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The National Eye Care Workforce Study: Q&A with Leaders in Optometric Education

ASCO and the American Optometric Association recently released results from their jointly developed National Eye Care Workforce Study. The study was designed to help answer critically important questions about how America’s eye health needs will be met in the next decade and beyond. Among the key findings are that demand for optometric services is increasing and that there appears to be an adequate supply of eye doctors — optometrists and ophthalmologists — (inclusive of projections of new doctors) to meet current and projected demand for eye care services through 2025.

Eye on Education spoke with five leaders in optometric education about the study results: Dr. Jennifer Coyle, ASCO President and Dean of Pacific University College of Optometry; Dr. Richard Phillips, ASCO President-Elect and President of Southern College of Optometry; Dr. David Heath, ASCO Immediate Past-President and President of State University of New York College of Optometry; Dr. Elizabeth Hoppe, At-Large Member of the Executive Committee of the ASCO Board of Directors and Founding Dean of Western University of Health Sciences College of Optometry; and Dr. Kevin Alexander, President of Marshall B. Ketchum University and a former ASCO President.

Q&A with Dr. Jennifer Coyle

Q&A with Dr. Richard Phillips

Q&A with Dr. David Heath

Q&A with Dr. Elizabeth Hoppe

Q&A with Dr. Kevin Alexander
Eye on Education: What was the purpose of the National Eye Care Workforce Study? What were you hoping to find? Why now?

Dr. Alexander: The purpose of the study was to give the optometric profession an assessment, at this point in time, as to the current and projected supply of optometrists and ophthalmologists and demand for eye care services.

We were hoping that the study would result in meaningful data to assist in healthcare planning, educational planning and scope of practice considerations.

EonE: What do the findings say about the future of academic optometry? For future Doctor of Optometry students?

Dr. Alexander: With a dynamic profession and ever-expanding scope of optometric practice, the future of optometric education is constantly changing, so the results of the study do little to change that fact. The study does point to increasing opportunities in the area of medical eye care which, of course, the profession has been preparing for, for at least a generation. The scope of practice changes that have occurred over the past 40 years have positioned optometry well to fill the increasing demand for medical eye services while maintaining our traditional role in vision care.

The future for Doctor of Optometry students, as well as the practicing optometrist, is bright if they embrace the future and practice to the fullest scope allowed by law.

EonE: What is your overall sense of the study? How it was conducted? The questions asked? The results?

Dr. Alexander: As one who played an integral role in the development and execution of the study, I am pleased with the results. This was a very difficult undertaking. The project team tried to set appropriate goals for the study, craft questions that would lead to meaningful results and, along the way, be careful not to allow preconceived notions to taint the process. In addition, the project team selected the professional survey firm that conducted the study.

I think we were successful in our goals. While it is easy to find fault with studies, one must remember that no study is perfect and that every study can be improved after the fact. For example, the study raises many questions such as regional workforce differences and gender differences in projected capacity that are worthy of study. In reviewing a study such as this, one must also remember that these things have to be accomplished within a certain period of time to be useful, and, of course, there is a budget to be maintained.
EonE: Let’s discuss the survey result that most are talking about: Respondents say they could see an average of 19.8 additional patients per week without adding hours to their practice schedule. What is your response to that? How will academic optometrists/faculty in optometry schools address this issue with their students, and will curricula change or adapt because of this?

Dr. Alexander: It is interesting that you comment that “most are talking about” the additional capacity question. Frankly, from my perspective, this is the weakest part of the study and the question was added late in the process. We knew, anecdotally, that many optometrists believe they can see more patients. As the study developed, we tried to figure out a way to get a handle on that issue and decided “let’s just ask the question,” and the result was 19.8. I think it is important that we not read too much into this number as additional study is required. For example, are there differences in age, gender or how practitioners use technology?

While this is not a strong part of the study, the project team did feel it was important to include the response to this question and factor it into projections. I do not feel this finding impacts optometric education significantly. Whether this is a meaningful finding in predicting workforce needs is yet to be determined.

EonE: In light of the entire survey, what would you say to a potential optometry student? Parents? Current student? Recent graduate?

Dr. Alexander: My response to all of these groups, as well as existing practitioners, is the same it has always been. I remain bullish on optometry. It is a wonderful profession, full of opportunity for those who embrace the future. If you expect optometry (or any other healthcare profession) to be the same as it was when you graduated, you will be disappointed. But for those who accept that change is part of the deal and adapt accordingly, there are opportunities for success.

EonE: Will another study be conducted in the future?

Dr. Alexander: Assuming that funding will be available, I’m sure a future study will be conducted. The beauty of this study is that we have a model that allows us to change assumptions as we gather more information. For example, this study made certain assumptions about the Affordable Care Act that may, or may not, play out. As we get solid data, we can update the study and see what results follow.
Dr. Jennifer Coyle

Eye on Education: What was the purpose of the National Eye Care Workforce Study? What were you hoping to find? Why now?

Dr. Coyle: The intent was to provide data for the profession to use for assessment and decision-making in a variety of ways. Since the last workforce study, we have experienced a rapid transformation in health care and the external factors that affect the demand for eye care.

EonE: What do the findings say about the future of academic optometry? For future Doctor of Optometry students?

Dr. Coyle: That the demand for eye care services, whether for optometrists or ophthalmologists, is similar and that the number of ophthalmologists is predicted to decline until 2025. Doctors of Optometry will need to step up to make sure eye care needs of the public are met. Schools need to continue offering an excellent and vigorous curriculum to prepare students for their future.

EonE: What is your overall sense of the study? How it was conducted? The questions asked? The results?

Dr. Coyle: It’s wonderful to have data, to have the ability to rework the data based on the changing realities and other external factors, such as the number of individuals who need care, incidence of diabetes, number of practicing optometrists and students and graduates of optometry schools and ophthalmology programs. These provide snapshots of the workforce.

The study raises more questions, as most studies do. The data collection and methods were sound. The study makes assumptions that only time will tell if true. I wish we had more specific data about where practitioners are located, i.e., specific geographical locations. Is there greater demand in rural areas as we suspect, for example? The report doesn’t tell us that.

EonE: Let’s discuss the survey result that most are talking about: Respondents say they could see an average of 19.8 additional patients per week without adding hours to their practice schedule. What is your response to that? How will academic optometrists/faculty in optometry schools address this issue with their students, and will curricula change or adapt because of this?

Dr. Coyle: The study doesn’t compare the age of the practitioner and the response to that particular question. Are the respondents who report they could see more patients younger and still building their practice? Or are they older and more established? Do they even want to increase their daily schedule? Is there excess capacity in rural cities vs. major cities?

This is an opportunity to look at best practices and identify practitioners who don’t have excess capacity. What are they doing differently?

graduate?

**Dr. Coyle:** My opinion of the profession is exactly the same as before. Optometry is a great profession and the study reinforces the diversity of eye care services that Doctors of Optometry provide. I view the study in a positive light.

**EonE:** Will another study be conducted in the future?

**Dr. Coyle:** Yes. We owe it to the practitioners to constantly examine what workforce demands are and could potentially be in the future.
Dr. David Heath

Eye on Education: What was the purpose of the National Eye Care Workforce Study? What were you hoping to find? Why now?

Dr. Heath: Workforce studies provide information that support informed decision-making on all levels. Unfortunately, optometry is generally not included in federal and state-level health workforce studies and, as a result, it has fallen to the profession itself to assure that reasonable and objective data regarding the optometric workforce is available. The last study was conducted in the late ‘90s (the Abt Workforce Study of Optometrists) and so much has changed since then that obtaining updated information was critical.

