



Working Together in
6,500 Communities

Annual Report for the American Optometric Association
*Program Year 2007-2008



American Optometric Association

A Letter from the **President**



The American Optometric Association's 110th Program Year

The American Optometric Association's 110th program year was a shining success for our profession as we rightly assumed a role of leadership in the communities we serve. It was my pleasure during the year to experience firsthand in Canada, Europe and South Korea how we are making a difference in the global community. But I also saw how we are transforming eye and vision care in small and urban communities across the country—dinner at a member's home in Georgia; or driving around Branson with a certain Wisconsin OD, searching for a specialty store; or sharing a member's passion for astronomy in Arizona—special moments like these personalize the experience of organized optometry.

The presidency of the AOA is a unique place to get an understanding of the full impact of what members of our profession—and this association—contribute to good patient care and the welfare of the communities where we live. And speaking of impact, this year we said "farewell" to Dr. Mike Jones who served as executive director of the AOA for 10 years — doing so with distinction and dedication.

The year has seen the AOA Board, AOA staff and dedicated AOA volunteers working hard for both members and patients as we strive to create programs helpful to the profession and face controversial issues head on. And what a productive year we had! Allow me to review just a few of the things we accomplished on your behalf:

- We developed a diabetic co-management report form to encourage optometrists to communicate patients' eye health status to other health care providers;
- Through our legislative efforts and record AOA-PAC contributions, our influence in Washington continues to grow;
- We joined with five other national optometric organizations to form the Joint Board Certification

Project Team to explore the topic of continued competency;

- Through our affiliation with Hill & Knowlton, optometry continues to be a go-to source for major media across the country;
- A successful Electronic Health Records seminar was hosted in January;
- InfantSEE® was awarded a \$438,000 congressional appropriation to continue the good work the program has begun;
- We have established the National Commission for Vision and Health — a true optometric "think tank" for public health policy;
- Optometry's Fund for Disaster Relief was used to assist optometrists who were affected by the wildfires and tornadoes.
- The AOA continues to supply members with updates to the ever-changing NPI and PQRI scene;
- We introduced AOACodingToday.com to help members better manage the details of their practices;

And we've done so much more. As you read the year's highlights on the following pages, I hope you begin to share my appreciation for the breadth and impact of the work of the AOA, and of each one of you. It's certainly true that we are all working together—in 6,500 communities.

Sincerely,

Kevin Alexander, O.D., Ph.D.,
President, American Optometric Association,
2007-2008

Community with a Global View

To protect and promote our profession for the benefit of our patients and practices.

“A man's feet should be planted in his country,
but his eyes should survey the world.”

--George Santayana



More than a century ago, the profession of optometry was founded by a small group of spectacle makers. From a tiny community of merchants and craftsmen, the field of optometry has grown into the American Optometric Association, a distinguished and essential component of American health care, and a beacon for worldwide eye and vision care.

For generations of distinguished leaders, committed caregivers and skilled professionals, the AOA has provided the common ground where shared aspirations can flourish. Built upon the collective energy, vision and efforts of many, the AOA has earned the esteem of its peers in other professions and established a reputation

among policymakers that is enviable and effective. Working together in thousands of places, today's optometrists are highly qualified, trained doctors on the frontline of eye and vision care who examine, diagnose, treat and manage diseases and disorders of the eye. Optometrists serve patients in nearly 6,500 communities across the country, and in 3,500 of those communities are the only eye doctors. Doctors of optometry provide more than two-thirds of all primary eye care in the United States.

The AOA helps those doctors of optometry achieve more – together and separately – than they could ever accomplish alone.



From left, AOA President-elect Peter Kehoe, O.D., meets with Lt. Col. Donovan Green, O.D., and Rep. John Boozman, O.D. (R-Ark.), original sponsor of the Military Eye Trauma Act.

Georgia Optometric Association President John Whitlow, O.D., testifies on behalf of optometry during a Nov. 8, 2007, hearing before the U.S. House Committee on Small Business' Subcommittee on Regulations, Health Care and Trade. He detailed the harmful impact of Medicare reimbursement cuts on solo and small-scale optometric practices.



Community of Responsible Citizens

A strong community calls for active citizens, vigorously engaged in the democratic process, speaking up for what's right. The AOA has become highly adept at opening doors, shaping messages, and giving voice to those ideals.



With the help of concerned doctors and students from across the country, the AOA:

- Prevented the enactment of a massive Medicare payment cut to ODs and other Medicare physicians and replaced it with a 0.5 percent positive payment update. The scheduled fee cut would have slashed reimbursement levels more than 10 percent.
- Worked tirelessly to ensure better care for America's wounded warriors through the enactment of the AOA-backed Military Eye Trauma Treatment Act sponsored by Rep. John Boozman, O.D. (R-Ark.).
- Helped defeat the anti-optometry "Sullivan Bill II" (H.R. 2260), which sought to diminish optometric education and to govern every optometrist-patient relationship.
- Helped extend — at existing funding levels — the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP), which allows states to continue to serve about 6 million children and eligible adults nationwide.
- Brought violations of the Fairness to Contact Lens Consumers Act by Internet contact lens sellers, such as those by 1-800 Contacts, to the attention of federal enforcement officials and congressional leaders.
- Secured support for the Contact Lens and Consumer Health Protection Act (H.R. 2012), an AOA-backed bill to launch a federal crackdown on the anti-patient activities of unscrupulous Internet contact lens sellers.
- Secured new backers for the National Health Service Corps Improvement Act (H.R. 1884), a bill to end the exclusion of ODs from the National Health Service Corps student loan and repayment programs and offer federal incentives to attract health providers to medically underserved areas.
- Successfully sought more congressional co-sponsors to sign on to the Optometric Equity in Medicaid Act (H.R. 1983), an AOA-backed bill to extend physician status to optometrists under the Medicaid program. The bill was the focus of a misinformation campaign by ophthalmology, the American Society of Cataract and Refractive Surgeons and the American Medical Association.
- Foiled a Health Resources and Security Administration plan to eliminate vision care from designated Medically Underserved Populations and Health Profession Shortage Areas. The agency proposal would have excluded vision care from an important federal designation and would have negatively impacted care for millions of medically underserved Americans.
- Secured a leading role for optometry in numerous briefings on Capitol Hill promoting public health issues such as the Vision Care for Kids Act (H.R. 507/ S. 1117).

