

# United in Possibilities. The AOA and You.

Guide to Member Benefits



One doctor can do so much.  
One organization can do so much more.  
**United in Possibilities.**

# Welcome to the American Optometric Association.

When you join the AOA, you join a group of more than 40,000 optometric professionals dedicated to advancing the science, stature, and business of optometry.

As the country's **optometric leader** and only **advocate** for our profession, the AOA serves as a respected and effective voice at the local, state and national levels. We provide **Clinical Resources** and **Continuing Education** programs to keep you on the leading edge of patient care. Our **Public Awareness** efforts educate the public on the importance of eye health and the leading role optometrists play in protecting it. Our **business resources** offer valuable tips and tools for building a thriving practice and career. And our outreach efforts provide a number of opportunities to **serve** and **connect** with peers and patients.

This guide will give you a brief overview of your AOA membership benefits. You'll find more information, the latest legislative and clinical news, updates on upcoming events, and more on AOA.org.

## Table of Contents

3	Introduction
4	Advocacy
7	Clinical Resources
8	Continuing Education
11	Public Awareness
12	Additional Benefits

# Advocacy:

## A strong voice where it matters most

As the only advocate for optometry, the AOA and state associations advocate for the profession 24/7/365, ensuring that our members are listened to and heeded in Washington, D.C., state capitals, and the third party arena. From our advocacy office in Washington, D.C., the AOA works closely with individual doctors and state associations to put our priorities in the spotlight and get results.

It's the support of AOA members like you who make victories possible. Member doctors help optometry keep our seat at the table whenever and wherever health care policy decisions are being made. This means achieving historic wins at the federal level like our physician status in Medicare, making comprehensive pediatric eye health and vision care a national priority, and enacting a federal law to ban health plans from discriminating against us. It also means taking on anti-optometry groups who want to control how we practice, deny us full recognition and reimbursement, and place patients at risk.

### Moving forward, our federal and state advocacy priorities include:

#### **Securing Scope of Practice Gains**

The AOA will continue working with state associations to craft new and updated laws ensuring that doctors of optometry will continue to meet the growing needs of their patients.

#### **Stopping Vision Plan Abuses**

Through our alliance with the American Dental Association, we're building support in Congress for the Dental and Optometric Care Access Act (HR 3323), a bipartisan bill outlawing detrimental policies imposed by health plans such as forced discounts, restrictions on medical plan participation, and limits on a doctor's choice of labs.



### **Keeping Patients Safe**

The AOA will continue to work tirelessly for full federal enforcement of patient health and safety laws targeting unscrupulous Internet contact lens sellers and companies falsely claiming to offer “online eye exams.”

### **Protecting Physician Status and Reimbursement**

In our rapidly changing system, the AOA safeguards the hard-won federal recognition of optometrists’ physician status in Medicare, physician-level reimbursement, and full eligibility for physician payment incentives.







# Clinical Resources:

## The leading edge of patient care

Better resources mean better care. And the AOA is at the forefront in developing clinical tools and best practices to advance and elevate patient care. As a member, you have access to a variety of invaluable resources.

### **AOA MORE: Measures and Outcomes Registry for Eyecare**

Launched in 2015, **AOA MORE** is a clinical outcomes registry that provides industry-wide measures and outcomes. Requiring no additional coding, **AOA MORE** seamlessly integrates data from your electronic health records and analyzes it to help you and other doctors of optometry improve patient care. Valued at \$1,800 per year, **AOA MORE** is included with your AOA membership. And it satisfies the Medicare payment reform requirements, so you can receive the maximum reimbursement.

### **Evidence-Based Clinical Practice Guidelines**

Find the latest recommendations for the diagnosis, management and treatment of patients with various eye and vision conditions with the AOA's clinical practice guidelines. Developed and reviewed by an interdisciplinary panel of experts, this essential resource combines evidence-based research with expert clinical opinion. Available in convenient, quickly searchable electronic formats, the guidelines are continually updated to provide you with the very latest insight into clinical best practices.



# Continuing Education: Improving skills, educating leaders

Meeting your continuing education requirements can be an ongoing challenge for a busy optometrist. The AOA's Continuing Education program makes it easy and affordable for you and your staff to stay abreast of the latest research, techniques and technology. From diabetes to public health to retinal toxicity, we offer a range of courses in person, online, and through your state association. As an AOA member, you can be confident that you are receiving the best instruction from the industry's leading scientists, physicians, and educators.

## EyeLearn™

Advance your knowledge where and when it works best for your busy schedule. Our complimentary online learning resource, **EyeLearn™**, offers access to the latest AOA educational tools and courses. Prepare for board certification. Research clinical findings. Test your knowledge with online assessments. And find tools and webinars for better managing your practice. A wealth of accredited resources are available with just a few clicks.

## Paraoptometric Resource Center & Certification

Give your staff the training and certification they need to enhance patient care and improve patient satisfaction. Your AOA membership includes an associate membership for your staff. The Paraoptometric Resource Center offers a wide range of courses to improve their clinical skills, knowledge, and business acumen. They can even earn professional paraoptometric certifications to help further their careers while helping to grow your practice.







