Certified Professional

News Magazine for Certified Optometric Staff

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Nebraska Practice Encourages Staff Certification

At Professional Eyecare in Ord, Nebraska, certification is highly encouraged in our office from the beginning, and it starts as soon as new staff are hired. Our doctors let us know that they would like us to take at least the CPO and the CPOA examinations. They compensate us by giving raises for each certification level that is passed. The office also provides transportation to and from the test site.

Certification proves to our doctors our knowledge in the field. Having competent staff is valuable to them so they take the time to help us study. One of our doctors has a PowerPoint presentation that he goes through with us and worksheets to help us prepare for the exam. The doctors also help us practice hands on with equipment and adjusting glasses.

According to Brandon Blair, O.D., one of the optometrists in our practice, “Certification is valuable to everyone involved. It enhances the technician’s knowledge, which allows them to do more in the office. It also enhances the patient’s experience because the technician is able to help patients more because they have a greater knowledge of eye care. It helps the doctors because they can rely on certified technicians to do additional testing and help with patient education.”

Being certified has helped me be more knowledgeable in my job because of all of the studying I did to prepare. I’m also more confident that I’m doing the testing and procedures correctly now. I encourage everyone in our office to become certified, even if it’s at the CPO level. And then I work on them to keep going!

When I was hired, I decided to make this job a career, to put myself out there, and to become a CPOT. I was the first one in our office to go through all three levels. On my path to becoming a CPOT, I have met a lot of great people; have had the opportunity to write and review questions for the certification examinations; and now sit on the Commission on Paraoptometric Certification.

Jennifer Smith, CPOT
Commission on Paraoptometric Certification
Office manager at Professional Eyecare, Ord, Nebraska
Iowa Optometric Assistant Association Celebrates 50 Years!

The Iowa Optometric Assistant Association (IOAA) celebrated their 50th anniversary at its annual convention in Des Moines, Iowa, held April 1 and 2. A plaque commemorating this historic achievement was presented by Erlinda Rodriguez, CPO, chair of the Paraoptometric Resource Center Executive Committee to the IOAA President, Angie Fouts, CPOA. Keynote speakers Lynn Lawrence and Sharon Carter addressed over 250 members in attendance.

The IOAA sponsored the Friday night reception that included a champagne toast followed by dancing. In addition, paraoptometric courses were offered Friday afternoon and Saturday.

Front row (left to right): Janet Phipps (treasurer) and Angie Fouts (president)
Row 2: Lori Ruddick (continuing education), Sharon Spink (newsletter), Dori Hampel (past president) and Julie Logan (secretary)
Row 3: Kris VanSickle (vice president), Melanie Haywood (president-elect), and Kim Stargell (membership)

Have an upcoming milestone or event? Send us your story and pictures at CPC@aoa.org.
Make Education Fun by Having a Staff Retreat

Has your practice ever considered closing the office for a day to hold a staff retreat? Staff retreats provide a break from the daily responsibilities in the office and time to work on the development of goals for the practice, team-building, and most importantly—fun!

Our lead team at Smart EyeCare Center (practices in Augusta, Bangor, and Farmingdale, Maine) plans a staff retreat every year. We handle all of the planning for the entire day, from the education to the location, activities and food. Dr. Smart (pictured below) has such trust in us that when he arrives the day is a surprise for him.

How we plan a successful retreat:

Survey. All staff members receive a short survey (1-3 questions) to complete. By asking for their input, we can get them involved in what type of topics may be of interest to them. They may want a little more time for socializing at lunchtime or to play more games. One thing we found out they did not want was “role playing.”

Budget. Determine your retreat budget.

Location. We start planning our staff retreat approximately 6-8 months in advance. One of the first things we decide is where our retreat will be held and the date. The location we usually hold our retreats at is the local YMCA camp the first week of September. The YMCA camp provides a building large enough for our group of 49 staff members. We have plenty of space for outdoor activities, if the weather cooperates. The camp is located on a beautiful lake, and we are able to swim, canoe, or kayak during our lunch break.

Focus. What will we focus on for the day—teambuilding, conflict resolution, or understanding change? Will we need to bring in an external speaker, or will we have our lead team members/doctors train on various topics? (Don’t forget to have the presentations reviewed by the CPC so that continuing education credits can be provided.)

Theme. We choose a theme and incorporate it into our activities.