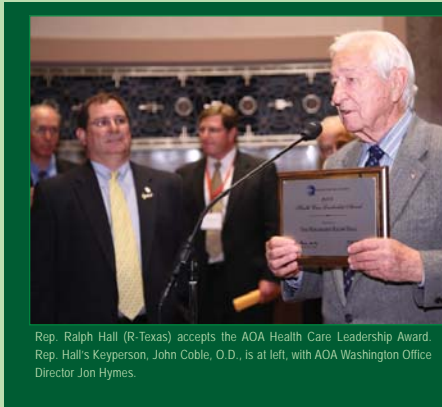


Michele Haranin, O.D., chair of the Federal Relations Committee, addresses attendees at the Congressional Advocacy Conference.

- This year, Federal Legislative Action and Keyperson (FLAK) Committee members helped plan and execute optometry's largest and most successful Congressional Advocacy Conference to date. In April 2008, more than 420 ODs and students represented the profession at the three-day conference where virtually every congressional office was educated about optometry and learned more about the AOA's legislative priorities.
- Nearly two dozen optometry-only and optometry-led fundraisers were held this year to assist the campaigns of pro-optometry members of Congress and candidates. These "hometown" events helped to elect and re-elect federal candidates that support optometry.
- The Federal Keyperson program surpassed an all-time record for doctor participation, reaching nearly every member of Congress.
- In an effort to highlight the good that the profession is doing nationwide, the Professional Relations Committee boosted optometric participation in a number of meetings and conventions, including the

2008 AARP convention as well as in meetings of the National Chronic Disease Directors Vision and Eye Health workgroup.

- In the last program year, the AOA safeguarded and oversaw optometry's role as the exclusive provider of vision screenings at the Veterans of Foreign Wars annual convention, which is the largest gathering of U.S. veterans in the country.
- This year was a record-setting year for AOA-PAC. More money was raised in the past program year than in any previous year. However, while AOA-PAC came close to hitting the \$2 million target for the recent election cycle, the need to continue to support pro-optometry candidates has never been greater.
- Highlighting optometry's commitment to American service members, an AOA-led delegation toured the Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, D.C., in May 2008. Meeting with a number of wounded warriors and the ODs that care for them, the aim of the visit was to ensure full implementation of the Military Eye Trauma Treatment Act.



Rep. Ralph Hall (R-Texas) accepts the AOA Health Care Leadership Award. Rep. Hall's Keyperson, John Coble, O.D., is at left, with AOA Washington Office Director Jon Hymes.



Jeff Weaver, O.D., director of the AOA Clinical Care Group, met with U.S. Sen. John Barrasso (R-Wyo.) at a Washington, D.C. reception. Sen. Barrasso – a former state legislator and an orthopedic surgeon – was appointed in June 2007 to fill the unexpired term of the late Sen. Craig Thomas (R-Wyo.). Dr. Weaver, normally based in the AOA headquarters in St. Louis, is a colonel in the Army Reserve, and was in Washington performing his annual training in his position as Army Reserve Consultant to the Surgeon General.



Above, in a visit promoting the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) and the Children's Health and Medicare Protection Act of 2007 (the CHAMP Act), Rep. Russ Carnahan (D-MO) toured the optometry clinic at the Family Care Health Center, a Federally Qualified Health Center in St. Louis, MO. From left, Larry Davis, O.D., dean of the University of Missouri-St. Louis (UMSL) College of Optometry; optometry students Antlone Barnett and Vandy Rajaram; Rep. Carnahan; Brian Brunig, O.D.; optometry student Amber Hanschu; and Jeff Weaver, O.D., AOA director of the Clinical Care Group.

Below, on April 9, Barry J. Barresi, O.D., Ph.D., AOA incoming executive director and member of the AOA Federal Relations Committee, presented Sen. Edward M. Kennedy (D-Mass.) with the 2008 AOA Health Care Leadership Award during the 2008 AOA Congressional Advocacy Conference – optometry's largest federal advocacy event to date. At the conference, Dr. Barresi was joined by 420 optometrists and optometry students from all over the country who took time away from their practices and studies to deliver optometry's pro-access and pro-patient message all over Capitol Hill and throughout Washington, D.C.



The AOA secured optometry's first-ever congressional appropriation this program year: a \$430,000 earmark for the AOA's lifesaving and sight-saving InfantSEE® program sponsored by Sen. Robert Byrd (D-W.Va.), the chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee and a true friend of optometry.

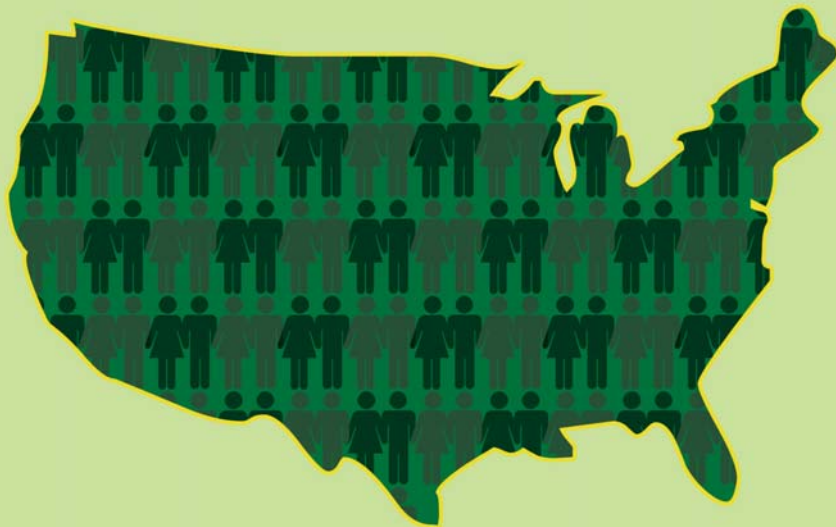
Left, Norma Bowyer, O.D., and Glen Steele, O.D., recognize Sen. Byrd for his work on behalf of children.



