) 670-6288 x 228 OR Pat Dobbyn at (204) 982-6060/1-866-377-3636

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Vision Canada Annual Conference
Slated for Kelowna October 12th & 13th, 2007

Family Fun is the theme of this year's Vision Canada Conference & Trade Show. The venue lends itself to a family vacation. Kelowna is one of Canada's most beautiful settings and October is the right month to take a pre-winter break. Vision Canada is organizing adventures for spouses and children so you can take in the lectures without worrying about what your family is up to. The site of the Vision Canada conference is the Grand Okanagan resort. Referred to as 'An Oasis in the Centre of the City' the Grand Okanagan is luxury stated to the 'nth' degree. It sits on the picturesque shores of Lake

Okanagan so you have easy access to float plane tours, cycling or climbing. Whatever adventure sparks your interest you'll find it in Kelowna. And don't forget when you're in Kelowna you're in wine country. Plan to come early or stay a few days late to take it all in. The Saturday night festival is shaping up to be a Family Carnival with Kid Cocktails, a chocolate fountain and challenging games for both adults and children. This year in addition to the traditional continuing education format Vision Canada is introducing a series of sidebar workshops themed at special interests. Sometimes one hour is just not enough to provide a learning

experience. These mini-workshops will have a limited capacity and will require pre-registration. As another sidebar feature the OAC is planning on holding labs for the students in the NAIT/OAC training programs. The lab for the eyeglass dispensing students will focus on fitting skills and will also include a review of the portions of the courses that involve mathematical calculations. Contact lens students will have the opportunity to practice their RGP fits as well as work with some of the contact





Transitions Becomes First Corporate Fellow of OAC

Transitions is a company unique in the fact that it doesn't sell directly to regulated professionals but instead has a product that it provides to wholesale manufacturers of optical lenses. Yet Transitions has always been amongst the first in line to support opticians' conferences and trade shows. Clearly Transitions has made a conscious commitment to education of the profession based on a sense of responsibility to the public. For this reason the Opticians Association of Canada is very pleased to welcome Transitions as a Corporate Fellow. The Corporate Fellowship category of member-

ship is mutually beneficial to both the Corporate Fellow and the OAC. So don't be surprised when you see OAC partner with Transitions as they embark on their 2007 'roadshow'. Transitions has identified as an educational need, an updating of the profession's understanding of photochromics. They have quite correctly noted the fact that most of the printed literature—particularly the information in textbooks—is outdated and does not serve either the professional or the consumer very well. (Part 2 of the Transitions educational

presentation provided by the OAC and one of its provincial association partners.) You can look forward to an interesting and rewarding evening when you sign up for the Transitions/OAC educational evening. You can be sure you'll be amongst the first to know when we head out to your area.

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The OAC's CAO for Finances, Pat Dobbyn Presenting Isabelle Tremblay and Tim Schmidt of Transitions with the OAC corporate Fellow Certificate

Current Legislative Issues: Delegation

Delegation represents a slippery slope with which professionals and their regulatory bodies are continually faced. Certainly in a busy practice it seems sensible to assign certain tasks to ancillary staff while the regulated professional concentrates on higher level tasks. But...where do you put the line in the sand and establish the point at which restricted tasks cannot be done by unregulated personnel? And what are the terms of reference for delegation? Should the task be delegated on a case-by-case basis? Does the regulated person need to be present and available

when the delegated task is being performed? Does the ability to delegate help or hurt a profession? Does delegation benefit the public? If an activity has been classified as representing a risk of harm and is therefore restricted, should anybody but a regulated professional be performing that activity? And finally, what is the purpose of delegation? Is it to offset a lack of professionals? Is it to make low risk services more accessible to consumers or is it to make service less expensive because lower paid individuals are the service providers? To put a fine point

on it, will delegation threaten the livelihood of the trained regulated professional?

This is not an easy issue. Governments have mandated that regulatory bodies have policies on delegation. It's an issue that won't go away. I encourage you to learn about the delegation issue. Look for a longer dialogue on this matter in the March/April issue of Vision Magazine. The sidebar to the left lists the guidelines laid out in the College of Physicians & surgeons of Ontario. It mirrors the delegation policy of many regulatory bodies.