With the implementation of the Affordable Care Act (ACA), optometry is very much at a crossroads with the full integration of the profession into the healthcare delivery system at stake. This study is the first time that optometry and ophthalmology have been looked at together relative to the projected demand for eye care services. In the past, each was analyzed in isolation. This would only be appropriate if the two professions were providing distinctly difference services. This is clearly not the case as both provide broad-based medical eye care. As a result, understanding the ability of the two professions to meet the eye care needs of the public is critical in workforce planning and the development of healthcare policy and regulation nationwide.

EonE: What do the findings say about the future of academic optometry? For future Doctor of Optometry students?

Dr. Heath: First, it is important to consider what the findings say or don’t say. Workforce studies by nature are prone to being politicized, with many jumping to conclusions not supported by the data. We’ll see this whenever someone chooses to embrace the most unlikely of the scenarios. In this study, that would be either assuming the extreme in demand or in supply. In the first, we would find a dramatic shortage of providers if every child, every diabetic patient and all of the increasingly elderly population made full use of eye care services – an unlikely proposition. In the second, on the supply side, the expectation that every Doctor of Optometry would be fully booked and every patient would show up is equally folly. As a result, the conclusion that we probably have an adequate number of providers based on current trends is reasonable, but it will need to be actively monitored to assure the growing demand for services is met.

That said, this study needs to serve as a catalyst to a reasonable profession-wide dialogue on the future of optometry, and as a resource for our advocacy efforts.

In terms of our academic institutions, I’m not sure the study changes much. I personally continue to believe that ours is a great profession with unlimited opportunities. That said, I do believe that we need to increase our efforts to provide career planning programs for our students (and graduates) so they can make wise decisions regarding where and how to practice. A critical
issue that is not addressed by the study is the distribution of providers. In health care, even when there appears to be a surfeit of providers, there are often large underserved communities both within our cities and among our rural communities. These shortage areas are often what drive federal debate.

It is important to stress that as the ophthalmology workforce is not expected to grow, it will clearly be our graduates who will step in to meet increased demand for services in the future.

**EonE:** What is your overall sense of the study? How it was conducted? The questions asked? The results?

**Dr. Heath:** These studies are quite difficult to develop and execute. There are many more questions than can be reasonably answered, and once completed, many of the unanswered questions appear to be the most important. I think the study team undertook a monumental task and I understand it took them a long time to develop some consensus about what the most critical questions were. (Indeed they deserve our thanks for their dedication and efforts on our behalf.) Given the challenge of these studies, rather than find fault with the research, I think we need to use it to refine additional questions to be investigated. Indeed this is an area where the schools and colleges of optometry could play an important role.

One of the more controversial elements of the study is the question of “excess capacity.” The finding that optometrists report “being able to see 19.8 more patients per week” if every appointment slot is filled and every patient shows up will be attractive to many as the silver bullet to meet increasing demand. Unfortunately, it is also highly unrealistic to expect that to happen. However, I do think we can conclude that there is some degree of unused capacity, but the questions of how much and how to access it are begging to be answered. This is an area where ASCO and AOA working together could support our doctors by investigating what that capacity really is and what are the best practices through which we can realize that potential.

Other potential questions include workforce distribution, which is very critical from an advocacy standpoint, and gender differences.

**EonE:** Will another study be conducted in the future?

**Dr. Heath:** It needs to be. To validate any of the projections, we need to conduct follow-up studies every five years or so. They may not need to be as comprehensive, but we do need to monitor some of the more critical numbers.

I would suggest that, alternatively, we need to use this study as an advocacy tool for the inclusion of optometry in healthcare workforce studies whenever they are conducted by federal and state agencies. I would look to see where dentistry is included and work towards adding optometry.

My experience in New York State is that if your data is not included in state-mandated workforce analyses, you are excluded from critical policy discussions. Health departments want large, single sets of data from commonly cited sources. When an alternative data set is offered, they will not use it – too different – too difficult to merge – and (if from the profession itself) too suspect.
Dr. Elizabeth Hoppe

Eye on Education: What was the purpose of the National Eye Care Workforce Study? What were you hoping to find? Why now?

Dr. Hoppe: The purpose of the study was to provide a “snapshot” of the actual supply of eye care providers and the actual demand for eye care services based on an analysis of real data. From that point, we used modeling of a variety of factors to create a prediction of what would be likely to happen in the future. The modeling is based on a set of assumptions and the assumptions can be varied as we get more accurate information.

The timing was important because of major changes in healthcare delivery systems, projections based on population changes like the aging Baby Boomers, and changes in what we know about different disease rates. Just about every other healthcare profession has been engaged in some type of workforce study and some type of workforce projection, so it is important for the profession of optometry to engage in the process. If we did not do this for ourselves, it is likely that someone would do it for us.

EonE: What is your overall sense of the study? How it was conducted? The questions asked? The results?

Dr. Hoppe: The project team and the consulting group that was hired to conduct the study worked very diligently together to make sure that the highest standards were used in every aspect of the study. The standards were set at a very high level for the sampling, the data collection, the data analysis and the interpretation of the results. When we conduct research, we can never completely eliminate the potential for bias. However, all of the checks and balances were in place and I feel very good about the quality of the work that was conducted.

EonE: Will another study be conducted in the future?

Dr. Hoppe: I think it is very important for our profession to continue to invest in health policy research needed to support various initiatives. I hope that this study can be used for aspects of planning, legislative initiatives and to support evidence for profession-wide discussions. Because the modeling is based on the best information that we had at the time, and it is based on a set of assumptions, it would be very interesting to see how accurate the model is a few years from now. Does the data for the supply side meet our predictions? What changes do we see in the demand for eye care? Has anything changed in the number and type of services provided by optometrists? I hope that we are able to revisit this on a periodic basis.
Dr. Richard Phillips

Eye on Education: What was the purpose of the National Eye Care Workforce Study? What were you hoping to find? Why now?

Dr. Phillips: The desire for accurate data that would help the profession understand more about the supply and demand for eye care is not new. There have been studies on optometric providers and ophthalmology as well, but not a study that truly looked at the “big picture.” With the Affordable Care Act, with increased scope of practice opportunities for optometry, and with an expanding work force, it was important to have a tool to not only assess where the needs are now, but to be able to continually monitor the changing need in the future.

EonE: What do the findings say about the future of academic optometry? For future Doctor of Optometry students?

Dr. Phillips: It is probably not appropriate to make a snap judgment based on the one snapshot of data that we have now. However, it seems clear that we do not have a tremendous need to expand the workforce hastily. For future optometric physicians, it seems clear that for the profession to grow, it will be necessary for future students to graduate with a comprehensive background that will allow them to practice full scope optometry. Ophthalmology is not expanding to keep up with the demand, so there will be additional need for optometrists to be even more involved in the medical eye care.

EonE: What is your overall sense of the study? How it was conducted? The questions asked? The results?

Dr. Phillips: It would seem that almost any study becomes more known for what it doesn’t tell us than what it does tell us. What seems clear is that some Department of Labor numbers predicting the need for 25-35% expansion, depending on the report, are exaggerated. This study was certainly more comprehensive in many ways, as it considered the time spent and number of patients seen for both optometrists and ophthalmologists. There has been conjecture that with the increasing number of female practitioners, the number of hours worked on a weekly basis would be drastically reduced, and this does not actually seem to be the case. And no matter how comprehensive a study is, it is always easy to point out data that should have been analyzed. For example, it would have been very meaningful, in my opinion, to evaluate the workforce by regions and by demographics of practice. Data made available by state boards would certainly seem to indicate that there are some states that have oversupply, while some other states have critical needs. We also have indications that there is a significantly higher need for new optometrists in rural settings than in urban ones, but the study did not address that issue.