Right, Missouri ODs brief educators on the state's new children's vision examination law.

Dedicated Statesmanship

Thomas “Tip” O’Neill — a longtime Speaker of the House in the U.S. Congress — once declared, “**All politics is local.**” The AOA is a federation of affiliated optometric associations. We work together to ensure that legislative momentum builds nationally by coordinating advocacy in the statehouses. Our tools include scrupulous integrity, persuasive reasoning and relentless determination. The results are evident in our affiliates.



The State Government Relations Center (SGRC) offers support and resources to help affiliates accomplish their legislative goals. From drafting and review of bill language, to grassroots political education, SGRC provides the tools needed to ensure success in the state legislative and regulatory process.

Scope of practice legislation traditionally takes the limelight—and for good reason. No other health care

profession has accomplished as much as optometry in advancing its scope of practice.

Since 1971, when the first diagnostic law was enacted in Rhode Island, our affiliated associations have passed 173 scope-of-practice expansion laws. This has taken countless hours on the part of hundreds of dedicated optometrists and staff at both the state and national levels to accomplish so much in a relatively short period of time.

Adding to the victories of this program year were:

- **Alaska**—won authority to use and prescribe all oral drugs, controlled substances and injectable agents
- **Louisiana**—enacted an oral authority bill
- **Illinois**—won authority to use and prescribe all oral drugs (except steroids), controlled substances and injectable agents to treat anaphylaxis
- **Ohio**—enacted a sweeping bill repealing most of the restrictions, conditions, and limitations that were in the previous law.



Illinois ODs, including AOA President-Elect Peter Kehoe, O.D., and educators mark the start of required eye examinations for school students in Illinois.

New technologies and new ways of delivering drugs to the eye through ophthalmic devices will require many of our states to go back to the legislatures yet again to ensure that optometrists can provide full-scope eye and vision care to their patients. While not every state's law needs to be amended to allow optometrists to sell ophthalmic devices classified by the Food & Drug Administration as a drug — most do. This program year,

Kentucky, Louisiana, Minnesota and Ohio enacted laws clarifying this authority.

Based on the directive of the AOA House of Delegates, license mobility continues to be a top priority for the State Government Relations Center. Joining the list of states establishing licensure by endorsement this year were Minnesota, Missouri, and Nebraska.



At the American Legislative Exchange Council's 34th Annual Meeting in July 2007, Utah Senate Majority Leader Curtis S. Bramble (R), at left, meets with Clarke D. Newman, O.D., member of the State Government Relations Center Executive Committee.

SGRC continues to represent the profession in the exhibit hall at the annual meetings of the two largest membership organizations for state legislators: the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) and the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC). These two meetings have a combined annual attendance of 9,000 – 12,000. SGRC represents optometrists and patients to thousands of state lawmakers and other important policymakers who hold the future of the profession in their hands.



Louisiana ODs gather to celebrate passage of an oral authority bill.



She may never recover from early vision problems.

The effect untreated vision problems will have on her learning and development will profoundly impact her education, her self-worth and what she does with her life.

Please support mandatory comprehensive eye exams for all children entering school.



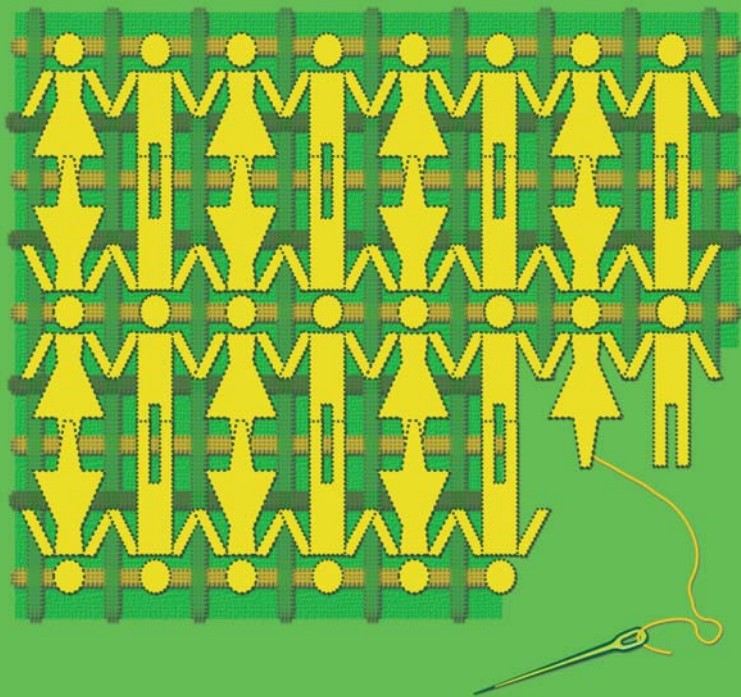
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SGRC has received funding from the AOA Board of Trustees the past two program years to place public relations messaging ads in *State Legislatures*, a publication of the NCSL read by all 7,499 state legislators, as well as members of Congress. These messaging ads such as the one above, developed in consultation with Hill & Knowlton, are placed in support of the affiliates' legislative goals — such as mandatory eye exams for children entering school.

