



AMERICAN OPTOMETRIC ASSOCIATION

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Mr. Mazzarelli and Ms. Siegel,

Patients are inundated with health misinformation and we, doctors of optometry across the country, were disappointed and, frankly, outraged that your program—one supposedly designed to debunk myths about eye health—perpetuated some of the biggest myths about the primary providers of eye health care in America. This morning, during a factually inaccurate segment hosted by Dylan Dreyer, Sheinelle Jones, Craig Melvin and Al Roker, the guest contributor, Anne Negrin, M.D., mischaracterized the care that doctors of optometry deliver.

To be clear, doctors of optometry take a leading role in patient care with respect to eye health and vision care as well as general health and well-being. We have extensive, ongoing training to examine, diagnose, treat and manage ocular disorders, diseases and injuries. Doctors of optometry are the nation's largest eye care profession and serve patients in more than 6,500 communities, in over half of which we are the only eye care providers. We provide over three quarters of first-time eye care visits and two-thirds of all primary eye care in the United States. We also play an important role in the management of systemic diseases with ocular manifestations including diabetes, hypertension, cardiovascular disease, autoimmune diseases, and neurologic disease.

To simply say that we are “great for prescribing glasses, contacts,” only serves to fuel patient misunderstanding of the health care providers they should be accessing for their primary eye health care, including annual comprehensive eye exams.



Dr. Negrin's statements perpetuated inaccurate understanding of the care we provide. The next time you would like to distinguish between professions, you would be well served as a news organization to go to the source. We have numerous talented and engaged doctors in New York City who would be happy to educate your audience on what doctors of optometry do for patients across the country. In the meantime, we urge you to correct the record in your next broadcast and provide accurate information about who doctors of optometry are and the care we deliver. We are here to help you facilitate that message today and in the future.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robert C. Layman O.D." in a cursive script.

Robert C. Layman, O.D.
President, American Optometric Association

The American Optometric Association represents more than 48,000 doctors of optometry, optometric professionals and optometry students. We serve doctors of optometry in meeting the eye care needs of the public.