EonE: Let’s discuss the survey result that most are talking about: Respondents say they could see an average of 19.8 additional patients per week without adding hours to their practice schedule. What is your response to that? How will academic optometrists/faculty in optometry schools address this issue with their students, and will curricula change or adapt because of
Dr. Phillips: To me, this is the most troublesome data in terms of the ability to analyze its usefulness. We obtained objective information on the number of patients seen, hours worked, plans to retire, and used this to help establish the data patterns. But then we asked a question that essentially asks an opinion on how many more patients respondents believe they could add if they could somehow wave a magic wand and make it happen, like turning on a tap. And from that, we reduce what looked to be a shortage to an assessment that we have enough supply to meet the demand, meaning that if we have additional schools or if the Affordable Care Act assumptions are less than estimated, we should actually have an oversupply. Many participants in the study were in the first 2-3 years of practice, when one is almost never as busy as when one reaches the "peak years" of practice. Candidly, it also ignores practice management considerations. A practitioner's personality may be such that he or she will never be much busier than he or she is because of poor practice management habits. Considering the wide variation in how practitioners delegate responsibility during an evaluation, should we also ask how many more patients practicing doctors could see if they delegated more and became much more efficient?

EonE: In light of the entire survey, what would you say to a potential optometry student? Parents? Current student? Recent graduate?

Dr. Phillips: We already know that the most successful practices are those that find a good blend between medical eye care and the provision of vision care aids. And we see that this is a balance most easily met in more rural settings. I think that the most important decision a graduating student will make is where they are going to practice, and what mode of practice will that be? I counsel first-year students at our institution, and try to motivate them to start networking, start thinking early in their academic careers about where and how they will practice. Whether they join an existing practice or open a new one, where the practice is to be located and the demographics surrounding the area will become even more critical as the supply of eye care practitioners expands. As competition increases, practice management skills will become even more crucial for one to enjoy a high level of success.

EonE: Will another study be conducted in the future?

Dr. Phillips: There will certainly be additional studies in the future. One of the best aspects of this particular study is that we can add data routinely to refine the conclusions and test the assumptions made. I hope that future studies do allow consideration for regional differences and population density considerations; with the additional data, we should be able to identify trends.
ASCO Task Force Plans IPE/Collaborative Care Summit

My favorite Tedx Talk is one that I know many of my colleagues in optometric education also refer to when making decisions of all kinds, from simple to complex. The talk is Simon Sinek’s “Start with Why ...” At a recent meeting of ASCO’s Interprofessional Education Task Force, we quickly moved into that discussion of “why?” Why do we think it is important to provide interprofessional experiences for our students? Why is interprofessional collaborative care important in optometric education? It was the unanimous consent that integrated collaborative care is good for the patient, which is a pretty compelling “why.” So, we MUST prepare future doctors of optometry to be adaptable and collaborative because that is how healthcare transformation will affect all of us in the health professions.

Representatives from many of the schools and colleges of optometry have had the opportunity to attend an Interprofessional Education Collaborative (IPEC) workshop. Overall, our colleagues report that the experience is worthwhile because it provides the opportunity to develop action plans for interprofessional education alongside other educators from their institutions. Time set aside for focused small group discussions and large audience participation, all with knowledgeable facilitators, is a strength of the format. The ASCO IPE Task Force is now planning an Eye on Interprofessional Education and Collaborative Care Summit modeled after those successful IPEC workshops. The summit will likely be held in February 2016. The date, location and formal details will be forthcoming. The overall goal is to have an intense one-day workshop with participation from all ASCO member institutions and interested industry partners. Please start sending me your ideas for the event so we can address key issues, including but not limited to breaking down the barriers to IPE (which we know are typically time and resources), developing action plans for a new model at specific institutions, and sharing experiences for group feedback.

Finally, I would like to congratulate Dr. Melissa Vitek, Dr. Jon Baker and Dr. Elizabeth Hoppe on their successful poster presentation at the American Optometric Association meeting, where they shared the results of ASCO’s 2013 IPE survey of the schools and colleges of optometry. The “whys” are plentiful: IPE is good for the patient, good for the profession and good for education.

Jennifer Coyle, OD, MS, FAAO
President
Association of Schools and Colleges of Optometry
Research Grants Awarded to Educators

ASCO and The Vision Care Institute, LLC, an affiliate of Johnson & Johnson Vision Care, Inc., are pleased to announce the recipients of the 2014 Starter Grants for Educational Research.

Grants were awarded to the following research projects:

• Impact of Computerized Classroom Test Administration on Student Performance / Dr. Gregory Fecho, Dr. Jamie Althoff and Dr. Patrick Hardigan (Nova Southeastern University)

• The Effect on Knowledge and Attitude of an Interprofessional Education Curriculum to Optometry and Physician Assistant Students / Dr. Ray Chu (Southern California College of Optometry at Marshall B. Ketchum University)

• Enhanced Clinical Readiness for Optometry Students Entering Second Year / Dr. Fuensanta Vera-Diaz and Dr. Catherine Johnson (New England College of Optometry)

• Acupuncture and CAM Services in Optometric Education / Dr. Mort Soroka (State University of New York College of Optometry).

ASCO congratulates this year’s grant recipients and looks forward to the completion and publication of their projects in the journal Optometric Education.
ASCO Acts Locally but also Thinks Globally

In the broader global context of optometric education, the Association of Schools and Colleges of Optometry (ASCO) and its members are often asked for curricular assistance, new school planning, faculty exchanges and materials to expand optometric education to areas of the world where optometry is in various stages of development. The International Optometric Education (IOE) committee of ASCO works on the relationships, projects and policies related to international education and the global promotion of the profession.

The committee is charged with maintaining current information about international educational, clinical, research and exchange programs and relationships that are supported by ASCO members. Each fall, the committee surveys the member institutions to review the types of projects and programs with which they are involved. In line with expanding standards in international service-learning, this year’s survey included questions for the first time about humanitarian service missions to other countries. The November 2013 survey is available to members by request.

The IOE committee works closely with members through ASCO’s International Optometric Educators Special Interest Group (SIG) to explore ways to assist, coordinate, promote, advance and disseminate optometric education and training to schools and colleges in other nations. In 2013-2014, the SIG created a database of schools in Latin America with the intent to understand their status and issues.

As an affiliate member of the World Council of Optometry (WCO), ASCO fosters relationships with other organizations to ensure coordination of efforts, principles and standards related to optometric education around the world. Several ASCO member institutions are also affiliate members of the WCO. Recently, the WCO education committee produced a guide to help schools, colleges and universities in the developing world to start or upgrade their programs. Click here to learn more about the guide.

If there is a critical challenge in global optometric education, the committee is charged with researching the issue and recommending a position or action to address that challenge. Dr. Andrés Pagán (IAUPR) is the 2014-2015 Chair of the committee. Members are: Dr. Ronald Richardson (RSO), Dr. Janet Leasher (NOVA), Dr. Tracy Matchinski (ICO), Dr. Jeffrey Perotti (IUSO) and Dr. Stanley Woo (SCCOMBU). Dr. Hector Santiago (IAUPR) serves as the International Optometric Educators SIG’s liaison to the committee. LaShawn Sidbury is the ASCO point person for the committee, as the manager of programs and meetings. She can be contacted at lsidbury@opted.org.
Guide to Outcomes Assessment Updated

The ASCO Academic Affairs Committee has updated the Outcomes Assessment Resource Guide for Schools and Colleges of Optometry.