The AOA is working in conjunction with state affiliates to achieve their goals. The Information & Member Services Group established a liaison program to facilitate requests and to assist with developing and implementing membership recruitment and retention campaigns. The AOA also presented the Optometric Leadership Institute, sponsored by CIBA Vision, to several state associations to assist states with the development of leaders.

The Frontlines of Eye Care: Answering the Call

The fabric of a community is woven from the bonds of neighbors helping neighbors. Optometrists have long protected the eyesight of our neighbors. Now, seeing the health of residents threatened by diabetes and other systemic conditions, optometrists are responding to the call to heal. The AOA is on the frontline of eye and vision care, championing health and preventive care for the whole person.



Positioning ODs to improve our patients' overall health

With "disease management" now a key concept in American health care, the AOA provides optometrists the clinical support, practice management know-how and patient education materials necessary to ensure they can meet the nation's growing demand for diagnosis and treatment of eye health conditions.

The AOA developed an Eye Disease Management kit that provides members with handouts, laminated cards and other materials related to glaucoma, macular degeneration, and diabetic retinopathy. The materials are designed to facilitate conversations with patients at the point of diagnosis and promote understanding of the important role early detection plays in the care and treatment of eye diseases. The kits are available to AOA members free-of-charge by request, courtesy of Optos®.

The new Second Edition of the AOA Optometric Clinical Practice Guideline on Care of the Patient with Visual Impairment (Low Vision Rehabilitation) reflects growth and development in the field of low vision rehabilitative care and assists optometrists in responding to the increasingly common diagnoses and referrals for care of visual impairment by medical doctors for the approximately 10 million blind and visually impaired people in the United States.

The AOA Neuro-Optometric Rehabilitation Committee's four-hour AOA Neuro-Optometry Course positions optometrists to address the growing unmet need for care of neurological vision impairment resulting from traumatic brain injury (TBI) among both the nation's returning military veteran and older adult population.

The AOA Diabetes Eyecare Project Team's first-of-its-kind comprehensive three-hour "Diabetes: An Inside Look" course provided practice management strategies and clinical overviews to help optometrists fulfill their responsibilities as primary eye care providers on the frontlines in the battle against the health care epidemic

declared by the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services as the nation's top health priority. The innovative AOA Diabetes Eye Report Form improves communication between the OD, patient and other health providers.

The AOA Professional Relations Committee joined with other health care provider groups, government officials and leaders from the academic and business communities to announce a new national effort to stem the tide of diabetes in the United States. The National Diabetes Goal aims, by 2015, for 45 percent of Americans who are at risk for type 2 diabetes to know their blood glucose levels and what actions to take.

Assisting those who assist others

A new feature of the online job and opportunity matching service provided by Optometry's Career Center® was launched this spring for paraoptometric, with sponsorship from Marchon and Johnson & Johnson. The service offers member ODs the opportunity to advertise opportunities for staff and for staff to post resumes.

The Paraoptometric Section established new guidelines for exam preparation courses to help ensure uniformity. The section also developed an Education Library to archive online continuing education articles available to members for a small access fee.

In June, the Commission on Paraoptometric Certification announced plans to offer certification exams via computer at several hundred sites in an effort to increase flexibility and accessibility.

Strengthening optometry's role as America's primary eye care provider through collaboration



“With the Healthy Eyes Healthy People® initiative, the American Optometric Association has matured with extensive frontline experience in multidisciplinary collaboration. We have developed new friends and allies through effective service partnerships in locally led community health projects and through Memoranda of Understanding with national entities, such as the American Public Health Association, the National Rural Health Association, and the National Association of Community Health Centers. We believe that HEHP can be the foundation of a new initiative to make vision health visible in the broad debate about community health and public policy.”

— Edwin Marshall, O.D., MPH, chair of the National Commission on Vision and Health. Grants from Luxottica and VSP worth \$810,000, have been awarded to more than 223 projects.

Tacoma, Washington, optometrist A. Paul Chous, O.D. (pictured right with an image generated by a corneal topographer), devotes his practice to eye care for patients with diabetes. About 90 percent of his patients have diabetes and most are referred from a neighboring endocrinology practice.

Dr. Chous' top priority is to teach patients about the importance of good metabolic control to reduce the risk of vision loss and other complications, underscore the link between diabetes-related eye disease and other (especially cardiovascular) complications, and give each patient some tools to help them live well with diabetes.

Some barriers to care for his patients include patients being unknowledgeable about diabetes and its effects on the eyes; patients believing that good vision is tantamount to having healthy eyes; community physicians not uniformly emphasizing the importance of routine dilated eye exams to their patients with diabetes; lack of health care team emphasis on risk factors other than glycemic control, particularly hypertension and dyslipidemia; and lack of health care team emphasis on non-pharmacologic therapies, particularly sound nutritional guidance and physical activity.



Dr. Chous repeatedly tells his patients: “My goal as your optometrist is to help you prevent or minimize eye complications of diabetes, communicate with you and your other doctors in your best interest, and always be your advocate—I am on your side.”

The AOA Professional Relations Committee fought to ensure that ODs receive the same AMA Physician Practice Information (PPI) surveys as MDs. Through this survey, the AOA and the AMA joined with more than 70 other health care associations in working together to collect this coordinated, multi-specialty survey to update widely used data about sustaining a medical practice. Optometry was applauded by the AMA on having 100 percent completed PPI surveys.

Following a successful pilot test, the rapidly expanding AOA Contact Lens & Cornea Section Online Continuing Education Program offers AOA members COPE-approved courses on contact lens practice (sponsored by CooperVision) while a variety of additional features, such as the exclusive E-Z Fit Calculator (courtesy of eyedock.com), are available to section members.



