



PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Non-Corrective Contact Lenses Become Medical Devices

Bill C-313 has received royal assent

Ottawa, December 17, 2012 – The eye health professions are pleased to announce that *Bill C-313 – An Act to amend the Food and Drug Act* received royal assent on Friday. The bill places federal regulatory controls on the distribution and sales of non-corrective contact lenses. However, provincial regulations still do not address the health risks associated with non-corrective contact lenses.

Pat Davidson, MP for Sarnia-Lambton, brought forward the private member's bill in early October 2011. The eye health professions (ophthalmologists, optometrists and opticians) have been advocating for this change for over ten years. Concerns raised about these products included: the lack of information available at the point of purchase on appropriate use and care; contact lenses are not a one-size-fits-all product; and not everyone is a candidate to wear contact lenses. The primary causes of contact lens complications are due to improper use and care and the fact that 50% of non-corrective lens wearers are first time contact lens users. Non-corrective contact lenses are only available in one base curve size. When fitting for corrective contact lenses the eye care professional measures the base curve and prescribes the brand with the appropriate measurement for the user. Improper use or an ill-fitting contact lens will present a variety of eye health risks that may include corneal scarring and abrasions.

C-313 will classify non-corrective contact lenses as class II medical devices under the Food and Drug Act. This will require manufacturers of non-corrective contact lenses to apply for a medical device license to sell the products in Canada. As well, importers and distributors of the products will be required to obtain a medical device establishment license. In addition to the licensing requirements, there are specific standards for labeling required for class II medical devices.

MP Pat Davidson stated, *"Today marks the culmination of a long process to bring federal oversight to this industry in order to address consumer protection concerns by declaring non-corrective lenses to be class II medical devices. This will allow for regulatory oversight by Health Canada to ensure that producers, importers and retailers in Canada will require the necessary licensing associated with distributing a class II medical device and will greatly enhance consumer protections concerning the growing cosmetic lens industry."*

Bill C-313 was a common sense initiative that aligned products with the same risks under the same regulatory environment. What C-313 will not address is the prescribing and dispensing regulations which are provincially determined. The eye care professionals are hoping the provincial regulatory bodies and ministries of health use the royal assent of C-313 as an impetus to update regulatory controls on non-corrective contact lenses to match those in place for corrective contact lenses.

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