The guide is designed to provide a basic orientation to outcomes assessment as well as assist institutions with developing, evaluating or updating their own systems for outcomes assessment. The updated document was shaped by current perspectives on outcomes assessment in medical education and it contains an active link to the latest standards from the American Council on Optometric Education.
OptomCAS Open for 2014-2015 Cycle

OptomCAS, the Optometry Centralized Application Service, launched its sixth application cycle (2014-2015) on July 1 with a new and improved look. In addition, new software allows for a more user-friendly feel and easier navigation for applicants. The service enables applicants to schools and colleges of optometry to use a single web-based application and one set of materials to apply to multiple institutions. All 21 ASCO member schools and colleges are participating.

In the previous OptomCAS application cycle (Cycle 5), which ended June 2, there were 2,605 applicants, a 1.3% decrease from the cycle that preceded it. A complete statistical report from Cycle 5 will be available at the end of the year.

For answers to questions about OptomCAS, visit www.optomcas.org or contact Paige Pence, ASCO Director of Student and Residency Affairs, at ppence@opted.org.
Student Affairs Officers Meet in San Francisco

The ASCO Student Affairs Officers met in San Francisco on June 25 during the annual meeting of the National Association of Advisors for the Health Professions (NAAHP). Members discussed a variety of timely issues, including ASCO activities, OptomCAS and financial wellness for optometry students. For the third year in a row, a primary topic of discussion was the joint ASCO/American Optometric Association effort to further develop a robust, diverse and highly qualified national applicant pool. A roundtable discussion took place on professionalism for optometry school applicants during the application process and once they matriculate as optometry students.

ASCO members participated in many NAAHP activities, including the Spotlight Session on Optometry, Professional Health Professions Shuffle and the Meet the Deans exhibit fair. Participation in these events helps ASCO and its member schools to better connect with health professions advisors from hundreds of institutions across the country to promote the profession of optometry.

For more information about the Student Affairs Officers or the NAAHP meeting, contact Paige Pence, ASCO Director of Student and Residency Affairs, at ppence@opted.org.
Pro-Optometry Video Gains Supporters

The Allergan Foundation has awarded a competitive Focus Grant to ASCO to support the “Be a Doctor of Optometry: Put Your Future in Focus” video. The Allergan Foundation joins Luxottica in supporting ASCO’s initiative to promote careers in the optometric profession.

The video, available on the Association’s YouTube channel and through its website, is the latest career marketing tool developed for the ASCO/American Optometric Association Joint Project of Further Developing a Robust, Diverse, and Highly Qualified National Applicant Pool. The video complements the True Stories booklet and other information and resources at the ASCO website.
Speaker at Leadership Luncheon Updates Attendees on Affordable Care Act

Dr. Henry Desmarais speaks to attendees at ASCO’s Annual Leadership Luncheon.

Members of the optometric community, including representatives from the companies that are ASCO Corporate Contributors, gathered June 25 in Philadelphia for the Association’s Annual Leadership Luncheon, which was generously sponsored by Hoya.

Among the happenings at the event, ASCO President Dr. Jennifer Coyle addressed the attendees on ASCO priorities over the past year including progress in the area of interprofessional education, and Dr. Henry Desmarais, Principal, Health Policy Alternatives Inc., presented the informative talk “Challenges and Opportunities the Affordable Care Act (ACA) Presents for Optometric Education and the Profession.”

Dr. Desmarais’ presentation focused on healthcare delivery system reforms, such as accountable care organizations, bundled payments and initiatives sponsored by the new Center for Medicare and Medicaid Innovation. He also discussed transparency-related efforts, such as public disclosure of physician performance data on Medicare’s Physician Compare website and the new system for reporting and publicly disclosing certain payments and other transfers of value that occur between drug and device manufacturers and physicians and teaching hospitals. Another area explored during the presentation was increased coverage of patients under both public and private plans, many with relatively narrow provider networks.

Dr. Desmarais stated that many ACA-spurred developments create “the need for increased collaboration, increased coordination of care, increased vigilance regarding environmental changes affecting a doctor’s practice, and increased relationship building” and that it is no longer sufficient for a doctor to focus only on his or her own practice. He also noted the increasing interest in interprofessional education. He concluded his address by telling the audience that health professions schools of all types have essentially inherited a new burden: “the need to help their students understand and prepare for the new healthcare financing and delivery system that is evolving so they are able to meet the challenges head on and take advantage of the opportunities.” He admitted that health professions schools would be doing this at a time of tremendous uncertainty and often limited resources.

ASCO thanks everyone who attended this year’s luncheon and looks forward to hosting the flagship event again next year.
ASCO’s New Board Gets to Work at Annual Meeting in Philadelphia

Back row (left to right): Dr. Andres Pagan, Dean, Inter American University of Puerto Rico School of Optometry; Dr. Timothy Wingert, Dean, University of The Incarnate Word Rosenberg School of Optometry; Dr. Roger Boltz, Interim Dean, University of Houston College of Optometry; Dr. Donald Jarnagin, Dean, Midwestern University Arizona College of Optometry; Dr. John Flanagan, Dean, University of California at Berkeley School of Optometry; Dr. Joseph Zinkovich, Acting Associate Dean, MCPHS University School of Optometry; Dr. Arol R. Augsburger, President, Illinois College of Optometry; Dr. Douglas K. Penisten, Dean, Northeastern State University Oklahoma College of Optometry; Dr. Larry J. Davis, Dean, University of Missouri-St. Louis College of Optometry.

Middle row (left to right): Dr. Kelly Nichols, Dean, University of Alabama at Birmingham School of Optometry; Dr. Stanley Woo, Dean, Southern California College of Optometry at Marshall B. Ketchum University; Dr. Lori Grover, Dean, Pennsylvania College of Optometry at Salus University; Dr. Clifford Scott, President, The New England College of Optometry; Marty Wall, ASCO Executive Director; Dr. David A. Damari, Dean, Michigan College of Optometry at Ferris State University; Dr. David S. Loshin, Dean, Nova Southeastern University College of Optometry; Dr. Karla Zadnik, Dean and Professor, The Ohio State University College of Optometry.

Front row (left to right): Dr. Elizabeth Hoppe, Founding Dean, Western University of Health Sciences College of Optometry; Dr. Joseph A. Bonanno, Dean, Indiana University School of Optometry; Dr. Jennifer Coyle, Dean, Pacific College of Optometry; Dr. Richard Phillips, President, Southern College of Optometry; Dr. David A. Heath, President, State University of New York College of Optometry.

The Board of Directors of the Association of Schools and Colleges of Optometry (ASCO) held its 73rd annual meeting June 24-25 in Philadelphia.

Officers for the 2014-2015 fiscal year were elected by the Board of Directors. They are: President Dr. Jennifer Coyle (formerly Dr. Smythe), Dean, Pacific University College of Optometry, who was re-elected to a second one-year term; President-Elect Dr. Richard Phillips, President, Southern College of Optometry; Immediate Past-President Dr. David Heath, President, State University of New York College of Optometry; Secretary-Treasurer Dr. Joseph A. Bonanno, Dean, Indiana University School of Optometry; and At-Large Member Dr. Elizabeth Hoppe, Founding Dean, Western University of Health Sciences College of Optometry.

The Association also welcomed a number of new members to the Board of Directors who were participating in their first Board meeting or who began July 1. They are: Dr. John Flanagan, Dean, University of California at Berkeley School of Optometry; Dr. Lori Grover, Dean, Pennsylvania College of Optometry at Salus University; Dr. Kelly Nichols, Dean, University of Alabama at Birmingham School of Optometry; Dr. Timothy Wingert, Dean, University of The Incarnate Word Rosenberg School of Optometry; Dr. Karla Zadnik, Dean, The Ohio State University College of Optometry; and Dr. Joseph Zinkovich, Acting Associate Dean, MCPHS University School of Optometry.