The AOA Aviation Vision Committee's traveling “Eyes Right for Flight” exhibit and AOA Aviation Vision Course position optometry as the preferred source of eye examinations required for flight physicals. The AOA Aviation Vision Program is sponsored through generous grants from Essilor and The Vision Care Institute.



The AOA Eye Safety Committee's new “Protecting Your Vision” document helps optometrists address the nation's unmet need for prescription and non-prescription safety eyewear.

The AOA Sports Vision Section's Eye Emergency Kits for Athletes promote the importance of protective eyewear usage for athletes (sponsored by a grant from Alcon).



Making a big difference in the lives of our **littlest patients...**

Taking the call to ensure a lifetime of healthy vision, AOA members are starting with the youngest members of the community—infants—and ensuring they get a bright start. With so much at stake in a child's life, the AOA is stressing the importance of eye exams before school and getting resources into AOA members' hands to help them care for young patients efficiently and with a minimum of fuss.

As the scope and impact of the AOA's lifesaving and sight-saving InfantSEE® initiative continues to grow, so does the list of new supporters. Over the last program year, the AOA advocacy group secured significant endorsements for the InfantSEE® program from the Lions Clubs International and the American Cancer Society, and Johnson & Johnson continued as major contributor.



New support was also secured for the Vision Care for Kids Act, which overwhelmingly passed the U.S. House (H.R. 507) in October 2007. The bill aims to establish a federal grant program to fund state children's vision/classroom learning initiatives and has advanced in the U.S. Senate (S. 1117).

The AOA's Ready for School public education campaign and a new alliance with the National Association of School Nurses are helping parents and teachers understand the importance of comprehensive eye examinations in addressing the vision problems that can impact academic performance.

Mandatory comprehensive eye exam requirements for children entering school were increasingly added to states' legislative agendas. The goal is to ensure that our

nation's children enter the most learning-intensive period of their lives fully equipped to read, learn, and grow to their full potential. This program year:

- Illinois became the third state to require eye examinations for all children entering public school, following Kentucky and Missouri.
- Rhode Island and Nebraska enacted enhanced vision screening programs.
- New Jersey launched a pilot eye examination program for children in the second grade.
- Massachusetts and Ohio began requiring comprehensive vision examinations for all children newly referred to special education programs.

The Lee's Summit, Mo., practice of Scott Drake, O.D., is seeing a "trickle-down" effect from his involvement in the InfantSEE® program.



Scott Drake, O.D., provides care for the whole family. From left, Dr. Drake, RaiJah, 6, Zion, 9, Mom Tiffany and Elijah Griffin, 2.

"We've been doing assessments since the inception of the program," said Dr. Drake. "It does bring in parents and the rest of the kids in the family. The InfantSEE® assessments are a good chance to educate the family on getting their eyes examined. Someone who would otherwise start worrying about getting their kids in for an exam between age 7 and 10 will now know to bring them in before that."

When Dr. Drake scheduled a follow-up appointment for 2-year-old Elijah Griffin, the family decided it was time all of them had eye exams.

It turns out both mom Tiffany and 6-year-old sister RaiJah required a prescription for glasses.

"Two of the five of us came in and needed glasses," said Tiffany Griffin. "They say your eyes are your windows to the world, and I want us to see everything that's possible."

Dr. Drake performs three or four InfantSEE® assessments each month. He has discovered cases of strabismus, cataract and anisometropia during the three years he's been an InfantSEE® provider.

The new Missouri children's vision law has also made a difference in the lives of his patients. The law requiring comprehensive eye examinations for children entering kindergarten or first grade in public schools went into effect July 1, just in time for students preparing to start school in the fall.

"We've gotten a lot of kids with the new law—lots of kindergartners," said Dr. Drake. "Most of them are fine, but we've had several who needed glasses and two children with amblyopia who have since started treatment."

Dr. Drake encourages other practitioners to become InfantSEE® providers and start seeing more children.

"It's fun and easy," said Dr. Drake. "I have a good time with the kids."

Paving the Way for E-Records

As the AOA Health Information Technology and Telemedicine Project Team eyes the Nationwide Health Information Network -- set to serve all U.S. patients and health care providers by 2014 -- the team is working to ensure optometrists are ready to participate and reap the clinical and practice management benefits.



Providing optometrists practical know-how for new e-records systems

- **Electronic health records (EHRs)** — "Building the Paperless Practice: AOA's Electronic Health Records Seminar" offers a step-by-step plan for understanding implementation of EHRs in an optometric practice with a "hands-on" workshop to personally try out popular systems.
- **E-prescribing** — Medicare's new e-prescribing bonus program begins Jan. 1, 2009. Optometrists will be ready thanks to an extensive AOA e-prescribing education program including the "What Optometrists Need to Know" White Paper" and interactive "Electronic Prescribing Readiness Assessment" (developed specifically for optometric practices by SureScripts/

RxHub, the nation's e-prescribing network, in cooperation with the AOA) accessible in the e-prescribing section of the AOA Web site HIT page.

- **Medicare Individuals Authorized to Access Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services Computer Services (IACS)** — As Medicare issued its first provider report cards, indicating how well providers did in meeting designated standards of care, *AOA News*, *Optometry: Journal of the American Optometric Association* and the AOA Web site provided extensive instructions for downloading reports through the new IACS.

Ensuring participation and fairness

Quality reporting and pay-for-performance programs are rapidly being implemented by public and private insurance plans—bringing new opportunities as well as new regulatory compliance responsibilities for optometrists. The AOA is helping optometrists participate in the new world of quality reporting and ensuring optometrists are treated fairly.

- **Medicare PQRI** — As Medicare launched its first Physician Quality Reporting Initiative (PQRI) reporting period in July 2007 and its first full-year PQRI program in January 2008, many optometrists reported quality measures and were ready to qualify for 1.5 percent bonuses thanks to extensive "how-to" guidance from the AOA Eye Care Benefits Center on the new G codes and modifiers required to report designated quality measures.

