



American Optometric Association

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AMERICAN OPTOMETRIC ASSOCIATION POSITION STATEMENT ON OPTOMETRIC SERVICES IN HOSPITALS

"Doctors of optometry are independent primary health care providers who examine, diagnose, treat and manage diseases and disorders of the visual system, the eye and associated structures as well as diagnose related systemic conditions."¹ As optometry's scope of eye and vision care services has broadened, optometrists are becoming more involved in interprofessional referrals, consultation and in co-management with other health care professionals. The increased availability of optometric services in hospitals and hospital affiliated settings can enhance the quality, cost effectiveness, and continuity of patient care.

The Joint Commission of Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations (JCAHO) has established standards and required characteristics regarding the privilege delineation process for practitioners in hospitals and other health care organizations. One standard states: "All individuals who are permitted by law and by the hospital to provide patient care services independently in the hospital have delineated clinical privileges, whether or not they are members of the medical staff."²

Professional criteria developed by hospitals for delineation of clinical privileges for provision of medical and/or other patient care services within the institution should be based on the practitioner's education, training, experience, and evidence of his/her current competence. The scope and extent of clinical privileges for optometrists must be defined, be in accordance with their professional education, and must not conflict with their scope of practice as defined by state law.

Therefore, the American Optometric Association affirms its position supporting the affiliation of optometrists with hospitals and other multidisciplinary health care settings and optometrists' independent access to diagnostic testing procedures and equal access to hospital privileges.

REFERENCES:

1. American Optometric Association: Board of Trustees. St. Louis: American Optometric Association, September 1993.
2. Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations: Accreditation Manual for Hospitals, Medical Staff Standard MS.2.2. Chicago: Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations, 1992.