Dr. Coyle began the meeting looking back on her previous year as President. She discussed her accomplishments and activities, which include promoting interprofessional education, extending ASCO’s voice through numerous media interviews and press communications, and the recently launched National Eye Care Workforce Study.

Other highlights from the two-day meeting include:

• The Board directed a newly established subcommittee of ASCO’s Residency Affairs Committee, chaired by Dr. Stanley Woo, to develop a definition of “Advanced Competencies” and to begin defining the steps required to achieve Advanced
At its annual meeting in June, the ASCO Board of Directors presented Dr. Karla Zadnik (center) with two Resolutions, one congratulating The Ohio State University College of Optometry on its 100th anniversary and one honoring her upon her induction into the National Optometry Hall of Fame. Dr. Zadnik is pictured with ASCO President Dr. Jennifer Coyle and Dr. Larry Davis, Dean, University of Missouri-St. Louis College of Optometry.

- The Board embraced an American Optometric Association (AOA) pilot program for students on the federal legislative process and health policy issues that affect them as students and as future practitioners. ASCO’s Government Affairs Committee will work with AOA staff on developing the program.

- The Board began a dialogue on the potential impact of the Affordable Care Act on how member schools prepare graduates for its potential impact and the plethora of issues surrounding it.

- Presentations were given on updates to the ASCO multiyear applicant development project, AOA’s InfantSEE children’s vision program, and the latest news from corporate contributors Accutome Inc., Topcon Medical Systems and Volk Optical Inc.

- Two Board development presentations were given by ASCO staff members: “ASCO 101: A Brief Introductory Overview and Refresher for New and Not so New Board Members” by Marty Wall, CAE, ASCO Executive Director, and “ASCO Data and Surveys Overview: Importance and Role of the Dean or President” by Joanne Zuckerman, Manager, Data Services and Special Projects.

Dr. Arol Augsburger (center, pictured with Dr. Jennifer Coyle and Dr. Karla Zadnik)
Dr. Larry Davis accepts the resolution congratulating him on his induction into the National Optometry Hall of Fame.

• Through the adoption of Resolutions, the Board celebrated The Ohio State University College of Optometry’s 100th anniversary and honored Board members Dr. Arol Augsburger and Dr. Karla Zadnik for their induction into the National Optometry Hall of Fame.

The ASCO Board of Directors meets three times per year. Members will meet next in Denver on Nov. 11, 2014.
Three Accept ASCO Special Recognition Awards

Dr. Yi Pang, center, receives the Rising Star Award from Dr. Jennifer Coyle and Dr. Arol Augsburger during ASCO’s Leadership Luncheon in Philadelphia in June.

This June, ASCO presented three 2014 Special Recognition Awards. Dr. Barbara Fink, Associate Professor of Optometry and Vision Science and Chair of the Diversity Enhancement Committee, The Ohio State University College of Optometry, was selected by the ASCO Board for the Dr. Jack Bennett Innovation in Optometric Education Award. Dr. Yi Pang, Assistant Dean for Research and Associate Professor, Illinois College of Optometry, was chosen by the ASCO Board for the Rising Star Award, and Dr. Ryan Anderson, a 2014 graduate of Midwestern University Arizona College of Optometry who is currently in a Veterans Affairs San Diego Health Care System residency program in California, won the Student Award in Clinical Ethics.

Dr. Fink received the Bennett award in recognition of her outstanding work to facilitate the implementation of the ASCO Cultural Competency Curriculum Guidelines at

Dr. Barbara Fink, winner of ASCO’s 2014 Dr. Jack Bennett Innovation in Optometric Education Award.
Dr. Ryan Anderson, right, accepts a plaque representing his receipt of ASCO’s Student Award in Clinical Ethics from Dr. Donald Jarnagin, Dean of the Midwestern University Arizona College of Optometry.

the schools and colleges of optometry. She has served for several years as Chair of ASCO’s Cultural Competency Curriculum Guidelines Subcommittee, of the Diversity and Cultural Competency Committee. In this role she worked to produce the customizable Cultural Competency Guidelines Implementation Workshops that are held on the campuses of member institutions.

Dr. Pang is the first winner of the ASCO Rising Star Award, which is sponsored by Oculus and given to an exceptional faculty member or administrator with less than 10 years of service. She was recognized for her outstanding contributions to ASCO, most notably in the area of international optometric education, and her important contributions to the Illinois College of Optometry through teaching, scholarship, administration and professional service.

Anderson won the Student Award in Clinical Ethics, which is sponsored by International Vision Expo, based on his essay “Tough Talks and Patient Privacy.”
ASCO Launches Online Optometry Resident Directory

ASCO has developed an online Optometry Resident Directory to serve as a centralized source of information about optometry residents. The purpose of the directory is to help residents and outside entities network with one another about career opportunities.

The directory can be searched by residency program type, residency state, residency school/college affiliation, resident’s school or year of graduation, year the resident started the residency, and/or resident’s first or last name.

Sponsored by Alcon, the directory is found at www.odresidents.com. Questions about it can be directed to Paige Pence, ASCO Director of Student and Residency Affairs, at ppence@opted.org.
ASCO Programs Foster Diversity, Cultural Competency

ASCO, with support from industry partner Walmart, spearheads many efforts designed to help the eyecare profession foster diversity and cultural competency.

Cultural Competency Curriculum Guidelines Implementation Workshops

There is still time for ASCO member institutions to apply to receive a grant to fund an on-campus Cultural Competency Curriculum Guidelines Implementation Workshop. The program provides funds to schools and colleges of optometry for on-site Cultural Competency Curriculum Guidelines Implementation Workshops. The workshops demonstrate how to use the ASCO Guidelines for Culturally Competent Eye and Vision Care to incorporate topics and experiences in cultural competency into the optometric curriculum.

The deadline to apply in the 2014 grant period is August 8. The dean or president of the applying member institution should submit an application letter to Carol Brubaker, Liaison, Cultural Competency Curriculum Guidelines Subcommittee. The letter can be e-mailed to cbrubaker@opted.org or mailed to: 1017 Chumley Rd., Virginia Beach, VA 23451. All of the details about the program and application can be found at ASCO’s website.

Cultural Competency Case Study Competition for Students and Residents

Chelsia Leong

This year was the first year for ASCO’s Cultural Competency Case Study Competition for Students and Residents. Chelsia Leong, a Pacific University College of Optometry resident at the VA Southern Oregon Rehabilitation Center and Clinics, won for her case study “Cultural Competency with the Navajo Nation.” The 2014 student winner was Fatima Elkabti, who just completed her third year at the University of California at Berkeley School of Optometry, for her submission “At Home for an Hour: Competent Healthcare for the Homeless.”
In addition to awarding $2,500 each to the student and resident who win each year’s competition, the contest is a way to build a database of real-world examples of how to handle culturally sensitive patient encounters.

*Developing a Diverse Applicant Pool in Optometric Education Mini-Grant Program*

Fatima Elkabti

This is the tenth year ASCO has offered a diversity-related mini-grant program. For 2014, the program focuses on increasing diversity among applicants to optometry schools and colleges. The grants awarded help member schools and colleges to develop and implement activities aimed at recruiting and retaining underrepresented minority students, financially disadvantaged students and first-generation college students. This year, the program awarded nearly $20,000 to the following institutions to help fund their diversity programs, which reach out to and encourage potential students in various ways:

- Illinois College of Optometry (Focus on Your Future Summer Program)
- NOVA Southeastern University College of Optometry (The Preparatory Optometry Program [POP])
- The Ohio State University College of Optometry (Pathways to Optometry)
- SUNY State College of Optometry (Increasing Diversity by Engaging All [IDEA])
- University of Alabama at Birmingham School of Optometry (Providing Diversity in Optometric Education through Continual Enhancement of Current Programs)
- University of the Incarnate Word Rosenberg School of Optometry (Summer Optometry Institute [SOI])
- University of Houston College of Optometry (Texas Optometry Career Opportunities Program [TEXOCOP])
- Indiana University School of Optometry (Your Future/I Can See Clearly Now).

