

## The World Council of Optometry

### Meeting of the General Delegates to be held on 05 June 2009

#### North America Regional Report – Canada - June 2009

##### CANADIAN ASSOCIATION OF OPTOMETRISTS

- 1 **Membership** (as of December, 2008): 3741 (3.8% increase from 2008)
- 2 **2009/ 2010 CAO Assessment** - \$330 per member. \$800 national advertising assessment (\$200 per member in Quebec).
- 3 **Congress Date/ Location** – the next CAO Biennial Congress is July 29 - August 1, 2009 in Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island. Future locations are Winnipeg, Manitoba (July 21-23, 2011) Edmonton, Alberta (July 11-13, 2013) and New Brunswick (2015).
- 4 **Federal Legislation** – CAO continues to pursue the regulation of cosmetic contact lenses at a federal level. In 2008, amendments to classify cosmetic CLs as medical devices were before Parliament when a Federal Election was called. We expect the Bill to be reintroduced in the next Parliamentary session.
- 5 **Medicare / Third Party Coverage and Negotiations**
  - a. **Health Care** – CAO's Government Relations Committee monitors health policy and reform. A meeting with senior staff from the Minister of Health's office was held on March 7, 2008. CAO recommended actions related to: Practitioner mobility (TPA legislation in all provinces); Children's eye care programs; Cosmetic contact lenses and CAO support for funding the National Coalition for Vision Health (NCVH). In 2008, the NCVH was granted \$500,000 by PHAC to complete an environmental scan of eye care in Canada.
  - b. **Occupational Vision Program** - CAO continues to manage an Occupational Vision Plan in Ontario consistent with OVPs in other provinces. Marketing via OVP doctors will increase in the current economic downturn. OVP in Ontario enables 'national' OVP programs, is a member service in Ontario and a source of non-dues revenues for CAO.
- 6 **Member Programs**
  - a. **Member Discounts** - CAO offers member programs including a professional liability/ practice insurance program, home/auto

insurance, group health insurance, banking services, merchant credit card, frame discount, car rental, on-hold telephone messaging, member website and the Optometric Assistant Course. These programs are available to CAO members only.

- b. **Publications** – CAO communicates via the *Canadian Journal of Optometry*, *In Touch* newsletter, *Optometrists' Desk Reference*, and a variety of brochures, fact sheets, and other practice resources.
  - c. **Eye Health Month** - is held in October each year. The 2008 campaign was successfully implemented with the assistance of a public relations firm. More than 15 million consumers were reached between September – October, 2008.
  - d. **Websites** - the 'member only' website has expanded content, a robust search function and opportunities for provincial associations via a provincial portal. The member portal is now very close to being fully bilingual (as is the public site). We also added an 'ask an OD' and an 'eye exam reminder' features to the CAO public site. There is a panel of Optometrists who answer questions from the public.
  - e. **Canadian Optometric Education Trust Fund** –In 2008, COETF funded optometric research and education and approved \$30,000 support for a national uncorrected refractive error project. CAO then approved a matching amount in support of the project. Since its inception, COETF has awarded grants of over \$1.7 M including a \$250,000 donation in 2004 to the School of Optometry, UW expansion campaign.
  - f. **Optometry Giving Sight** – CAO assisted OGS in its initial stages with secretariat functions and establishing OGS as a registered federal charity. CAO is a Silver (in kind) sponsor of OGS providing promotion through articles, inserts in *CJO*, and other opportunities for profile.
  - g. **Member Satisfaction Survey** – in 2008, CAO completed an on-line member satisfaction survey. The results showed an overall satisfaction rating of 76% which achieved a CAO Council strategic goal.
  - h. **Frequency of Eye Exams Study** – CAO commissioned an evidenced based study on the frequency of eye exams. This comprehensive review will be completed in 2009.
- 7 **Inter-intra professional relations** – CAO continues to maintain good internal relations with CAO members, provincial associations (corporate members) and other optometric organizations through ongoing communication, attendance at provincial AGMs, the annual Optometric Leaders' Forum and liaisons with Canadian Council of Provincial Presidents, Canadian Association of Optometric Executives, Canadian Association of Optometry Students, Schools of Optometry, Canadian Optometric Regulatory Authorities, Canadian Examiners in Optometry, World Council of Optometry, American Optometric Association and Volunteer Optometric Services to Humanity (VOSH). In 2008, CAO Council approved the annual funding of lab coats for Optometry students at Canadian Schools of Optometry. The inaugural 'White Coat' ceremony was held at UW on

January 28, 2009. The University of Montreal will hold its first ceremony during the 2009/ 2010 term.

- 8 **Other collaborations** - CAO's relationships with outside organizations includes groups such as the National Coalition for Vision Health, Canadian Ophthalmological Society, Opticians Association of Canada, Canadian National Institute for the Blind, Canadian Diabetes Association, Canadian Public Health Association (literacy), Health Action Lobby (HEAL), Foundation Fighting Blindness and the AMD Alliance. CAO attends the annual Family Physician Forum and the annual conference of the Canadian Diabetes Association.
  
- 9 **Student Relations** – in 2008, CAO launched a new free student membership program available to all registered optometric students in North America. This membership will enable students to access CAO member programs, the CAO member website, *CJO* and In Touch newsletter. CAO also communicates with students via a Facebook page and visits to Schools.
  
- 10 **Committees** – CAO has a long list of standing committees not noted above, but involved in important work on behalf of the profession. A high priority for CAO has been the Children's Vision Initiative, Chaired by Dr. Dorrie Morrow. A new Diabetes Committee, Chaired by Dr. Richard Lee also has ambitious plans for improving awareness about the role of optometry in the care of patients with diabetes. Another important area is the Optometric Assistant Course Committee, Chaired by Dr. Jacquelyn John. The OACourse has an enrollment of 330 in 2008/2009 term. CAO also administers a certification process following successful completion of the OA Course. Graduates are granted the CCOA designation and maintain this status through ongoing CE requirements and membership with CAO. The National Public Education Committee, Chaired by Drs. Lil Linton and Marlene Reiss, is made up of representation from all provinces and is responsible for the highly successful national advertising program. In 2008, NPEC launched a new 'oranges metaphor' television campaign highlighted by ' your optometrist knows your eyes inside and out'. The ad may be viewed on the CAO website, [www.opto.ca](http://www.opto.ca).

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