



OBC: Opticians Of British Columbia

OBC: Opticians of British Columbia Submits Comments to Ministry of Health on Proposed Regulations to Govern Optometry Under the Health Professions Act

January 22, 2009

In 2004, the Province of British Columbia gave notice of proposed regulations to govern the practice of optometry under the Health Professions Act, and invited interested British Columbians to provide comments on those draft regulations.

OBC: Opticians of BC participated fully in that consultation, participated in many meetings with elected and non-elected government officials, and provided reasoned suggestions for how the proposed regulations might better reflect the complementary roles that optometrists and opticians play in providing British Columbians with safe and high quality eyecare services.

In December of 2008, the Ministry of Health circulated final draft regulations and restricted activities regulations, and OBC was please to see that several of the concerns we raised through the consultation process were addressed, including:

- To ensure patient choice, optometrists are required to provide a copy of a prescription for glasses be given to a patient free of charge.
- Any anti-competitive disclaimers or notices on prescriptions or records are prohibited, and a prescription cannot express or imply that only optometrists or qualified medical practitioners or their delegates are authorized to dispense corrective eyeglass lenses.
- Before a corrective eyeglass lens or contact lens may be dispensed, it must be verified by an optometrist, qualified medical practitioner, optician or contact lens fitter or their delegate that it meets the specifications set out in the prescription or contact lens record.
- The definition of “prescription for a corrective eyeglass lens” now includes records prepared by persons in other provinces who are equivalent to those authorized to prescribe corrective eyeglass lenses in British Columbia.

The Province also announced that these regulations will be effective March 1, 2009 when the profession of optometry will be designated under the Health Professions Act.

OBC: Opticians of British Columbia will continue to actively pursue continued improvements and modernization of the regulations governing professional services