NOTES FROM THE CHAIR

John Butler | Chairman of the Board

This year, the Nova Scotia Health and Wellness Office of the Minister granted the NSCDO an additional member to the Board of Directors. We would like to welcome Anne Cox to the Board of Directors. Additionally, The College is happy to announce we have a new Registrar, Brigitte MacInnes. Brigitte started in September 2018 and comes to us with a wealth of experience and knowledge having been a Registrar and Director of Student Services at both the College and University levels. She will help the NSCDO advance in online registration, the creation of a members/individual portal and overall, making the office an up-to-date, user-friendly environment.

The College can be a very interesting and rewarding way to give back to your profession. There are numerous ways to be involved with the College and there are many committees, provincially and nationally, requiring NS representation. If you have a strong interest, and would like to get involved, please let a member of the Board or the Registrar know.

Did you know that most inquiries coming into the Board office can be answered on the NSCDO website at www.nscdo.ca? Please take the time to visit the website and review the information offered there as you may find it can be very informative. The NSCDO is involved with education (NEC), labour mobility including the new development for Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR), competency gap analysis (CGA), OCC, OAC and NAIT. NSCDO and the NSSDO continue to work with UWDG (Unregulated Working Dispensing Group). These are some of the groups working for the betterment of Opticians in Nova Scotia and in Canada.

I would like to thank the Directors on the Board and the Opticians on the many committees for their hard work. Because of their involvement we continue to grow in our professionalism as Opticians.

The NSCDO is dedicated to supporting opticians in their delivery of high quality, safe and ethical care to the public of Nova Scotia. The College works diligently to maintain and advance our profession for the betterment of both the public and Opticians.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

5:30 pm, Wednesday, June 5, 2019
Main Floor Boardroom, 1718 Argyle Street, Halifax, NS

*Please RSVP by May 31, 2019
The purpose of the National Association of Canadian Optician Regulators (NACOR), is to support the provincial regulatory boards and colleges by being a forum for information distribution, and tool development and sharing. NACOR is staffed by two full-time employees, Jodi Dodds and Jaime Hay. This year the two national meetings were held in April and October with one or more representatives from every province in attendance. In Nova Scotia, Tanya MacPhee and Glenna Locke were in attendance at the April 2018 and October 2018 meetings.

Many projects are in progress but one very interesting NACOR endeavor this past year included the competency document revision. The current document is nearing six years old and is in need of an update to keep the profession current.

The process was thorough, involving multiple steps which began in March of 2018, followed by a gap analysis from April to June. Drafting occurred June to August, followed by revisions in August until September. Interim approval or pre-approval took place October to November. Validation surveys were completed December to January and finally, the final validation, in February of 2019. It was a big job! Dozen of Opticians were involved from start to finish. All domains were modified and a more comprehensive section on refracting and low vision will now be included.

Why is refracting included in the competencies? Several reasons actually. This document will provide a comprehensive tool to identify the competencies required for safe and effective practice for those already refracting, such as in BC. This document is also for licensed opticians who live in provinces where scope of practice may expand to include refracting, not-to-mention those opticians who are working or will work in supportive roles in optometry or ophthalmology in any province. A more comprehensive version of low vision will also be included to address the need of the aging population.

Within the next few years, schools offering an accredited optical program will need to include refraction in their curriculum. Sounds exciting, doesn’t it? In the future, opticians will leave school trained in all three areas of expertise…eyeglasses, contact lenses and refracting. It always seemed strange to me that opticians were taught all of the different layer of the retina, aqueous fluid, the crystalline lens and so on, but nothing on refracting! But, soon, opticians will graduate from their optical programs, already prepared for regulatory changes that may come their way and able to work collaboratively with other eye health practitioners to the full scope of practice anywhere in the country.

I am enthused by the efforts and accomplishments made this past year by NACOR. This is a very collaborative and effective group with measurable results. I look forward to seeing what future projects NACOR will take on.
The National Exam Committee meeting were held in Montreal, February 9th and 10th, 2019. This year, all of the time was allocated to the validation of the newest edition of The National Competencies for Canadian Opticians. Roughly 1700 opticians across Canada, including 50 from Nova Scotia, participated in a survey between December 2018 and January 2019.

