President’s Letter

The year has gotten off to a great start for the Para Section!

The Para board has already been busy planning for this year’s conference. We have lots of exciting ideas that we are trying to implement, along with selecting different classes to educate and inspire us all. We are always looking for great ideas to incorporate and improve our great organization. If you have any ideas or just want to let us know what your interests are, feel free to contact myself or any of the other Para Board members throughout the year.

In the past several years our ballots have been lacking a list of candidates to vote on, so this year we are going to try focusing some of our efforts and space in the newsletters to explain the different roles and obligations of various Para board members. Every position requires personal time outside of the office and away from our families, but the time invested provides the opportunity to develop friendships and knowledge through this unique networking opportunity with fellow Paras. From past experience, I have found that this network of people can offer great support to an individual’s career and helps contribute to the knowledge and skills required to help the NOA continue to grow and welcome new members.

I look forward to serving as President for the NOA. It is very exciting to have this particular opportunity to grow my own knowledge and skills. I want to thank all the current and past board members for their service and also thank Rhonda Gregory and Joanie Smith for their service on the board. I also want to welcome Daniel Book, President Elect and Missy Grooms, Secretary; we look forward to working with you both. Last but not least, thank you Brook. You did a great job last year and have set a great platform for me to work from. I am excited to work with you and the rest of the board this year!

Matt Farritor
NOA Para President

Do You Have Eye Care Success Stories?

NOA would like to feature patient success stories in our consumer advocacy efforts in 2014. Do you have any patient stories you could use to demonstrate how you made a significant difference in the life of a patient? For the stories, we do not have to use names or locations of patients, in order to protect their privacy. We just need examples. On the other hand, if you have a patient you know would be willing to give us a quote or even appear in a short video, even better! Contact NOA at noa@assocoffice.net or 402-474-7716 if you have a story to share.
Enter Your School Vision Evaluation Data
By Dr. Jeff Klein, NOA President-Elect

The Nebraska Foundation for Children’s Vision (NFCV) and NOA are once again asking for our members’ help in collecting data on school vision evaluations in Nebraska. Our goal is to collect enough data to gain supporting evidence that the school evaluation law in Nebraska should be enhanced.

Please take the time to help us with this project. Details on entering the information can be found here: http://tinyurl.com/l2jxm4c.

This information can help us ensure that the children of Nebraska have healthy vision for a lifetime.

Calendar Of Events 2014

SECO International 2014
March 12-16, 2014
Atlanta, GA
Bonny Fripp
770/451-8206
FAX: 770/451-3156
bfripp@secostaff.com
www.secointernational.com

Vision Expo East
Education: Wednesday, March 26 - Sunday, March 30, 2014
Exhibition: Friday, March 28 - Sunday, March 30, 2014
Javits Center | New York, NY

AOA's Meeting
117th Annual AOA Congress & 44th Annual AOSA Conference: OPTOMETRY’S MEETING®
June 25 - June 29, 2014
Philadelphia, PA


Nebraska NOA Fall Convention
September 26-28
Kearney, NE

May your home always be too small to hold all your friends.

~Irish Toast
Top 5 ACA Changes for 2014
Is Your Practice Ready?

2014 will be a big year for health care reform, with many key parts of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) going into effect. Below are the top 5 ACA changes for 2014—and how each one will affect your practice—based on AOA analysis.

1. Health exchanges for insurance
The insurance sold on health insurance marketplaces was implemented on Jan. 1, 2014. These marketplaces sell health plans primarily to people who do not have insurance. They include individuals and small employers of up 50 or 100 employees.

What it means for ODs: Because these are new plans and newly insured people, optometrists are expected to gain new patients over time. Evaluate marketplace plans carefully, as you would any other business transaction for your practice. Marketplace plans will have an integrated pediatric vision benefit (see No. 2 below). Optometrists will be needed on provider panels to serve this population and provide medical eye care to the newly insured. Your state’s access and nondiscrimination laws will apply to these plans, as will the landmark Harkin Amendment.

2. The pediatric vision care essential health benefit
The pediatric vision benefit is one of the 10 essential benefits that create a basic benefits package for all health plans sold in the marketplaces, plus some plans outside of them. Thanks to the advocacy of the AOA and state affiliates, this is a fully integrated benefit (not a standalone plan) that offers a yearly comprehensive eye exam, plus a materials benefit, for every patient up to age 18.