Information about the programs can be found at the schools’ websites.
Roundtable Discussion Explores Collaboration for Benefit of At-Risk Groups

Seeking to improve eye health awareness and encourage regular eye care among at-risk groups, Transitions Optical hosted a roundtable discussion exploring the need for eyecare professionals to collaborate with other key influencers — including general health professionals and health-based community and cultural organizations — to provide enhanced consumer education. The roundtable event, which was held in Miami, Fla., in July, was attended by representatives from multiple points of interaction with at-risk consumers, including the National Eye Health Education Program of the National Eye Institute, Familias con Diabetes, National Council of Negro Women, Yale New Haven Health System, National Association of Hispanic Nurses, and Philadelphia’s Albert Einstein Medical Center.

Key discussions and strategies presented during the roundtable will be published in a consensus paper, which will be made available in the coming months through MyMulticulturalToolkit.com.
Project Foresight Scholarship Winners Announced

Senior leadership from Walmart & Sam’s Club Health & Wellness judged the company’s 2014 Project Foresight contest in Philadelphia, Pa., in June, choosing the following winners:

• First place and $15,000 scholarship: Jeremy Chartash and Jay Harrelson, NOVA Southeastern University College of Optometry

• Second place and $5,000 scholarship: Alexander Martin and Faustino Santiago, New England College of Optometry

• Third place and $2,500 scholarship: Ramon Yalldo and Luigi Greco, Michigan College of Optometry at Ferris State University.

Forty-five two-student teams from 17 schools participated, making 2014 one of the most competitive years ever for Project Foresight. The teams competed by articulating their vision and developing a business plan that answers the question “What should, and will be the future of optometry?”

2014 Preston Cup Goes to WUCO

The Student Optometric Leadership Network (SOLN) presented the Western University of Health Sciences College of Optometry with the 2014 Preston Cup Award in June at its annual meeting, which is sponsored by VSP Vision Care.

Each year, the Preston Cup recognizes excellence and leadership from among the 21 private-practice clubs from the schools and colleges of optometry across the country. Throughout the academic year, each private-practice club sets up practice management programs for their peers to learn more about what goes into running a successful optometric business. These educational activities supplement formal academic courses, and the private-practice clubs share their achievements and successes at the annual SOLN meeting.

Handheld Instrument Aids in Contact Lens Fitting and Diagnosis

Eye Check from Volk Optical is an electronic handheld device that helps practitioners screen and document ocular characteristics for contact lens fitting and general diagnostic purposes. It performs a number of key measurements, including pupil diameter, horizontal visible iris diameter, interpupillary distance, margin reflex distance, pupil eccentricity and strabismus angle. The real-time, objective results enable quick decision-making, such as identifying patients who are candidates for specialty contact lenses thereby reducing drop-out rates. Results can be output to electronic records management systems with WiFi connectivity.

Visit [www.volk.com](http://www.volk.com).
Reynolds Named Professional Relations Manager

Over the past few years, International Vision Expo has worked with schools and affiliated student groups to create and grow a valuable optometry student program. As this program expands to encompass alumni and young optometrists, The Vision Council is committed to dedicating more focus on this effort. Kristen Reynolds’ role has transitioned from Trade Show Marketing Manager to Professional Relations Manager. In her new role, Kristen will facilitate relationships with affiliate partners associated with schools. Her goal is to further build relationships and provide programs that meet the requests and needs of the students, young professionals and alumni attendees on behalf of International Vision Expo.

Registration for Vision Expo West, to be held in Las Vegas, Nev., Sept. 17-20, is now open. In addition to special programs for students and young optometrists, alumni receptions are being hosted for the first time. Vision Expo is offering $1,000 toward the cost to host an alumni reception to all schools of optometry. Details can be found at www.visionexpowest.com.
Practices Can Use Free App for UV Patient Education

To help eyecare professionals educate patients about the causes and effects of UV exposure and steps they can take to help protect their eyes from harmful UV rays, The Vision Care Institute, part of the Johnson & Johnson Family of Companies, has launched a new educational resource, The Vision Care Institute UV Protection App. Practitioners and office staff can use this resource during patient evaluations and follow-up communications to demonstrate who needs protection, the cumulative effects of UV rays on the eyes, the impact of environmental exposure to the eyes throughout the day, and steps to take to help protect eyes from harmful UV radiation.

The app, designed specifically for iPad, is free and can be downloaded via the Apple App Store.

Also: Effective March 31, 2015, Acuvue Advance Brand Contact Lenses, Acuvue Advance Brand for Astigmatism and Acuvue Advance Plus Brand will be discontinued and revenue lenses will no longer be available for sale from the company.
One-Day Contact Lenses for Presbyopia Now Available

Bausch + Lomb received marketing clearance for Biotrue ONEday for Presbyopia (nesofilcon A) soft (hydrophilic) contact lenses, the first daily disposable multifocal contact lenses from the Biotrue ONEday family of products. The company notes that the new lenses feature the next-generation 3-Zone Progressive design as well as the bio-inspired HyperGel material to provide comfortable vision throughout the day and exceptional vision across near, intermediate and distance.

Also: The company announced the availability of Soothe XP eye drops with Restoryl, which are designed to replenish the lipid layer of the tear film, at Walmart and Target and that additional retailers will follow in the coming months.

FDA Grants DME Indication for Ozurdex

The FDA approved Allergan’s sustained-release dexamethasone intravitreal implant 0.7 mg (Ozurdex) as a new treatment option for diabetic macular edema in adult patients who have an artificial lens implant (pseudophakic) or who are scheduled for cataract surgery (phakic). Approval of Ozurdex for this indication is based on the MEAD (Macular Edema: Assessment of Implantable Dexamethasone in Diabetes) study. MEAD includes two multicenter, three-year, sham-controlled, masked, randomized clinical studies assessing the proportion of patients with 15 or more letters improvement in best-corrected visual acuity from baseline.

The implant had previously received FDA approval for the treatment of macular edema following branch retinal vein occlusion or central retinal vein occlusion and for the treatment of non-infectious uveitis affecting the posterior segment of the eye.

Industry Veteran Sattler to Retire

Dave Sattler will retire from Alcon in August, after 28 years of service. His most recent role with the company had been overseeing academic development for U.S. Vision Care as Director of Professional Relations. During the Association of Schools and Colleges of Optometry (ASCO) Corporate Contributors Breakfast in Philadelphia in June, the Association recognized and thanked Sattler for being a strong and long-term supporter of ASCO member schools and colleges and of ASCO as an organization.

According to Alcon, while holding the Professional Relations position Sattler strengthened the company’s ties to optometry schools and colleges. He also worked with the Alcon Foundation, the city of Fort Worth and two optometry schools in Texas to help establish an eye clinic for the underserved in downtown Fort Worth. “I have had 28 great years with Alcon, but I am most proud of the eye care now being provided to the local underserved patient population through the establishment of the Fort Worth Community Eye Clinic,” Sattler said in a press release. “This program brings together our local city government, optometry schools and Alcon to make a real difference in patients’ lives.”

Sattler’s career with Alcon began in 1986 when he was hired as a sales representative in San Diego, Calif. His colleague Dr. Rick Weisbarth, Vice President of Professional Affairs for U.S. Vision Care, commented “Dave is one of the most respected industry professionals in the eyecare field. It was my pleasure to work side-by-side with Dave for so many years as his passion for eye care is unmatched in the industry.”