Agenda. We make an agenda for the whole day, and we stick to it the day of the retreat. Everything is planned right down to bathroom breaks!
Staff Retreat, continued

Dress Comfortably. We encourage staff to dress comfortably. Because we have energizing activities, they are allowed to wear casual clothing—jeans are allowed!

Food. We start the day with breakfast. We provide muffins, donuts, sweet rolls, fruit, coffee, milk, and juice. For lunch, we have either pizza delivered, a barbeque, or have it catered.

Ice-Breaker. We usually choose one ice breaker to start the day. Because we often have new staff members each year, this is a great way for everyone to mingle and meet each other from all of our locations.

Team-building Activities. Because we have a large number of staff members, we break them up into five to seven groups. We assign which staff member will be in each group because this guarantees that not all of the same staff from one location will be in the same group.

Evaluate the Retreat. Following the retreat, send a survey to the staff and find out what they liked best, liked least. What ideas do they have for the next retreat?

Our lead team consists of the chief operating officer, senior practice resource manager, optical manager, and the office managers of our three locations. We are currently in the planning stages of our eighth staff retreat. We hope this will be the best one to date!

Contributor: Sally J. Greeley, CPOT, ABOC, NCLE
Sr. Practice Resource Manager, Smart EyeCare Center
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See product instructions for complete wear, care and safety information.
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**CPC News**

**Winners!**

Congratulations to the three winners of the Role Delineation Survey drawing held earlier this year! Each received a $100 MasterCard Gift Card for completing the survey.

Terry-Jo Ayotte, CPO – Michigan
Patricia Fannin, CPOA – Ohio
Elizabeth Tanguay-Collins, CPO – Maine

The CPC and Professional Testing Corporation will utilize the information gathered from the surveys during the development of future examinations.

**Ready for Contact(s)!**

High school sports can be pretty rough and tumble. For students who play sports and wear contacts, it can be even more challenging after losing a contact during practice or in the middle of a big game or wrestling match. That’s why Kris VanSickle, CPOT, of West Union Eye Clinic in Iowa, steps in to assist.

Being a sports mom herself, Kris understands that kids can lose contacts at the worst possible moments. She makes sure that all of the players have a trial set of contacts on hand in their sports first aid kits, along with a small bottle of solution. That way, if they lose a contact, they aren’t out of the game. They have a spare they can pop in and keep going.

Each team keeps an emergency eye kit on hand and nearby. Players identify their replacement lenses by writing their jersey numbers on their personal items in the kits so they know which trials to use. In the case of wrestlers who don’t wear jerseys, they record their weight or name on the items.

**Time is Ticking! Renewal Approaches!**

The CPC emailed the second renewal invoice the first week in June to paraoptometrics who are due to renew their certification this year.

Those CPOs, CPOAs, and CPOTs who are due to renew must earn all of their credits prior to the Nov. 1 deadline.

If you have accumulated the required number of credits already, we encourage you to submit your renewal now. Don’t risk the loss of your certification because you forgot to submit it or submitted inappropriate or insufficient credits.

800.365.2219, ext. 4210
CPC News

Find CPC on Facebook!

Like the Commission on Paraoptometric Certification page and stay current with the latest certification information. Notifications will be automatically sent to your newsfeed when new information is posted on our page. Take this opportunity to network with peers and make new friends while keeping up with information on certification, recertification, and paraoptometric education. View the events to find out where CPC-approved continuing education is being offered across the nation.

Need assistance or more information? Contact cpc@aoa.org.

Have You Heard?

The CPC maintains a directory of currently certified paraoptometrics on the AOA website. You (or your employer) may check your certification renewal year on the list. If you do not see your name on the list there may be a reason. The list is updated about twice a year. If you took an exam after the list was posted (or if we had not yet received the results from your exam), there is no current mailing address in your record, or if your renewal is pending, your name may not appear on the list. Contact CPC@aoa.org to ensure your records are up to date so that the next time the list is updated you will be included.

Having trouble submitting an application? Need a receipt? Missing your eligibility notice? These are all problems that Professional Testing Corporation (PTC) can assist you with. Contact them directly at ptcny@ptcny.com or phone 212.356.0660 for assistance.

For over 30 years, the CPC has partnered with Professional Testing Corporation to provide the best testing experience possible to paraoptometrics. You can now follow PTC on Facebook.

The Paraoptometric Resource Center also has a Facebook page where you can find information on AOA associate member benefits, education and study materials, as well as discover opportunities to connect with other paraoptometrics across the country.