What it means for ODs: Potentially millions of new patients will have coverage they didn’t have before. You may want to advertise to these potential patients and their patients and offer education about the services optometrists provide and the need for pediatric eye exams.

3. Medicaid expansion
Starting in 2014, many states will expand their Medicaid program to everyone under 133 percent of the federal poverty line. Mainly, this will expand coverage to childless adults who generally are not covered in the Medicaid program. States can opt into this expansion or not. It will be fully funded by the federal government for at least three years. States will be getting a lot of pressure from hospitals to adopt the expansion, and the list of states doing so is expected to fluctuate all year.

What it means for ODs: Optometrists who see Medicaid patients will see a significant increase in them. However, although states will get more money for covering this population, that will not necessarily translate into increased payments for providers. States will still face funding issues, which could lead to an increase in Medicaid Managed Care plans in states. If you feel payments are too low in your state, your local affiliate can help you fight to ensure greater access to this vulnerable population.

4. New payment methods
ACOs, PCMHs, care coordination, care transition and managed care—these are just some of the many ideas and acronyms being thrown around as ways to control the rising cost of health care. For example Accountable Care Organizations (ACO) attempt to save money by allowing providers to share in any cost savings achieved through better management of a patient’s care. Patient-Centered Medical Homes (PCMH) pay primary care providers extra to better manage a patient’s care, usually for chronic diseases such as diabetes.

What it means for ODs: These new delivery models are not necessarily closed systems; you may be participating in one and not even realize it. Organizations that qualify as an ACO or PCMH may refer patients for diabetes-monitoring eye exams to meet certain quality measures. To be an integrated partner in an ACO or PCMH, providers must show value and savings. The AOA is working on materials to help optometrists demonstrate value, but you will need a full-scope optometry practice and a robust medical practice.

5. Changes that affect small business owners
Optometrists will face many of the same health care changes as other small business owners.

What it means for ODs: The health insurance marketplaces may affect not only the patients you treat but also the people you employ. Visit the AOA’s FAQ designed for small business owners—and be ready for coming changes.

Para Certification Examination Schedule
The CPO™, CPOA™, CPOT™, and CPOC™ examinations are administered during an established two-week testing period four times yearly, Monday through Saturday excluding holidays, at computer-based testing facilities managed by PSI, in addition to a paper/pencil administration annually conducted at Optometry’s Meeting® in June.

2014 Testing Dates
Application Deadlines Exam Dates
4/14/14 (9 PM EST) 5/10/14 - 5/24/14
7/14/14 (9 PM EST) 8/9/14 - 8/23/14
10/6/14 (9 PM EST) 11/1/14 - 11/15/14

Instructions for finding a PSI testing location
• To find a testing site, select this link www.ptcny.com/cbt/sites.htm
• Click on “Certification/Professional Associations” link
• Select the sponsor of the examination you are taking from list (Commission on Paraoptometric Certification/CPC)
• Click on “Test Centers” under Information Links section on right
• Select the sponsor of the examination again (Commission on Paraoptometric Certification/CPC)
• Fill out the form to see up to 20 Testing Centers matching your specified criteria

To see “Testing Software Demo”
• Go to http://www.psiexams.com/
• Click on “Certification/Professional Associations” link
• Select the Sponsor of examination you are taking from list
• Click on “Testing Software Demo” under Information Links section on right
• Select “Software Demo” in the window
• Press “Start Online Demo Test” button
February 25, 2014

Dear Volunteer:

Enclosed is your sign up form for this year’s NE Special Olympics/Lions Clubs International Opening Eyes. Please fill out and return it ASAP. We’re looking forward to another busy and rewarding day.

This year’s event is Friday, May 23, from 7:30 to 4:30. The screening again will take place in the lower level of the Skutt Student Center at Creighton University. When you check in that morning, you will be provided a t-shirt to wear during Opening Eyes (if needed), with our sponsors on the back - Pech Optical, Essilor, Safilo, and the NE Lions Foundation. Jeans or casual pants are appropriate, along with comfortable shoes.