- **The AOA Optometric Clinical Guidelines** — covering 20 clinical topics (six reviewed or updated this program year) — help ensure optometrists set the clinical standards they are measured against.

- **The AOA Commission on Quality Assessment and Improvement** gave optometry a voice in the bodies setting accreditation standards such as the National Quality Forum and the National Committee for Quality Assurance.

- **The Joint Board Certification Project Team** began developing a model for board certification in optometry and maintenance of certification for adoption by the profession. The AOA is one of six organizations who comprise this project team.

Attending to the details

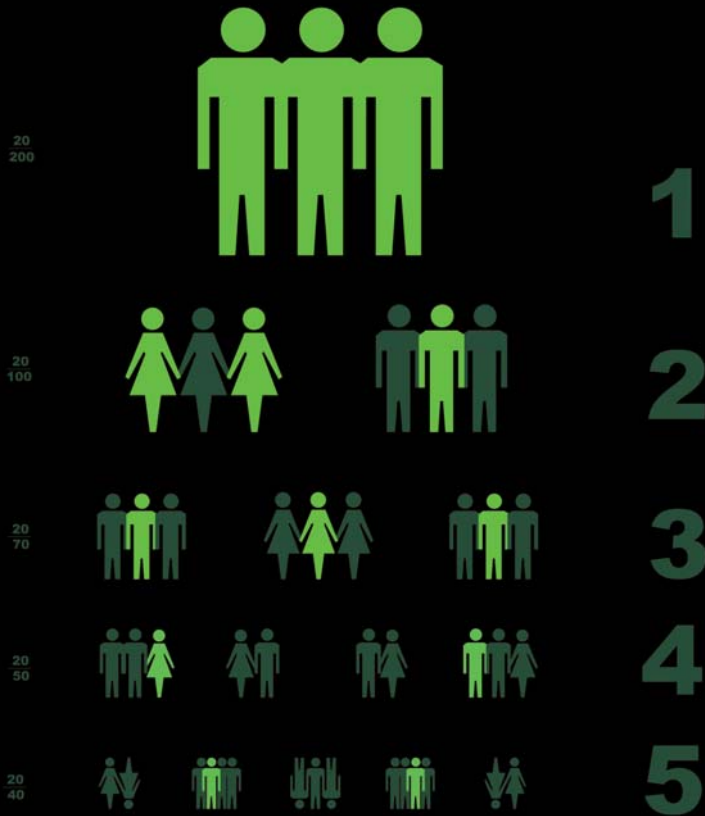
Also keeping the workforce up to date is the introduction of AOACodingToday.com. The subscription online coding service helps practices keep up with the latest coding changes and avoid costly and potentially troublesome mistakes. It combines coding data from eight separate sources into one and provides everything needed to code accurately.

the federal Medicaid requirements. To be considered tamper-resistant, a prescription pad must have features to prevent unauthorized copying of a completed or blank prescription form; prevent the erasure or modification of information written on the prescription by the prescriber; and prevent the use of counterfeit prescription forms.

This program year, the AOA Order Department began offering tamper-resistant prescription pads that meet

Raising the Public's Eye-Q®

Striving for an enlightened community, one that understands the importance of clear eyesight, regular examinations and professional care, the AOA has invested in an ambitious program of public education. The association has been eager to enlist allies and sought partnerships that lift the community's awareness and result in better health for all.



The target of the AOA Optometry Awareness and Public Affairs Campaign, conducted in conjunction with the Hill & Knowlton public affairs firm, is to promote awareness and understanding of who optometrists are, including their scope of practice, and to protect optometrists' ability to serve patients to the full extent of their optometric education and training.

The campaign positions optometrists as "go-to" experts on eye health and wellness and policy leaders in the public health arena. Campaign strategies raised the visibility of optometry and created an awareness of the AOA in order to better address attacks.

Yearly campaigns raise optometry's visibility by developing long-term media relationships; reaching out to national health and consumer media, ophthalmic press and top-tier newspapers in each state; and educating freelance journalists. The latest results from these public relations campaigns demonstrate the success of AOA efforts.



As part of the Ready for School campaign, Bill Nye the Science Guy and Leonard Press, O.D., (shown left) appeared live on 12 TV stations and five radio stations on

a satellite media tour covering 31 interviews. The VSP-sponsored tour included four national outlets, and coverage reached a total audience of 1.2 million, with 57 airings on 156 stations.

The AOA's American Eye-Q® survey harvested considerable results in terms of media coverage. The survey identifies Americans' attitudes and behaviors regarding eye care and related issues and is designed to assist the AOA in educating the public about the importance of regular, comprehensive eye exams for overall health and well-being. The campaign totaled 271 media hits and more than 126 million impressions.

January's National Glaucoma Awareness Month coverage increased from 12 hits in 2007 to 41 hits in 2008. The number of impressions went from 4.1 million to 38.2 million—an 830 percent increase. The campaign included an article co-authored with the National Optometric Association.

The March 2008 Save Your Vision Month campaign focused on computer vision syndrome. Total media impressions reached 83 million.

The Sports Vision Awareness Campaign in April garnered 112 media hits and 70 million impressions.

Keeping the Community Informed

Keeping up with the latest happenings in 6,500 communities is a weighty task. That's why the AOA News, e-newsletters, *Optometry: Journal of the American Optometric Association*, and the AOA Web sites are working hard updating members with breaking news on legislative and clinical issues.

In a new benefit for members, the AOA teamed up with *U.S. News and World Report* to provide a free daily e-mail summary of ophthalmic news under the title "AOA First Look." Editors at *U.S. News* scour online news sources and compile items they expect will interest optometrists every weekday morning.