800.365.2219, ext. 4210
CPC News

2016 Paraoptometric Examination Schedule

Note: All applications are due on or before the due date at 9 p.m. Eastern time. Late applications will not be accepted.

August
Application Deadline: July 15
Testing: Aug. 13–27

November
Application Deadline: October 3
Testing: Nov. 5-19

Scheduling a CPOT Clinical Examination
Candidates cannot schedule their examination appointments on their own. A representative from PSI will contact registrants directly for scheduling 3-5 days after receipt of their eligibility notice.

If you do not receive a call from PSI to schedule your appointment within that timeframe, contact Professional Testing Corporation immediately at 212.356.0660.

Recertifying Before Leveling Up?
Remember, if you are planning to test for the next certification level in November, one of the eligibility requirements is that your certification be current at the time of testing. That means if your renewal is due your renewal must have been received and processed by the CPC prior to the November examination registration deadline.

If you are planning to test in November and renewal of your CPO or CPOA is due in 2016, you must submit your renewal documentation and fee in time to be processed by the CPC before the Oct. 3 deadline. (Allow at least 4 weeks for your renewal to be processed.)

No candidate will be authorized to participate in an advanced-level examination during November testing in lieu of certification renewal that is due in 2016. If you have questions, contact cpc@aoa.org.

Have You Had a Moving Experience? Tell Us About It!
It’s one of those things you don’t think about every day. If you have moved in the past year, changed employers, changed phone numbers, email address, or even changed your name, did you remember to notify the CPC? AOA members may log in to their profile on aoa.org to make these updates themselves. Name and contact changes may also be forwarded to the CPC at cpc@aoa.org, and staff will make the updates for you.
See how we put Transitions® XTRActive® lenses to the test outdoors, indoors and even in the car.

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Education

Review Courses...
The final step before taking certification examinations.

Gain CONFIDENCE in your skills and knowledge.

CPO Review Course
The CPO Review Course CD-ROM assists you in the final stages of preparation for the Certified Paraoptometric (CPO) Certification examination. After you have learned the information presented in the CPO Study Guide and Study Flash cards, use this tool to gain confidence by reviewing your knowledge. This CD is designed in an easy-to-use, automated, audio/visual, PowerPoint presentation format guiding you through review information. Complete the quiz at the end of the presentation to earn two hours of continuing education credit. $50 members/$80 nonmembers. There is a processing fee of $20 for AOA members/$50 for nonmembers for each person seeking credit. *Please note this CD-ROM is not Mac compatible.

CPOA Review Course
After the many hours of learning all the core competencies necessary to sit for the Certified Paraoptometric Assistant (CPOA) Certification examination, use this CPOA Review Course CD-ROM as the last step in preparing for it. The CPOA Review Course is divided up into three parts covering office operations, ophthalmic optics and dispensing; testing procedures, special procedures, refractive status of the eye and binocularity; and basic ocular anatomy and physiology.

The CPOA Review Course is a three-hour course that offers the opportunity to earn three hours of Commission on Paraoptometric Certification (CPC)-approved continuing education credits upon successful completion of the Review Course Quiz. $75 members/$100 nonmembers. There is a minimal processing fee of $30 for AOA members and $75 for nonmembers. *Please note this CD-ROM is not Mac compatible.

CPOT Review Course
The highest level of certification through the Commission on Paraoptometric Certification (CPC) is the Certified Paraoptometric Technician (CPOT). The CPOT Review Course CD-ROM assists you in preparing to sit for the certification examination. Gain confidence to successfully pass the examination by reviewing your knowledge using this Review Course as a guide. The CPOT Review Course is divided up into six parts covering pre-testing procedures, clinical procedures, ophthalmic optics and dispensing, refractive status of the eye and binocularity, anatomy and physiology, and practice management.

The CPOT Review Course is a four-hour course that offers the opportunity to earn four hours of Commission on Paraoptometric Certification (CPC)-approved continuing education credits upon successful completion of the Review Course Quiz. $100 members/$125 nonmembers. There is a minimal processing fee of $40 for AOA members and $100 for nonmembers. *Please note this CD-ROM is not Mac compatible.
Navigating the web: Steps to find paraoptometric education materials. Ordering is as easy as 1,2,3!

1. Visit aoa.org, then click on the **Marketplace** tab on the right.

2. Click on the **Study Materials** tab in the middle.

3. Click on the **Show All** tab to view all the PRC products.

Call to place an order at:

800.262.2210
8 a.m. to 4 p.m. CST

Orders@aoa.org