GUIDELINES FOR DELEGATION College of Physicians & Surgeons Ontario

1. Physician/patient relationship
2. Delegate only those acts that form part of your regular practice
3. Identify the individual performing the act and be aware of his or her skills
4. Establish a process for delegation or ensure that there is one in place, that includes education ensuring the maintenance of competence in the performance of the delegated act, and providing the appropriate supports.
5. Ensure delegation occurs with the informed consent of the patient where feasible.
6. Ensure proper supervision of the delegation
7. Consider any liability issues that may arise from delegation
8. Consider any billing issues that may arise from delegation

Helping You to Communicate Your Message

The OAC has been approached by several of its members to develop articles that they can use in their local newspapers to accompany their advertisements. Often community newspapers will offer you a continuing column if they know that you have enough to provide a series of a dozen or more topics. As a result of these member requests we have developed the first of

these articles. (following on page three of this newsletter.) You can use these articles also as reprints to have in your dispensary or as inclusions in mailings to your clients. Should you wish to use the material in this fashion contact us and we will supply you with a graphically appropriate electronic file that you can reprint as required. Consumer education is an important part of

an optician's responsibility and one way we can polish our professional profile with allied professionals and government. We invite you, as members of the OAC, to contribute your ideas for themes that we should include in our consumer education series. Contact Mary Field at 1-800-847-3155 or via e-mail at mfield@opticians.ca .



Preparing for Your Winter Sunshine Experience



When winter comes to Canada sunshine becomes a topic of conversation. Some of us relish the opportunity to get out on the ski slopes and snowmobile trails while others long for tropical destinations

to get a little rest and relaxation. Not only does sunshine keep most life on earth thriving but also it brings us joy and nurtures our souls. However, too much sun can be dangerous to our skin and to our eyes due to ultra-violet (UV) radiation.

Here are a few examples. UV radiation exposure has been found to be one of the most important independent factors leading to the development of cataracts. Approximately 5%-10% of all skin cancers occur on the eyelid. More than 75% of UV radiation passes through the crystalline lens of a child's eye because it is in the process of maturing. This compares with only 10% transmission after age 30.

There is a lot of confusion about what constitutes a dangerous environmental condition and what steps we can take to protect ourselves from those dangers. There are two guidelines you can use on a daily basis to determine the severity of the risk. One is the UV index, while the other is less scientific but nonetheless reliable – your shadow.

The UV index is generally available in the daily newspapers and on television wherever you are in the world. In the tropics the UV reading is likely to exceed 10 and you should therefore seek shade, wear a wide brimmed hat as well as sunglasses and avoid exposure between 11:00 and 2:00 when the sun is at its peak. Regardless of the UV reading, the UV risk is greatest between those hours. Look for your shadow. At mid-day with the sun overhead your shadow will be shorter than you are. If it's longer than you are the sun is either climbing or starting to set. At a minimum and regardless of whether or not you require a refractive correction, you should make sure you have a good pair of sunglasses.

The frame should be large enough to give you protection from top and bottom and on all sides. As a rule of thumb, if you can look up, down and to each side and see beyond the edge of your frame, you don't have enough coverage. After all, if you can peek out, the sun can peek in.

If you're a contact lens wearer, there are contact lenses that provide some UV protection but don't forget that the contact lenses cover only your cornea and if you wear rigid gas permeable lenses they don't even cover that much. Your sclera (the white part of your eyes) also needs protection. And don't forget the eyelids.

For a sunglass-specific lens the colour of the lens should be dense enough so that you can just barely make out the outline of your eyes when you look in a mirror. Optimum blockage is 85% or, conversely, 15% transmission of light. If it is any darker than that your pupil will automatically enlarge to let in more light, just as it does if you go into a darkened room. If you're letting in more light, you're letting in more UV and you've defeated the purpose of the sunglasses.

For lenses that darken in response to the light (photochromic lenses), remember that although they may provide identical blockage/transmission in their darkened state, it takes a few minutes for them to darken to provide maximum protection and another few minutes to return to their fully lightened condition when you go indoors.

If you've had laser eye surgery it's even more important that you obtain good sunglass protection. Once the integrity of the cornea has been compromised it becomes more susceptible to the negative impact of UV radiation. The lens implants that are used in cataract surgery today most likely contain UV filtration properties however people who had cataract surgery some time ago may not have had lens implants that offer UV protection. Even with the best protection the lens implant can offer, your sclera and eyelids will have the same vulnerability as those of the contact lens wearer. Solid sunglass protection is a must.

And don't forget your kids. Kids are outside more than adults and get three times the sun exposure. They also have immature skin cells that are still developing and that are therefore more vulnerable to UV. Yet statistics show that their parents are far more likely to ensure they have sunscreen than they are likely to arrange for eye protection.