Your work station will be assigned to you when you arrive. All optometrists and optician volunteers are asked to report at 7:30. Opticians will be busy setting up the optical, and optometrists will be reviewing their station assignments and exam forms. Continental breakfast and lunch is provided, along with refreshments and snacks during the work day. The banquet this year will start at 5:00 p.m. If you sign up for the banquet please plan on attending, as the cost of the meal is covered by the Nebraska Lions.

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me at fremontalcorns@aol.com or by phone 402-721-8823 or Cherie S. Lodl, O.D. at cherie@drlodl.com or by phone 402-330-3063. I look forward to seeing you on Friday, May 23.

Sincerely,

Steve D. Alcorn, O.D.
Opening Eyes - May 23, 2014
Please print legibly.

Name_____________________________________  Lion (Y) (N)

Address_________________________________________________________
STREET    CITY  STATE ZIP

Phone-Home _______/______________ Work_____/____________
AREA CODE/NUMBER                                          AREA CODE/NUMBER

Business Name_____________________________________________________

E-mail___________________________________________________________

O.D. (  ) Optician (  ) Tech (  )

Optician/Tech - I am comfortable with (please circle all that apply)
Frame Selection             Frame Adjusting             Lensometry             Autorefracation             Measuring PD
Testing Acuity (near and far)             Testing Color and Stereo Vision  iCare Tonometry        Optomap

Lodging Required   yes      no  Thursday   Friday   Both
Share a room?     yes     no

VIP Buffet    yes    no
*Please note NLF will be charged for ALL banquet meals even if you sign up to attend and do not attend.

Special Diet Required    yes    no   Type____________________

Wear an Opening Eyes/Lions shirt from previous years.
T-Shirts may be provided, please indicate your size below.

T-Shirt Size     S   M   L   XL   XXL   XXXL

Mail form to:  Dawn Lodl
For Your Eyes Only
2510 S. 171 st Court
Omaha, NE 68130

Or Fax to:  402-334-4418 Phone:      402-330-3063
Or E-mail to:  dawn@drlodl.com
Your solution for SUCCESS

*Paraoptometric Skill Builder® provides staff training and development solutions*

Did you know there are a wide variety of optometric staff training options that will improve quality and help you save time and money?

When it comes to balancing the need for **quality** training for paraoptometrics, **time** to provide the training, and maximizing your training **budget**, look to the AOA Paraoptometric Section for your training solutions.

- **For your practice:**
  - Staff training programs and products tailored to meet your specific practice needs

- **For your paraoptometrics:**
  - Free online courses and live webinars
  - Education modules, articles and cross-training materials
  - Flash cards and self-assessment tools

The [AOA Paraoptometric Skill Builder®](http://www.aoa.org/documents/paraoptometric/NewProductGuide_Rnd3.pdf) program now provides **Beginner and Intermediate Levels** on CD. These cost-effective units provide the results-driven training optometric staff need in an easy-to-learn format with convenient access to the training when and where they need it.

**Beginner Level One** units focus on basic foundational topics for new optometric staff. It is offered online at no cost for Paraoptometric Section members. **Beginner Level One** is also available for purchase on CD. Expanding upon knowledge learned in the beginner units, **Intermediate Level Two** offers 13 additional units also on CD.

The AOA Paraoptometric Section provides you with the tools you need to educate and train your paraoptometrics. Find your solution for success by utilizing one of the many programs and services provided by the AOA Paraoptometric Section.

Contact the AOA Paraoptometric Section today to get tailored training and measurable results. For more information, call 800-365-2219, ext. 4108, or visit [http://www.aoa.org/documents/paraoptometric/NewProductGuide_Rnd3.pdf](http://www.aoa.org/documents/paraoptometric/NewProductGuide_Rnd3.pdf)

The Paraoptometric Skill Builder® program is provided through an education grant from Essilor and Vistakon.
Approximately 75,000 optometric staff members across the country will have the opportunity to access exclusive American Optometric Association (AOA) member benefits, thanks to a motion approved in 2013 that allows eye care professionals working for AOA-member ODs to become AOA associate members.