A new AOA Communications Group initiative responds to the growth of the Hispanic population and the importance of supporting optometrists in meeting the needs of their Hispanic patients. The AOA and Transitions Optical joined forces to deliver new communications tools and resources that focus on the unique needs of the Hispanic population. The initiative will help ODs better understand and accommodate specific cultural differences and risk factors pertaining to Hispanic consumers.

Investing in the infrastructure

Serving the profession means removing obstacles to practice, preparing for the future, and keeping the community a desirable place. From quality schools, to new surveys, to ensuring the right paperwork is always at hand, attention to the needs of the profession keeps everything humming.



Reaching out to students

The AOA concluded a successful year of visits to most optometry schools and colleges during the 2007-2008 academic year. The AOA has had a presence on campus to some degree for the last 20 years; with the 2007-2008 year, that presence grew to the point where an AOA-elected representative or volunteer visited almost every school or college of optometry. The visits not only give the opportunity for AOA representatives to meet with students and faculty to talk about the importance of involvement in organized optometry, they also give the schools a chance to showcase their facilities and programs to AOA decision-makers.

"Students are the future of optometry. It is critical that they understand that optometry is a legislated profession that arguably has grown to provide more services to our patients than any other health care profession in the last 35 years. What optometry and



The New in Practice series is intended to help ODs starting their careers or considering changing practice settings, including "Marketing & Networking for Practice Growth," which 250 attended June 26.

the care we provide to patients will look like 35 years from now will depend on the current and future students and their dedication to their profession and patients," said AOA President-elect Peter H. Kehoe, O.D. "The sooner we can connect with students and let them know that the leaders of their profession are passionate about their future, hopefully the more inspired they will be to become actively involved in their profession as students and graduates."

Surveying the landscape

The field of eye and vision care is not only growing, but changing in virtually every respect, according to the AOA's State of the Profession 2008 report compiled by the Information & Data Committee. However, independent practice optometrists are maintaining their status as the nation's primary care providers.

The AOA estimates there were 37,083 full-time equivalent optometrists in the workforce in 2007 with an average age of 46.6. Most continue to provide care in traditional solo practices, although numbers are increasing in partnerships and group practices.

In 2007, more than one in three optometrists (34.4 percent) participating in the AOA New Technology Survey described their practice areas as suburban, 37.7 percent as urban and 27.9 percent as rural.

More than 30 years ago (in 1973), only 3 percent of the workforce was made up of female ODs. Now, more than half of the new optometry graduates are women, which will lead to a rapid change in the gender composition of the workforce in the years ahead.

Gathering places

Independent doesn't mean solitary. The AOA is dedicated to bringing people together, in large meetings, in small gatherings and for special occasions. It's when we assemble that the strength of the profession is most evident and we most appreciate the contributions that every member of the AOA makes.



New practitioners: connecting the present and the future

In response to the growing need for help transitioning from optometry school to practice, the AOA presents the Career Advocate program to students at the schools and colleges of optometry. The program provides useful information to help students move from the structured environment of optometry school to the unstructured world of practice decision-making. The program is supported by Advanced Medical Optics and The Vision Care Institute™, LLC, a Johnson & Johnson company.

The AOA endorses the First Practice Academy™ as the first and only training program designed for independent optometrists who have been private practice owners for three years or less. Developed by CIBA Vision and Essilor of America, the First Practice Academy opened this year to provide new optometric business owners with strategies and tools to enhance their patients' experience, achieve financial success and gain competitive advantage.

The AOA launched a new member benefit for those in their first three years of AOA membership. Along with a new

member kit, those new to the AOA will receive a quarterly "Spotlight" mailing that details a particular member product or service that might appeal to new practitioners.

The AOA's New in Practice Series was designed with young ODs in mind. The New in Practice course at Optometry's Meeting®, sponsored by CIBA Vision, covered Marketing & Networking for Practice Growth, the Doctor's Role in Setting Up and Running an Optical, and Financial Management. This program was sponsored by CIBA Vision.

New financial solutions are available to members through the AOA's new partnership with GE Healthcare Financial Services. The innovative practice solutions span the entire life-cycle of a medical practice and include specialized products for practice start-ups or expansion, equipment financing and practice acquisition. GE Healthcare Financial Services' program also includes a network of financing experts who guide eye care professionals through the equipment and practice financing process.

2008 Optometry's Meeting®

Designed not only to meet the needs of all segments of optometry – from students to the most established practitioners – the 111th Annual AOA Congress & 38th Annual AOSA Conference: Optometry's Meeting® continues to be the only complete optometric meeting with continuing education, exhibition hall and the House of Delegates at which practitioners chart the future of their profession. Although Seattle, Wash., was a new, untested location, it proved to be an excellent venue on all accounts.



- 6,229 total attendees attended 111th Annual AOA Congress & 38th Annual AOSA Conference: Optometry's Meeting®, June 25-29, 2008, at the Washington State Convention & Trade Center.
- 228 hours of continuing education were offered to ODs, paraoptometrics and students during the week.
- 196 exhibitors displayed their latest products and/or services in the Exhibit Hall.
- The New in Practice Series, sponsored by CIBA Vision, and Optometric Educator's Exchange provided specialized learning opportunities to segments of the profession.
- Christopher Gardner provided the most inspirational presentation during the Opening General Session, sponsored by Essilor, while Jay Leno entertained 3,000 professional attendees and their guest at the Presidential Celebration, sponsored by HOYA, the largest turnout for an event in Optometry's Meeting® history.
- Optometry's Meeting® recently received its official registered status, therefore the ® has replaced the ™.
- Optometry's Meeting® would not be possible without the continued generosity of our many sponsors, especially the participants of the Ophthalmic Council.

