

## **Examining The Structure Of Canadian Opticianry**

### **National Opticianry Organizations**

There are four national bodies that are fundamental to opticianry in Canada: the Opticians Association of Canada (OAC), the National Association of Canadian Optician Regulators (NACOR), the Canadian Association of Opticianry Educators (CAOE) and the Opticians Council of Canada (OCC).

**Opticians Association of Canada (OAC)** is composed of representatives from all 10 Canadian provinces and acts as an opticians' advocacy group. As an example, the OAC undertakes initiatives related to education – including primary education, continuing education and advanced practice. The essential thrust of the OAC is to take a pro-active interest in all matters that have the potential to affect Canadian opticians both positively and negatively and to promote a favourable outcome for opticians. Funding for the OAC is based upon membership dues and monies raised from member benefit initiatives.

**National Association of Canadian Optician Regulators (NACOR)** was created by the 10 Canadian regulatory bodies to discuss issues related to Labour Mobility as mandated by the Agreement on Internal Trade (AIT). All members of NACOR represent regulatory bodies. Discussions took place over several years with the ultimate result that a Mutual Recognition Agreement (MRA) was developed and signed by 9 of the 10 provincial regulatory bodies. Absent from that agreement is Quebec. As there continues to be ongoing tasks ancillary to the terms of the MRA, the NACOR group continues to meet on a regular basis. NACOR is also the parent body of the National Examination Committee and the National Accreditation Committee of Opticians. Funding for NACO is based upon membership seat fees.

**Canadian Association of Opticianry Educators (CAOE)** is composed of representatives of the Optical Programs of Canadian Colleges. The CAOE represents the six Colleges offering opticianry programs in Canada. The CAOE was created to address commonalities of opticians programs and discuss additions to the curricula of the programs.

**Opticians Council of Canada (OCC)** is an umbrella organization with representatives from all provincial regulator bodies, associations and teaching institutions as participating delegates. The membership of the OCC is comprised of three groups, the OAC, NACOR and the CAOE. Meetings of the OCC provide a forum for discussing issues of mutual interest such as the development of common policy on the sale of Plano coloured contact lenses by beauty salons and others and development of common strategies and other joint programs that will promote and enhance the profession. Funding for the OCC is based upon membership seat fees. Funding for national cooperative programs is raised from organizations that share similar goals and are developing similar strategies.

### **Associations**

In five of the Canadian provinces the duties of regulatory body and association are fulfilled by separate entities. The College is the regulatory body and the Association serves as provincial advocate for opticians. In each of the other five provinces there exists only a regulatory body, which may in those cases be referred to as an association.

### **Canadian Optician Associations**

1. The Opticians Association of British Columbia
2. The Ontario Opticians Association
3. The Nova Scotia Society of Dispensing Opticians
4. The Newfoundland Guild of Dispensing Opticians
5. Prince Edward Island Dispensing Opticians Association
6. The Opticians Association of Canada

## **Regulatory Bodies/Colleges**

All 10 provinces have Regulatory Bodies – sometimes referred to as Colleges – whose mandate it is to govern the member opticians in matters outlined in each provincial Health Act. While such matters are the fundamental goal of the Regulatory Bodies, other initiatives may be proactively embraced.

### **Canadian Optician Regulatory Bodies**

1. The College of Opticians of British Columbia
2. The Alberta Opticians Association
3. The Saskatchewan Ophthalmic Dispensers Association
4. The Opticians of Manitoba
5. The College of Opticians of Ontario
6. Ordre des Opticiens d'Ordonnances du Quebec
7. The Opticians Association of New Brunswick
8. The Nova Scotia College of Dispensing Opticians
9. The Dispensing Opticians Board of Newfoundland and Labrador
10. The Board of Opticians of Prince Edward Island
11. The National Association of Canadian Optician Regulators

### **Teaching Institutions**

There are 6 teaching institutions in Canada. One fixed site institution in British Columbia and Alberta, two fixed sites in Ontario and Quebec. The fixed site from Alberta also provides primary distance delivery education to all ten provinces in Canada.

### **Canadian Teaching Institutions**

1. Douglas College
2. Northern Alberta Institute of Technology
3. Georgian College
4. Seneca College
5. College Edouard-Montpetit
6. St. Francis Xavier