Wrap-around sunglasses with a 15% transmission lens provide an excellent choice. A polarized lens is an environment-specific choice that combats glare conditions such as snow, sand and ice. (Did you know that old snow results in less glare than new snow?) But in many cases the wraparound style isn't suited to prescription wear. If you require a prescription, many of today's frames have as an option, optical quality clip-on sunglasses. These clip-ons match the shape and size of your optical frame and adhere to the frame front through the use of magnets. If you are physically very active you may choose to have a separate pair of prescription glasses dedicated to outdoor use.

It's true. Selecting the right sun protection for your eyes is not only a serious challenge but it requires expert guidance. But... take heart! Your dispensing optician can point you in the right direction.



The OAC Is Working For You

Don't Forget:
When you renew your OAC membership each year you will receive **8 free continuing education modules**

Con Ed Online continues to improve. Our catalogue of modules has grown to include the videotaped lectures from both Vision Canada Vancouver and Vision Canada Niagara Falls.

The National Coalition for Vision Health, of which the OAC is a member, is holding a two-day workshop devoted to developing a National Framework for Action to Promote Eye Health, Avoidable Blindness & vision Loss. It is important for opticians to be included in the ultimate equation.

Visit Us On the WEB:
www.opticians.ca

French Opticians Now Able to Provide Refractions for Consumers &

Bill Government Plans for Their Services

Great Britain is very interested in mirroring the recent legislative decisions made in France concerning optician-provided refractions. Starting from the day when the order in council is published for the Social Security budget of 2007, French opticians will be able to update the prescription of their clients' eyeglasses without a new prescription within 3 years of the original prescription by an optometrists. They will also be able to bill the government for this insured service.

In the British health services reform committee, the British government has just announced broad proposals for the General Optical Council, the ophthalmic branch of the National Health Service (NHS) Britain's health system.

The "tool kit" as outlined after an extensive study of the trends and practices of vision care in Britain, proposes that local NHS agencies should delegate some vision services to opticians and optometrists. A report/study by the economist Nick Bosanquet, an expert in health issues, notes in particular that opticians can conduct sight tests and screen for certain pathologies. Optometrists could then prescribe pharmaceutical drugs for ocular diseases similar to some Canadian provinces.

Of particular note is that the British proposals have been favourably received by stakeholders including the College of Optometrists, the Association of Optometrists, the Association of British Dispensing Opticians and the Federation of Ophthalmic & Dispensing Opticians.

This is certainly good news to Canadian opticians who have to date been facing strenuous opposition from optometric organizations both inside and outside Canada.

Excerpts Taken From French News Release 19/01/07

What Do Opticians Earn?

We often get requests from opticians and employers asking what the starting salary is for an optician. Here are the results of two separate surveys that may help guide you in your salary discussions. Table 1 gives you a salary

range based on years of service. Tables 2 and three indicate the percentage of the total respondents in a particular salary category. Table 2 is arranged according to salary level from lowest to highest according to salary range. Table 3 is arranged according to the percentage of re-

spondents who fell within a given salary range. You can see that the largest number of opticians by far earn over \$41,000/year (49.89%) but there is still a significant percentage of our colleagues earning under \$30,000/year. This may be accounted for by regional economic disparities. Whatever the reason, Table 1 clearly indicates that what you bring to the table when applying for a job—experience and specialty— can make a difference in how much you earn.

TABLE 1 BY YEARS		
Yrs of Service	Optician (eyeglass)	Optician (contact Lens)
1-5	\$34,000	\$50,000
6-10	\$39,000	\$52,000
11-15	\$40,000	\$57,000
16-21	\$46,000	\$61,000
21 +	\$57,000	\$65,000

TABLE 2 BY SALARY	
Salary	% Of Total Polled
\$20,00-\$25,000	13.20%
\$26,000-\$30,000	13.59%
\$31,000-\$35,000	12.43%
\$36,000-\$40,000	10.87%
\$41,000-\$50,000	16.69%
\$51,000-\$60,000	17.86%
Over \$60,000	15.34%

TABLE 3 BY %AGE	
% Of Total Polled	Salary
15.34%	Over \$60,000
17.86%	\$51,000-\$60,000
16.69%	\$41,000-\$50,000
13.59%	\$26,000-\$30,000
13.20%	\$20,000-\$25,000
12.43%	\$31,000-\$35,000
10.87%	\$36,000-\$40,000