Tom Duchardt will step in to lead the academic development initiatives for Alcon U.S. Vision Care following Sattler’s retirement.

Two Long-Time Leaders Retiring from UCB

Dr. Ian Bailey

Dr. Ian Bailey, Professor of Optometry and Vision Science at the University of California at Berkeley School of Optometry (UCB), is retiring this summer. Considered a “Berkeley Optometry legend,” Dr. Bailey is an international authority in the field of low vision. His contributions to vision science and low-vision rehabilitation have been recognized with such honors as the Prentice Medal from the American Academy of Optometry and the Pisart Vision Award from Lighthouse International.

According to university representatives, Dr. Bailey “is beloved by generations of optometry students as an exceptional teacher, mentor and clinician,” and in addition to his teaching and research is “also an enthusiastic participant in many student events and the overall life of the school.” Originally from Australia, he joined the Berkeley faculty in 1976.

Also: Dr. Edward Revelli retired in July and has been succeeded as Clinic Director and Associate Dean for Clinical Affairs by Dr. Christina Wilmer. UCB noted that “Over the last 20 years, Dr. Revelli has done an incredible job in building our clinical programs.” Dr. Wilmer was previously a UCB Associate Clinical Professor as well as Chief of the Tang Eye Center (University Health Services), Director of Affiliated Residency Programs, and Chief Mentor of the on-campus Primary Care Residency.
NOVA Participating in Multisite Clinical Trial

Dr. Rachel A. “Stacey” Coulter

Nova Southeastern University College of Optometry (NOVA) has been awarded up to $556,532 from the National Eye Institute of the National Institutes of Health for the work it will do along with other research centers as part of the national Convergence Insufficiency Treatment Trial - Attention and Reading Trial. Dr. Rachel A. “Stacey” Coulter is the NOVA principal investigator.

“Children who have convergence insufficiency sometimes suffer from poor reading performance and attention problems,” Dr. Coulter explained in a press release. “As the first large-scale randomized clinical trial to study this problem, outcomes of this study could lead to new therapies for some children with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and reading problems. We are very excited that the National Eye Institute has funded our grant application, and we look forward to enrolling children into the study this fall.” The NOVA faculty research team consists of Dr. Coulter, Dr. Annette Bade, Dr. Pamela Oliver, Dr. Gregory Fecho, Dr. Erin Jenewein, Dr. Deborah Amster, Dr. Yin C. Tea, Dr. Jacqueline Rodena and Dr. Nicole Patterson.
WUCO Adds Course on Nutritional Supplements

A new elective course — Supplement Facts for Health Care Professionals — was offered for the first time this spring to third-year students at the Western University of Health Sciences College of Optometry (WUCO). Professor of Nutrition Dr. Ron Waltman, a chiropractor who was contracted to teach the class, said the goals of the class are to provide an overall understanding of what is in a food or supplement and to teach students how to answer patient questions about what’s in a supplement, if a certain supplement is good for them, or if a supplement is recommended.

“Like it or not, every eyecare professional must be able to respond professionally to patient questions regarding diet and supplementation,” Dr. Waltman said. “This expectation is the new norm for eyecare professionals. Actually, this is the new norm for all health care professionals.”

Also: Optical Polymer Research Inc. announced a collaboration with WUCO researchers to develop a new generation of antimicrobial contact lens materials.
NECO Launches KidsVision for Life in Boston

Children were thrilled to receive their new glasses from volunteers from NECO, New England Eye and Essilor.

The New England College of Optometry (NECO) and its patient care subsidiary New England Eye, along with the Essilor Vision Foundation, conducted a pilot program this spring and summer called KidsVision for Life, providing free vision screenings, comprehensive eye exams and eyeglasses to children in need at The Boys and Girls Club of Boston’s Yawkey and Orchard Gardens locations.

Over the course of eight days, a team of NECO optometrists and students screened 356 children. Of those screened, 94 children were referred for a comprehensive eye exam at On-Sight, New England Eye’s mobile clinic. Later, the children who were prescribed glasses received them at celebratory fitting parties.
SUNY Community Outreach Continues to Expand

The State University of New York College of Optometry (SUNY) partnership with The Bowery Mission, one of New York City’s most respected organizations providing services to the city’s homeless and residents in need, has expanded to East Harlem. Last year the college signed an agreement to provide those served by The Bowery Mission’s lower Manhattan location with full-service, no-cost, comprehensive eye care. Three days each month, SUNY interns and Dr. Jack Chen visit the site to provide care to a wide range of people. Thanks to broad support solicited by the Optometric Center of New York, the college’s philanthropic foundation, equipment was purchased and provided for the program as well.

The continued support from a range of foundations and individual donors has enabled the college to expand its relationship with The Bowery Mission to include the organization’s new Men’s Center in East Harlem. The center is expected to house up to 60 men in a transitional residential setting and provide services to both the residents and members of the neighborhood in need.
SCO Opens Dry Eye Treatment Center

This summer, Southern College of Optometry (SCO) launched its new TearWell: Advanced Dry Eye Treatment Center. The standalone clinic is dedicated solely to dry eye treatment and is the first clinical facility in the area to offer the LipiFlow thermal pulsation treatment. Drs. Whitney Hauser and Alan Kabat, both known for their research and work with dry eye disorders, are the clinic’s optometric physicians. News of the clinic’s opening generated several stories in local and regional media outlets.

Also: The Eye Center at SCO was recently voted the top eyecare facility by readers of the Commercial Appeal newspaper in Memphis, Tenn. The Eye Center will be receiving the newspaper’s “Memphis Most” award in recognition of receiving the most readership votes.
UMSL Reflects on Life of Dr. Earle Hunter

Dr. Earle L. Hunter

Dr. Earle L. Hunter, former Executive Director of the American Optometric Association (AOA) and Special Assistant to Dr. Larry Davis, Dean of the University of Missouri-St. Louis College of Optometry (UMSL), and former Dean Dr. Jack Bennett, passed away in April. The UMSL EyeWire newsletter noted that Dr. Hunter “was the epitome of a gentleman: he served others faithfully, loved his wife of 60 years Doreen and his family, served his country with distinction, was an outstanding optometrist, and an exceptional administrator.”

Speaking about Dr. Hunter, Dr. Davis said, “Earle's varied experiences throughout his distinguished career prepared him to be an excellent advisor to the college administration following his retirement from the AOA. Earle consistently offered positive energy and wisdom first to the late Jack Bennett who had the foresight to bring him on board and then for several months following Jack's untimely death. I truly appreciated Earle's humility, advice and dedication to the college and our great profession during that transition.”
**UHCO Receives NIH Grant for BLINK Study**

The University of Houston College of Optometry (UHCO) is part of a National Institutes of Health (NIH) study to determine whether commercially available soft bifocal contact lenses slow the progression of nearsightedness in children. Investigators at UHCO and The Ohio State University College of Optometry were awarded grants from the NIH’s National Eye Institute, worth approximately $7.5 million over five years. The Bifocal Lenses in Nearsighted Kids (BLINK) study is a multicenter randomized clinical trial that will follow nearly 300 children for three years. Dr. David A. Berntsen, UHCO Assistant Professor, is the principal investigator for the UH clinical site of this collaborative effort.

**Also:** The university mourns the loss of Dr. Jesse Davis Armistead, a champion and advocate for optometry and higher education in Texas, two-time member of the UH System Board of Regents, and namesake of the UH College of Optometry building. Dr. Armistead passed away in June.