The meeting participants included regulators, educators and associations to provide a wide range of perspectives. The participants were licensed opticians, representing most provinces in Canada. From Nova Scotia, Tanya MacPhee and Eric Hahn were in attendance. The meetings were facilitated by Dr. John Wickett of Wickett Measurement Systems, appropriately chosen because competency development and review are his areas of expertise.

The meetings began with clear instructions and survey statistics were reviewed. Every competency statement was individually accepted, edited or deleted. These decisions were final and will be implemented into the new competency document in the coming months. The National Competencies for Canada Opticians document guide the development of education, continuing education and exams. We can expect to see changes being implemented in the future.

Continuing Education is an important part of any profession. As an Optician it is equally important to continue to do CE to keep your mind sharp, to expand your scope of practice, and to also get all those important credits for your license.

NSCDO has approved MANY seminars this year, some have been on-line, live presentations given by suppliers, and also CPR courses. REMEMBER: It is IMPORTANT that the presenters submit their information and fill out the required form from the NSCDO website at www.nscdo.ca, “Continuing Education Providers”. We have had a couple of presentations where the presenters did NOT submit any information for their presentations, and because of this the NSCDO was unable to approve the seminars.

NACOR approved presentations/seminars MUST be submitted to NSCDO for approval. These CE’s could have different values in Nova Scotia.

If you are attending a course or seminar and you want confirmation of accreditation or any other information, please contact the Registrar, Brigitte, at Registrar@NSCDO.org
Glenna Locke

The Opticians Council of Canada is comprised of three members organizations: National Association of Canadian Optician Regulators (NACOR), Opticians Association of Canada (OAC) and Canadian Association of Opticianry Educators (CAOE).

The mission of the OCC: Keeping Opticianry Relevant.

The Opticians Council of Canada (OCC) met in May and October 2018 in Quebec for National Meetings.

The OAC announced that they will not be renewing their membership with the OCC for 2019.

The new "Become an Optician” website was launched by FUTE Marketing. The site provides information on how to become an Optician including links to all accredited Optician programs in Canada, links to all associations, regulatory offices and government information. There are also testimonials on what it is like to be an Optician. Find the link to the website at: becomeanoptician.com

Refracting initiatives update: Lorne Kashin (OAC) ad Fazal Khan (NACOR) both from Ontario, along with Laura Greer (Hill & Knowlton PR Firm) have spoken to Allison Henry of the Ministry of Health about refraction. The Ministry was impressed that the first step in the plan is the education of all Opticians and referenced Optometry with their move in to therapeutics as this was successful. There is a new government in Ontario and once settled they expect meetings with governance, Alberta (Maureen Hussey) reported that they have the support of Ophthalmologists and the Physicians and Surgeons but Optometry has withheld their comments until they get official documents from government.

The OAC continues with educational enrolment through partnership with NAIT. The French OAC/NAIT Optical program has been a great success.

CAOE: Educators from Stenberg, Seneca, NAIT, Georgian, Douglas, Oulton, CCNB, and La Cite were in attendance. There was 100% agreement that the schools could move forward with refraction in the theory portion of the programs. The CAOE filed a motion to begin conversations with regulators surrounding participation of the CAOE on the NEC (National Exam Committee) and to re-examine the examination protocol. The CAOE and the regulators addressed topics on the exam process and this resulted in solutions being proposed.

The Opticians Council of Canada’s 2019 meeting: April 26 in Calgary, Alberta.
NOMINATION COMMITTEE
Glenna Locke

NSCDO sent out a call for nominations asking that Opticians interested in serving on the Board of Directors to submit their names, along with a bio/resume, to Ms. Glenna Locke, Chair of the Nomination Committee.

Several Candidates showed interest and all current Board Members have indicated their willingness to re-offer to serve for the next two years.

As there are more nominees than available positions, an electronic ballot will be forwarded to you by May 22, 2019. Votes should be received no later than May 29, 2019, and the results will be announced at the AGM on June 5, 2019.

If you have any questions, please refer to our By-laws or contact the College at registrar@nscdo.org

BOARD OF DIRECTORS
John Butler; Chair
Glenna Locke; Vice Chair
Shelley Smith Bona; Treasurer
Brigitte MacInnes; Registrar
Lynn Countway; Director
Anne Cox, Director
Angela Hume; Director
Susan Long; Director
Tanya MacPhee; Director
Marion Ripley; Director
Graham Sweett; Director

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