Other gatherings include:

- At the Presidents' Council held in January, the state optometric association presidents, presidents-elect and executive directors heard about several new opportunities in addition to state and federal advocacy challenges.
- Healthy Eyes Healthy People® Committee members and consultants from across the country gathered at the sixth annual Healthy Eyes Healthy People® Conference in early 2008 to collaborate, network and increase awareness of projects. AOA President Kevin Alexander, O.D., Ph.D., announced the awarding of \$810,000 in grants to date at the conference in St. Louis.
- Optometrists serving on more than 30 AOA committees, project teams, commissions and sections met in St. Louis, May 2-3 to advance the work of the association during Spring Planning. AOA President-elect Peter H. Kehoe, O.D., asked the groups to be mindful of the AOA's four pillars: advocacy, affiliates, membership, and public health.

Productive alliances

Growing communities attract investment, innovation and diversity. The AOA has welcomed like-minded leaders in industry and benefited from the ideas, energy and support they bring.



A collaborative milestone



Celebrating 10 Years!

The AOA announced the 10th anniversary of the Ophthalmic Council this program year.

The Ophthalmic Council serves as an informal forum for the leaders of the ophthalmic industry and the AOA to communicate their respective ideas and concerns while enhancing and advancing the ophthalmic industry to better serve patients and consumers.

In the course of its 10 years, the Ophthalmic Council's support of the AOA and the profession of optometry has been in the millions of dollars and unmeasured amounts of time and counsel.

A company's participation in the Ophthalmic Council begins with sponsorship support of projects or programs—either with a single sponsorship or collective support in several areas—as well as a demonstrated consistency with the AOA's goals and practices.

Of particular note, the Ophthalmic Council provided support for the Practice Management University (PMU) from 2000 – 2003 and Optometry 2020 Summits (2005 – 2006).

In its three years, PMU provided management training to more than 11,000 optometrists and their staffs.

The Optometry 2020 Summits provided an unprecedented opportunity for all optometric

organizations and industry to consider the future of the optometric profession outside the normal political and economic boundaries. Putting patient care at the center, and considering inevitable changes in the world, optometric organizations took an honest look at the future and determined its course.

"The Ophthalmic Council is extremely valuable to the profession because of the interactions with industry leaders, and has become a vehicle for industry and the optometric profession to work together to benefit the patients that we both serve every day," said Howard J. Braverman, O.D., chair of the AOA Ophthalmic Council. "Also, the Ophthalmic Council recognizes those companies at the top tier of support of organized optometry and to ensure an ongoing dialogue that benefits the profession."

Founding participants of the Ophthalmic Council include: Alcon, Allergan, Bausch & Lomb, CIBA Vision, Essilor of America, Luxottica Group, Marchon Eyewear, VSP, and Vistakon®, Division of Johnson & Johnson, Vision Care, Inc.

In addition, the current Ophthalmic Council participants include: Advanced Medical Optics, CooperVision, Eyemaginations, HOYA, Kemin Health, Liberty Sport, Optos, Shamir, TLC Vision, Transitions Optical, and VisionWeb.

The AOA Board of Trustees



The 2007-08 Officers and Trustees of the American Optometric Association are sworn in by Carol Alexander, O.D. From left, they are President Kevin L. Alexander, O.D., Ph.D.; President-elect Peter H. Kehoe, O.D.; Vice President Randolph E. Brooks, O.D.; Secretary-treasurer Joe E. Ellis, O.D.; Immediate Past President C. Thomas Crooks, III, O.D.; and Trustees Dori M. Carlson, O.D.; David A. Cockrell, O.D.; Ronald L. Hopping, O.D., MPH; Mitchell T. Munson, O.D., and newly elected Trustees Stephen A. Loomis, O.D., and Andrea Thau, O.D.

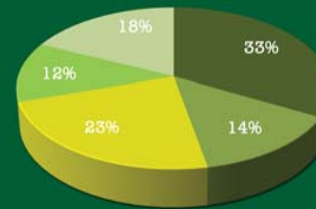


The American Optometric Association and Optometry's Charity™

Combined Statement of Financial Position, December 31, 2007

| ASSETS | | LIABILITIES AND OWNERS EQUITY | |
|--|-------------------|--|-------------------|
| Current Assets: | | Current Liabilities: | |
| Cash & cash equivalents | 2,236,898 | Accounts payable | 976,424 |
| Investments | 9,626,898 | Current portion of purchase price payable- VisionWeb | 32,416 |
| Dues receivable, net of allowance | 4,200,059 | Current portion of Note Payable - OOA | 20,000 |
| Accounts Receivable, net of allowance | 718,262 | Accrued expenses | |
| Other receivables | 249,748 | Other | 350,559 |
| Printed material for resale | 247,772 | Deferred Industry Funding | 455,240 |
| Other prepaid expenses | 456,925 | Deferred Exhibitor Revenue | 628,250 |
| Fixed assets held for sale | 1,601,800 | Other Deferred Income | 72,940 |
| | | | |
| Total current assets | 19,338,362 | Total current liabilities | 2,535,829 |
| | | Accrued Pension Cost - Defined Benefit Plan | 1,307,519 |
| Long-Term Investment, At Cost | 1,119,319 | Long-Term Debt - To Affiliate | 60,000 |
| | | | |
| Property and Equipment, At Cost | 2,232,768 | Total liabilities | 3,903,348 |
| | | | |
| Total Assets | 22,690,449 | Net Assets | |
| | | Unrestricted | |
| | | Designated | 1,778,043 |
| | | Undesignated | 16,275,221 |
| | | | |
| | | Total unrestricted | 18,053,264 |
| | | Temporarily restricted | 683,837 |
| | | Permanently restricted | 50,000 |
| | | | |
| | | Total net assets | 18,787,101 |
| | | Total liabilities and net assets | 22,690,449 |

Budgeted Expenses for 2008



- Membership
- Administrative
- Advocacy
- Clinical Care
- Communications



American Optometric Association