



**The Nova Scotia
College of Dispensing Opticians**

2011 NEWSLETTER

**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
MAY 1, 2011
DARTMOUTH, NOVASCOTIA**

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NOTES FROM THE CHAIR

In June of 2010, two members of the Board of Directors stepped down. Dr. Lystra Dayal-Gosine and Greg Gillam served many years for the betterment of opticianry. Their presence will be missed and their dedication applauded! On behalf of all Opticians in Nova Scotia, I extend our thanks. I also wish to welcome two new members, Melanie Kenney and Sindy Strong who started in 2010 and bring fresh ideas and enthusiasm.

A number of Opticians across Canada have completed the Automated Refracting Theory course on-line through the OAC and NAIT. Approximately 10% of Nova Scotia Opticians have taken this course which is open to all opticians (with or without contact lens certification). This program is very well received and is mandatory for Opticians in British Columbia who want to perform automated sight tests. I think education such as this will become the norm for opticians in the future. The higher the percentage of us who are trained in this, the easier it will be for us to change our scope of practice in Nova Scotia. Contact NSSDO for course information.

In June 2010, Success College posted information on their website offering an Eyeglass Dispensing Course. NSCDO informed them of the accreditation process now in place and how they could apply. We asked that they remove mention of the NSCDO in their information about the course. At this point Success College is still not accredited, nor have they applied to NACOR to be accredited. B. C. College of Optics has a non-accredited course, if a student graduates from a non-accredited course, you cannot go directly to final practical examinations.

Opticianry in Canada has never been so exciting, fast moving and rewarding! I hope to see everyone at our AGM in May!

Tom Burlock

Disclaimer: A new section on the renewal form this year deals with releasing your contact information to other optical stakeholders. With so many groups working for the betterment of Opticians (NSSDO; NACOR; OAC; OCC; Licensed Optician.ca, etc.). The more efficient our communication, the better we will work together.

NACOR REPORT

NACOR has applied to Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC) for a grant to do a GAP analysis of all competencies (eye glasses; contact lenses; refractions); data base harmonization; web-site harmonization; and a complete review of registration examinations. This will allow all provinces to up-grade their data banks and make web-sites able to do on-line registration as well as simplify moving from one province to another.

We are also completing a registration process that is equal across all provinces. Government has asked us to be able to deal fairly and consistently with people moving to Canada or from other provinces within Canada. We now can access the knowledge of a candidate while still in their home country. This will allow them to know where they stand in the registration pathway and what up-grades or further examinations they require when they arrive.

Tom Burlock

REGISTRAR'S REPORT

As of December 31, 2010, the number of Dispensing Opticians was 222, this includes 10 Non-Practicing, Contact Lens Fitters was 53, Dispensing Students was 19 and 6 Contact Lens Students.

On February 23, 2011 the Board of Directors of the College approved Dispensing Students may obtain a student license upon enrolment into the program, providing they have a sponsor(s) and the sponsor meets the requirements.

Bev Sample, Registrar

Eye Exams Signage

The NSCDO has received complaints from the Nova Scotia College of Optometry regarding the wording in some advertisements for eye examinations by Dispensaries. The complaint suggests that these dispensaries are in violation of the Optometric Act and the Dispensing Opticians Act section 21(g) (1x) as it defines “professional misconduct” includes such conduct or acts relevant to the practice of optical dispensing that, having regard to all of the circumstances, would reasonably be regarded as disgraceful, dishonorable or unprofessional which, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, may include (ix) publishing, or causing to be published, any advertisement that is false, fraudulent, deceptive or misleading.

The complaint implies that advertising stating “Eye Exams” suggests that eye examinations can be performed by persons who are not licensed to do so.

While work is being done by NSCDO to seek to expand the scope of practice for opticians respecting sight testing, our current legislation does not allow for sight testing or the performance of full eye exams by opticians.