# Public Awareness:

## Sharing our vision for better eye care

Complementing the AOA's efforts to defend optometry before policy makers is our mission to elevate our profession in the public perception. As the national steward of our profession, we take this responsibility seriously. In 2015, our efforts centered on both promoting optometry with integrity and protecting consumers' eye health both in the exam room and in everyday life.

Whether it's identifying the early signs of diabetes or counseling young adults on the hazards of mobile devices and eye-strain, today's optometrists are on the front lines of not only eye health, but community health. In 2015, we used a variety of marketing, public relations, and educational tools to educate the public on eye health, safety, and the importance of regular exams by a licensed optometrist. And we warned of the dangers of Internet "eye exams" and buying glasses online or contact lenses from illegal providers.

In 2015, our nationwide multimedia **Think About Your Eyes (TAYE)** campaign increased eye exams by nearly ten percent in the first quarter alone. Over the past ten years, our public awareness efforts have garnered 30 percent more mentions annually for optometry versus ophthalmology. And our ongoing public relations efforts, social media presence and direct community engagement continues to get the word out.

# Additional Benefits:

## Connecting you with peers and patients

Publications and events, networking and volunteer opportunities, and a wealth of resources to help you better manage the business of optometry, the AOA offers a host of valuable member benefits.

### AOAExcel®: Your Business Advantage

Position your practice to thrive. **AOAExcel** offers a number of business resources designed by optometrists for optometrists including exclusive services to help you finance, protect, and grow your practice. Visit [aoa.org/aoaexcel](http://aoa.org/aoaexcel) to learn more about these and other services:

- Business & Liability Insurance
- Optometry's Career Center®
- Educational Loans
- Group Insurance
- Healthcare IT Solutions
- HIPAA Compliance Tools
- Merchant Processing
- Practice Financing
- Retirement Planning

### Networking

The AOA offers a number of ways to help members connect with other optometry professionals. Contact your state association or affiliate for events in your area. And find us on social media at:



[facebook.com/American.Optometric.Association](https://facebook.com/American.Optometric.Association)



[@AOACONnect](https://twitter.com/AOACONnect)



[aoaweb](https://www.youtube.com/aoaweb)



[linkedin.com/company/American-optometric-association](https://linkedin.com/company/American-optometric-association)



## AOA Marketplace

Discover tools for educating patients and marketing your practice at the AOA Marketplace. AOA members receive significant discounts on patient educational materials, health fair kits, posters, and displays as well as branded promotional items like business cards, referral cards, practice management forms, and staff training resources. Visit [aoa.org/marketplace](http://aoa.org/marketplace) to see the full range of available products.



## News & Publications

The AOA publishes several timely and informative resources for optometrists, their staff, and patients.

### AOA Focus

Members receive a free yearly subscription to our award-winning magazine featuring member profiles, photos, infographics, a news roundup, and quick tips for improving your practice.

### AOA First Look

This daily email digest provides timely, unfiltered news from various national sources delivered to your inbox.

### AOA.org/news

Visit our information portal for fresh news updated daily and search our archives for insight on topics ranging from clinical eye care to advocacy to practice management tips.

### AOA Week in Focus E-newsletter

This weekly update offers in-depth information on AOA news and activities.



## Practice Development

Build your practice with promotions and public relations assistance from the AOA's marketing experts. We can develop customizable news releases, presentations and kits for your practice that complement the AOA's optometry awareness campaigns.



## “Find a Doctor” Online Directory

An AOA membership demonstrates your commitment to professional excellence. Show the world and help prospective patients find you quickly and easily through your listing on our online optometrist directory. Customize your listing by including information about your credentials, areas of specialization, and services provided. To view or edit your profile, login to your account at [aoa.org](http://aoa.org), go to “Optometrists” and select “My Profile.”

## Optometry Cares® — The AOA Foundation

Ensuring that eye and vision care are an integral part of wellness and improving quality of life: it's a lofty goal. And the AOA is making great strides toward them every day. Optometry Cares drives a number of community service efforts, so our members can rest assured that the AOA is always giving back, even when you can't.

### **InfantSEE®**

Under this program, AOA optometrists provide comprehensive eye and vision assessments for infants within their first year regardless of the family's income or access to insurance coverage. To learn more or to become a providing AOA physician, visit [infantsee.org](http://infantsee.org).

### **Healthy Eyes Healthy People®**

This program provides state association grants to bring together optometrists with other community resources to ensure that vision care and services are provided and that optometry is recognized as a vital component of the healthcare system.

## Optometry's Meeting®

Receive discounted pricing for the year's premier optometry event. Featuring expert speakers, entertainment, continuing education, advocacy updates, and an industry-wide trade show, Optometry's Meeting is not to be missed.

### **Vision USA**

Currently available in 39 states and Washington D.C., Vision USA provides basic eye exams for Americans in need. AOA optometrists provide their services at no cost to help bring eye and vision care to the more than 46 million U.S. residents who cannot afford routine eye care or do not have access to vision insurance coverage.



Our mission is to  
advocate for the profession and  
serve optometrists in meeting the  
eye care needs of the public.



243 North Lindbergh Boulevard,  
Saint Louis, MO 63141

800.365.2219 | [aoa.org](http://aoa.org)

Find us on

