

September 2008

vision matters

Highlights of the Board ~ College of Opticians of British Columbia



WORKING TOGETHER

Brand New Website

Welcome to the new COBC.CA website! Within the next few weeks the current COBC web site will undergo an exciting transition for both you and the public. The new web site, which will be more visually appealing, will also have many new features.

The main change is that the site will include an "Opticians Directory" where the public can search for opticians in their region as well as the specialization of the registrant.

Here is where you come in - the COBC will enter only the name and registration category (eyeglasses, contact lenses, or non practicing) of the registrant. Each of you will be given a user name and password to login to the website:

- **USERNAME:** Your username will be the initial of your first name and then your last name. For example Jon Smith's username would be: "JSmith."
- **PASSWORD:** Your password will be your registrant ID #.

This will allow each of you to go onto the web site and add any other information you would like to share with the public. This could include the name, address and contact information of your business as well as any special training or interests that you would like to bring to the attention of BC consumers.

The newly designed COBC website will also include features such as RSS feeds for news bulletins, feedback opportunities and more. Some of the

changes are as a result of requirements contained in the newly amended Health Professions Act. The site has been restructured to allow you and the consumer to keep up to date with developing stories as well as receive alerts that effect Opticianry. In the near future opticians will be able to complete registration renewal on-line as well as to complete continuing education tests and prior learning, assessment and recognition processes.

Important Changes to All Health Professions in BC

Recent amendments to the Health Professions Act add to the duties and objectives of all the Colleges in BC. It is our understanding of the amendments that the government wants all healthcare professionals to work together. The bickering and fighting between health professionals need to stop. It is time to start collaborating on quality of care and enhancing the ability of healthcare professionals to respond and adapt to changes in practice environments and advances in technology.

Protecting and enhancing eyesight is an ever changing commitment. We are optimistic that by providing the opportunity for every optician to change, you will be able to adapt to emerging issues, especially those driven by technology. We will announce steps on how the College will be moving forward with implementing all the expected changes to the Health Professions in BC. Stay connected to the College of Opticians website in the coming months.

You can download the amended Health Professions Act on our website at: www.cobc.ca/Resource_Room.aspx

CLARITY MEANS A LOT

The Role of an Optician

The College believes that it is important to inform the consumer about the training, the accepted standards of care, and the accountability of BC opticians. To help British Columbians to better understand the role of their eye care professionals, the College is working on a public relations campaign to let the public of BC know about the services they can expect from trained and registered practitioners.

The Health Professions Act requires transparency from the regulatory bodies. The College is committed to this requirement and will also use this opportunity to apply transparency to the new website.

New Brochure About Opticians Available

As a first step to help British Columbians to understand the roles of an optician, the College has developed a brochure to explain to your clients and the general public the role and obligations of a registered optician. After reading the brochure, your clients should understand that registered opticians fulfill an important job in protecting and enhancing their eyesight and trust that they will receive a high quality service from an accountable eye care professional.

The COBC has received good feedback from opticians on the first draft of this brochure. A revised [brochure](#), "To See Clearly" is available for you to view on the website.

www.cobc.ca

If you wish to receive copies of this brochure, please contact the College or directly email reception@cobc.ca

FROM THE BOARD ROOM

Election Time

The Elections are coming up and by the start of the year 2009, two registrants will be elected from the Lower Mainland to be the newest members of the Board.

The College encourages you or your fellow optician to take this opportunity to make a difference through the Board by helping to ensure BC opticians provide safe and effective care to help people achieve better vision.

The Notice of Nomination for District 1 (Lower Mainland) has been sent out. Deadline for nominations is Tuesday, September 30, 2008. Ballots will be mailed out to all registrants living in District 1 in mid-October and election polls will be open from November 30 to December 30, 2008.

IMPORTANT NOTICES

New Criminal Record Search Requirements

Starting this year, the B.C. Criminal Records Review Act requires professionals working directly with children to undergo criminal record re-checks every five years. The requirement will be phased in over a five-year period. All BC opticians are effected by this new legislation.

The Criminal Records Review Act was designed to help protect children from individuals whose criminal record indicates they pose a risk of physical or sexual abuse.

All individuals who work with children, or have unsupervised access to children in their ordinary course of employment, or in the practice of an occupation, or during the course of an education program and who are employed by or licensed by, or

receive operating funds from the provincial government are included under the Criminal Records Review Act.

The COBC and other Colleges are not responsible for this legislation; this is an initiative of the government of British Columbia. However the Act makes the COBC responsible to ensure members submit consent for a criminal record check form at least once every five years.

Coastal Contact Lenses

The College of Opticians has appealed a Supreme Court decision of Madam Justice Griffin. The hearing is scheduled for May 13, 2009 in the British Columbia Court of Appeal.

CONTINUING EDUCATION Annual General Meeting and Education Day

Last year the College held its Annual General Meeting in Kelowna as the guests of the Opticians of British Columbia (OBC). The event was successful as it allowed BC opticians to attend the AGM during the time of a successful education event.

The OBC has once again offered to host the COBC AGM during their October 19th 2008 event. The education day will be held in Richmond at the Executive Airport Plaza Hotel. The seminars begin at 8:30am and run throughout the day until 4:00pm. The AGM will be held from 12:30pm to 2:00pm.

The financial statements and the annual report of the College have been posted on the COBC web site. Members wishing a paper copy can phone the COBC office, and a report will be mailed at your request.

To view the annual report online please visit: <http://www.cobc.ca/ResourceRoom.aspx>

ABO/NCLE National Education Conference

The 2008 ABO/NCLE National Education Conference holds its inaugural meeting in Cincinnati, Ohio September 18 -21. This meeting is designed for United States and Canadian Opticians; it is held modest cost centrally located venues. The education program is excellent and will appeal to all North American opticians. Search on line for this event and note next years dates.

Speaking of North American Opticians

The Opticians of North America (ONA) is a new organization formed to bring all the optician stakeholders to the same table. The Canadian equivalent, the Opticians Council of Canada has successfully provided a venue to share issues and challenges of our national groups. The ONA is likely to have a similar result for both countries.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

COBC Board Meetings:

- Sunday, September 21, 2008
- Sunday, December 7, 2008

Annual General Meeting & Education Event:

- Sunday, October 19, 2008 at the Executive Airport Plaza, Richmond, BC.

Please visit the Opticians of BC at <http://www.opticians.bc.ca/> for more details about the Education Event.

NACO Examinations in BC:

- October 3-5, 2008

For the current information on events, look under [Upcoming Events](#) at www.cobc.ca.