The College is in the process of developing guidelines respecting advertising to assist members in understanding their legal and ethical responsibilities. Until those are available, we remind members of their obligations under the current Dispensing Opticians Act, to not publish any advertisement that is false, fraudulent, deceptive or misleading. The College also reminds its members, of the provisions in the Optometry Act that prohibits persons other than licensed optometrists from any advertising that implies or leads a person to believe that they are entitled to examine “the human eye and its adnexa by any acceptable procedure to diagnose visual defects or abnormal conditions”. The College of Optometrists has the authority to prosecute individuals it believes is violating its legislation.”

Nomination Committee

Looking for Candidates:

The nomination committee is seeking Opticians who are interested in serving on the College Board of Directors. An interested member is encouraged to forward his or her name with a short bio to the Board Office. A Candidates name will be brought forward by the Nomination Committee Chair, as a replacement for those Directors who have completed their mandate as College Directors. An election, if necessary, will take place at the May 1, 2011 Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Nova Scotia College of Dispensing Opticians in Dartmouth. The Board of Directors of the College is composed of:

- (a) the officers of the Board, who are the Chair, the Past Chair, the Vice-Chair and the Treasurer, each of whom must hold a practicing licence;
- (b) three persons, at least two of whom hold practising licences; and
- (c) no fewer than two and no more than three persons appointed by the Governor in Council who
 - (i) are not members of the College,
 - (ii) are not optometrists or ophthalmologists, and
 - (iii) have shown an interest in serving on the Board.

Robert MacLeod
Chair, Nomination Committee
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Investigation Committee

The NSCDO would like to remind all members, the College continues to send out our Investigator to conduct random inspections throughout the province.

We encourage you to contact the College with any questions or to make a report.

Professional Development

The Professional Development Guidelines have been updated to include 2 credits per year given to Sponsors of dispensing and contact lens students.

There are 4 categories of mandatory continuing education; 1. Eyeglass Dispensing; 2. Contact Lens Dispensing; 3. Professional Services; 4. Related Fields. The Guidelines, Section 3 (1) & (2) explain clearly, the breakdown of how many credits from each category you can use each year.

It is important to remember three criteria about each continuing education activity you complete (a) the topic, (b) the credit value and (c) the source of the material.

For your convenience a copy of the Guidelines is included with this Newsletter.

If you have a seminar or course for Professional Development, send your information to the College Office at nscdo@ns.aliantzinc.ca. The request for approval must be received in the office at least two weeks, prior to the event.

Copies of the Guidelines for approval of Professional Development Seminars will be sent out upon request.

Marion Ripley

Sight Testing Committee

The Sight Testing Committee is a working Committee comprised of members of the NS College of Dispensing Opticians (NSCDO) and the NS Society of Dispensing Opticians (NSSDO). Our legal advisor has recently met with and updated Senior Officials from the Department of Health, on the status of sight testing by Opticians in other jurisdictions in Canada, namely British Columbia, Alberta and Ontario.

Our legal council was also successful in arranging a meeting in March, to discuss moving forward the Sight Testing initiative in the province of Nova Scotia.

During our preliminary meetings with Government to discuss the addition of sight-testing within the scope of practice of Nova Scotia Opticians, the Committee was left with the impression Governments of today are open to the idea, of advancing technology and the

political climate may well be right, for our government to consider Automated Sight Testing in this province. To date a number of Opticians have taken the automated course and a few more have also taken the in-depth refracting course offered by the Northern Alberta Institute of Technology (NAIT) to interested members of our profession.

I encourage membership to consider taking these courses as it greatly improves your understanding of refraction and gives more meaning to how a prescription was derived to correct visual anomalies' like myopia , hyperopia, presbyopia and astigmatism.

Unbundling of sight-testing services from eye-health examinations can provide a safe, more economical and accessible choice to the consumer. Trained sight-testing opticians could service their clients with minor updates to their corrective lens powers between eye health examinations. British Columbia and Alberta opticians have been successfully performing automated sight-tests for over a decade and in May 2010 British Columbia became the first province in Canada, to allow Sight Tests performed by Opticians within the guidelines established by the BC College of Opticians.

The Sight Testing Committee is dedicated and willing to lobby Government, to make this scope of practice increase a reality for Nova Scotia Opticians, as well as to provide the consumer with a alternate choice for a sight test.

Robert MacLeod

Board of Directors

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