

# Opticians Association of Canada



## Newsletter

April 2008

President's message

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The Opticians Association of Canada (OAC) has devoted much of its time this past twelve months reviewing structures and goals as well as evaluating services. The OAC's provides several types of services for its members: Sustaining services; Assisting services and Leadership. Assisting and sustaining services help you on an immediate basis.

### Leadership

Sustaining and assisting services are obvious to you on a day-to-day basis. It's not so easy for you to see and appreciate the leadership role the OAC plays. The Opticians Association of Canada believes we are at a time when strong national leadership is fundamental to moving our profession forward. We cannot afford to be complacent and believe the current model of dispensing will survive. The business or retail part of dispensing will shift with competitive retail models - that is clear. But what form will it take? The Optician as a vision care professional will endure only if Opticians can see the changes that need to be made and work together toward making those changes.

Why do we need to change? Governments are altering their approach to professional regulation. There is a groundswell of belief that the public is best served by economy of regulation. Governments are starting to talk about collaborative practice amongst professionals with overlapping scopes of practice? What would collaborative practice look like? It could be good for Opticians. Will Opticians participate in developing the model? Will they be equal partners with the other 'O's? Is it even possible for a collaborative relationship between vision care professionals? Only if we participate. And you can bet the OAC will be participating on your behalf.

Stay connected. Keep in touch with us. Let us know what you need and what you hear. Together we are strong.

Winston Churchill once said, "Change is the price of survival." Collective change requires preparation and vision.

Lorne Kashin, President OAC

Visit Our Website For More In Depth Reporting On The Stories Highlighted In This Newsletter:

- Legislative Overview
- Opticians Survey
- Upcoming Events
- OAC Con Ed Library Updated
- Liability insurance now a requirement for Opticians in Nova Scotia

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## Importance of e-mail Addresses

The most timely and efficient way for the OAC to communicate with Canadian Opticians is through e-mail. When we have your e-mail address we can include you in surveys and study groups. We can reduce printing and mailing costs. We can send you important documents that increase your awareness of the political scene. We guarantee your privacy will be respected.

## Opticians Survey

The OAC office often receives calls from opticians and employers of opticians requesting information about the average salary paid in Canada. As a result several years ago the OAC undertook to gather information via a poll on our website. We posted that information in a previous issue of our newsletter. Recently we undertook to do a much broader survey and sent it out electronically to members who have supplied us with their e-mail addresses. The results of that survey will appear in the March/April issue of Vision Magazine but can also be viewed at the OAC web-

site. We can't say there's a true Canadian average since there are provincial disparities as well as differences due to length of service, job description and specialty training. There was limited response from some provinces so the survey results cannot be applied where the sample was small.

To get an even broader response we are now inviting opticians to take time to complete our survey which is also posted on our website at [www.opticians.ca](http://www.opticians.ca).

### **Directors**

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## Legislative Update

**British Columbia**—The BC Opticians Regulation that will allow Opticians to provide automated sight tests is still waiting implementation. The good news is the recently released report of the government's Conversation on Health describes principles that continue to support endorsement of this regulation. The College of Opticians of British Columbia has initiated legal action against an Internet seller of contact lenses—Coastal Contacts. The case was to be heard near the end of March but has been rescheduled to April.

**Alberta**—The Alberta regulatory body, The Alberta Opticians Association, posted a draft Standard of Practice in December. It awaits implementation. The OAC has been invited by the Alberta government, along with other stakeholders to comment on its amendments to the Health Professions Act and the Medical Act.

**Ontario**—The College of Opticians of Ontario Quality Assurance Committee has recently revised its definitions and requirements. Of note, it now allows continuing education credits awarded to members of study groups.

HPRAC—the Ontario Health Professions Regulatory Advisory Council has invited stakeholders to comment on collaborative models of professional regulation. It is the thought of the Ministry that common Standards of Practice where Scopes of Practice overlap would be of benefit to public expectation of service. For more information on this issue e-mail us at [info@opticians.bc.ca](mailto:info@opticians.bc.ca).

**Nova Scotia**—With the passage of the new Opticians Act in Nova Scotia the regulatory body now becomes the Nova Scotia College of Opticians. As well, Nova Scotia opticians will now be required to maintain liability insurance.

**Ontario Optometrists Challenge the College of Optometrists of Ontario**—Ontario optometrists are split in their views about freedom of association with opticians. Currently the Ontario regulation prevents optometrists from hiring opticians or working for opticians. The bi-weekly newsletter Capsule Dot Clip has been running a very interesting electronic conversation amongst several optometrists who have weighed in on the issue. Here's an example, "Ontario has been holding back Optometry in Canada for decades. Free association, open advertising, employment... its the way things are going. Look South of the border; look west and you will see it. Our patients will benefit with greater access to care. It may be that Optometry will go down the same path of Pharmacy." It would be worth your time to visit the Capsule Dot Clip site and follow along as the debate continues.

<http://www.infoclip.ca/cgi-bin/portail.pl>

**Cosmetic Contact Lenses**—The OAC along with the Canadian Association of Optometrists (CAO) and the Canadian Ophthalmological Society (COS) have for several years met with Health Canada in an effort to remove plano coloured contact lenses from their 'cosmetic' category to the same category as all other contact lenses—'medical devices'. When those discussions failed the three 'O's decided to work legislatively. The CAO volunteered its PR firm to guide us through the process and finally the announcement was made that Motion M-409 was passed on the floor of the house on March 10, 2008. But there are still steps to be taken. This gives direction to government for a specific action and the need for a regulatory change either thru the Hazardous Product Act or Food and Drug Act.

## New Modules Added to the OAC Con Ed Library

This year the OAC has added many new modules to its continuing education library. When you take out or renew your membership with the OAC you will receive 4 con ed credits of your choice. These modules can be sent to you via e-mail or in hard copy. Another continuing education option is our online web page where you can complete your continuing education module post test online and print out your own con ed certificate. The online library consists of all our hard copy modules as well as video recordings of lectures from Vision Canada educational series over the past few years.

## Upcoming Events

**BC:** April 21, Prince George  
June 10, Vancouver, B.C.  
June 11, Victoria, B.C.  
**AB:** May 24 & 25 Calgary  
**NS:** May 4 Halifax  
**PEI:** May 2 Charlottetown  
**NS:** November 7, 8, & 9 Halifax

**Lectures by AMO & Hoya**  
**Workshop by Optelec**  
**Workshop by Optelec**  
**AOA Annual General Meeting & Conference**  
**Inaugural Meeting of NSBDO**  
**OAC Board Meeting**  
**Vision Canada**