This change ensures access to all Paraoptometric Resource Center member benefits and services at no membership cost to the paraoptometric and no added membership cost to the AOA-member optometrist. It also opens the door to expanded education and training for new optometric staff members. Among the benefits are:

- Online continuing education (CE) articles worth six hours of CE credits
- Paraoptometric Skill Builder® Beginner Level 1 program
- Billing and Coding: Foundations for Beginners- nine-hour webinar series
- Access to member-only Web pages
- Discounted fees for Paraoptometric education and certification preparation materials
- Reduced registration fees for Optometry’s Meeting®

The Commission on Paraoptometric Certification (CPC) status will not be affected by this change; the CPC will continue to operate without any changes.

To enroll staff:
1. Click here: http://bit.ly/1ijERJ4
2. Click on the “Manage Staff” tab
3. Enter information for each staff person (non-OD)

You will need:
- Legal name of staff (as appears on driver’s license)
- Date of birth
- Unique email address for each staff person

For questions or assistance, contact the AOA Paraoptometric Resource Center at prc@aoa.org or call 800-365-2219, ext. 4108.
First Quarter NOA Public Relations with Mom’s Everyday Focused on Children’s Vision Essential Benefit

The KOLN/KGIN-TV Mom’s Everyday campaign by NOA and the Nebraska Foundation for Children’s Vision for the first quarter of 2014 focused on the children’s vision essential benefit. Elements of the campaign include:

- 2014 NOA President Dr. Darren Wright was featured in an interview on Channels 10/11 on January 6. See the video at http://www.momseveryday.com/lincoln/justformoms/Nebraska_Optometric_Association_226895681.html.

- Dr. Wright authored a blog post for the Better Access to Quality Eye Care web page. (http://bettereyecarenebraska.com/2014/01/what-parents-should-know-about-the-pediatric-optometric-care-benefit/)


- Social media posts aimed at consumers.

- A commercial on the Children’s Vision Benefit that will rotate with our other commercial and air 19 times a month. See the video at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6lVcTRoJtE&feature=youtu.be.

Second Quarter NOA Public Relations - Save Your Vision Month

The American Optometric Association (AOA) conducts Save Your Vision Month annually in March to help people preserve vision throughout their lifetime.

According to the American Optometric Association’s (AOA) annual American Eye-Q® survey, 40 percent of Americans worry about losing their eyesight over their ability to walk or hear. So, AOA is offering tips for a lifetime of healthy vision via a national press release and social media posts.

In Nebraska, our outreach includes:


- Social media posts throughout the month on https://www.facebook.com/BetterEyeCareNebraska and https://twitter.com/NEOptometric.

- Facebook ads.

- A blog post on www.bettereyecarenebraska.org, NOA’s consumer web page.

What Individual Members Can Do

- Use the social media posts at http://nebraska.aoa.org/Documents/NE/PR/SYVMSocialMediaPosts.pdf

- Post this infographic on your social media pages or print it out as a flyer (http://bit.ly/1igoVeC)

- AOA also has another opportunity for members this year. Promotion kits are available via the Optometry Cares - AOA Foundation. The kit includes 25 wristbands, posters, balloons and other materials that can be used to promote the message. Go to http://www.aoafoundation.org/optometry-cares-supporters/save-your-vision-month/ to order one or email Foundation@aoa.org.

American Optometric Association (AOA) offers sight-saving tips

Every waking minute, your eyes are working hard to see the world around us. According to AOA’s annual American Eye-Q® survey, 40 percent of Americans worry about losing their eyesight over their ability to walk or hear. So, it’s easy to incorporate steps into your daily routine to protect your vision!

1. Schedule yearly comprehensive exams
   Seeing a doctor of optometry regularly will help keep you on the path to healthy eyes.

2. Protect Against UV Rays
   Remember, sunglasses are important to wear.

3. Give Your Eyes a Break From Digital Device Use
   Practice the 20/20/20 rule: Every 20 minutes, take a 20-second break and look at something 20 feet away.

4. Eat Your Greens
   Eat the servings of fruits and vegetables, especially the leafy green variety.

5. Practice Safe Care of Contact Lenses
   Follow your optometrist’s recommendations for use and wear – keep them clean!

To learn more about eye and vision health, or to find a nearby doctor of optometry, please visit www.aao.org. To help our 40 million members and their families, visit AOA’s site, browseyourvision.org.