Dr. Jesse Davis Armistead
SCCOMBKU Researchers Awarded Grant for Clinical Trial

Members of the MBKU study team, left to right in the front row, are Dr. Kristine Huang, Dr. Raymond Chu and Dr. Carmen Barnhardt, and left to right in the back row, Dr. Susan Cotter, Dr. Eric Borsting and Sue Parker. Not pictured is Dr. Angela Chen.

Researchers at Marshall B. Ketchum University (MBKU) have received a $665,500 grant from the National Institutes of Health/National Eye Institute to study the relationship between a common childhood vision condition, convergence insufficiency, and reading performance. The grant will fund the Convergence Insufficiency Treatment Trial - Attention and Reading Trial (CITT-ART), a national multicenter clinical trial that involves optometry, ophthalmology, psychiatry and education in evaluating how this eye-teaming problem affects a child’s attention and reading performance.

MBKU is one of eight locations in the United States participating in the clinical trial. Enrollment is expected to begin this fall.
RSO Appoints New Dean

Dr. Timothy Wingert

Dr. Timothy A. Wingert is the new Dean of the University of the Incarnate Word Rosenberg School of Optometry (RSO). He replaces Dr. Andrew Buzzelli, who resigned to become the Founding Dean of the Kentucky College of Optometry. In conjunction with his new role, Dr. Wingert is also serving as a member of the ASCO Board of Directors.

Dr. Wingert had been RSO’s Associate Dean for Academic Affairs. He joined RSO in 2012 after 23 years at the University of Missouri - St. Louis, where he currently holds the position of Professor Emeritus. As a National Academies of Practice Distinguished Scholar and a U.S. Department of State J. William Fulbright Scholar, Dr. Wingert has done much professional work on the issue of access to care. In addition, he is a Past President of the Missouri Optometric Association and was appointed by the Missouri Governor to the state Children’s Vision Commission in 2008, serving as chair in 2010. He is a Fellow of the American Academy of Optometry and a Diplomate in the Section on Public Health and Environmental Vision, for which he also previously served as Chair.
New Dean Assumes Post at OSU

Dr. Karla Zadnik

Dr. Karla Zadnik, the Glenn A. Fry Professor in Optometry and Physiological Optics, became The Ohio State University’s (OSU) first female Dean on June 1. She succeeds Dr. Melvin D. Shipp, who stepped down in May, as Dean of The OSU College of Optometry. In conjunction with her new role, Dr. Zadnik is also serving as a member of the ASCO Board of Directors.

Dr. Zadnik has made significant contributions to the optometric profession. She spent 14 years as a faculty member in the Department of Ophthalmology at the University of California-Davis and was the principal investigator and study chairman of the landmark National Eye Institute studies CLEK and CLEERE. Dr. Zadnik is a former President of the American Academy of Optometry and the numerous honors she has received include the Warren G. and Ruth P. Morris Optometrist of the Year Award from the Ohio Optometric Association, the American Optometric Association’s Contact Lens and Cornea Section’s Donald R. Korb Award for Excellence, and The Ohio State University’s Distinguished Scholar award. This year she was inducted into the National Optometry Hall of Fame, which the ASCO Board recognized by presenting her with a congratulatory Resolution.
New Dean Steps in at PCO

Dr. Lori Grover

Dr. Lori Grover has been appointed Dean of the Pennsylvania College of Optometry at Salus University. Dr. Grover, who previously was Director of the Center for Translational Health Science and an Associate Professor in the Department of Health Solutions at Arizona State University, is highly regarded for her extensive experience in optometric education, clinical care of chronic vision impairment, curricular programming, interprofessional education and clinical research in the areas of low vision and health services research. In conjunction with her new role, Dr. Grover is also serving as a member of the ASCO Board of Directors.

Her 23-year academic career includes numerous accomplishments, such as being among the first faculty members at Johns Hopkins University to complete the leadership training program in the Office of Women in Science and Medicine. She has held faculty appointments in the Department of Ophthalmology at the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine and the Southern California College of Optometry. Dr. Grover currently serves as a Diplomate of the Public Health and Environmental Vision Section of the American Academy of Optometry.

Also: Salus University investigators are among eight study groups who are using an $8 million grant from the
National Eye Institute of the National Institutes of Health to conduct the Convergence Insufficiency Treatment Trial (CITT). CITT is designed to determine whether the successful treatment of convergence insufficiency leads to improvements in attention and reading skills in children 9 to 14 years old. Dr. Mitchell Scheiman, Interim Dean of Research at Salus University, is the Study Chair, and Dr. Michael Gallaway is the Lead Investigator for the university’s Eye Institute.
News from ASCO Special Interest Groups

LOW VISION EDUCATORS SIG

Met: July 10-12, 2014 at Northeastern State University Oklahoma College of Optometry in Tahlequah, Okla.

Chair: Dr. Tracy Matchinski

Attendees: 24 attendees from 19 U.S. and two Canadian schools/colleges and a representative from the Veterans Administration

Speakers/Discussion Topics: Dr. Dave Lewerenz, Dr. Swati Modi, Cathy Holden and Lynda Crouch (multidisciplinary work in low vision rehabilitation); Dr. Matchinski and Dr. Kierstyn Napier-Dovorany (teaching case studies); Dr. Henry Greene (telescopes); telescope and prism-fitting workshops; Dr. Sarah Appel (How are we getting students excited about providing low vision care?); Dr. Sharon Lee (How do we teach technology to our students? How can we keep it current?); Dr. Julie Marinier (journal club); Dr. Elli Kollbaum (ideas for generating referrals into your low vision clinic); and Dr. Katie Boland (What has been your most successful and unsuccessful teaching idea?)

Sponsors: Ocutech Vision Enhancing Systems, Chadwick Optical Inc. and Lighthouse for the Blind of St. Louis.

Contact: LaShawn Sidbury, ASCO’s Manager of Programs and Meetings, lsidbury@opted.org.

OPHTHALMIC OPTICS EDUCATORS SIG

Met: July 24-26, 2014 in St. Petersburg, Fla.

Chair: Dr. Mark Street

Attendees: 33 attendees from 19 U.S. and two Canadian schools/colleges and four sponsor representatives

Actions: The SIG observed a moment of silence to pay homage to the loss of a sponsor and friend Dr. Darryl
Dr. Pete Hanlin received this year’s Joe Bruneni Lecture Award from the Ophthalmic Optics Educators SIG.

Meister (Carl Zeiss Vision). The group is discussing honoring him by establishing the Darryl Meister Memorial Research Project; Curriculum Database Project: consensus to create a composite database of syllabus and curriculum comparisons of the general optics and ophthalmic material courses of the various schools and colleges of optometry (final product to be presented in potential publication form); Dr. Pete Hanlin delivered this year’s Joe Bruneni Memorial Lecture, “Contrast Sensitivity and Visual Perception.”

**Speakers/Discussion Topics:** Dr. Mike Tolentino (presentation and discussion regarding the deleterious effects of non-ultraviolet blue light within the visual spectrum); Discussion regarding the validity of “blue light” claims, availability of industry materials designed to “filter” blue light, potential incorporation of both theoretical basic and practical application of this topic into existing ophthalmic curriculum; Rose Harris and Michael Matson (life 360: using real life metrics to advance technology); Dr. Nicole Putnam (using technology in an optics classroom setting); Dr. Michele Hoff and Dr. Natalie Hutchings (comparing course syllabi)

**Sponsors:** Carl Zeiss Vision, Essilor of America, EyeMed, HOYA, Transitions. The SIG thanks Transitions for being the sole sponsor of the events held on July 24.

**Next Meeting:** July 23-25, 2015 in Grand Rapids, Mich. The workshop will be chaired by Dr. Jamie Brady. The theme of next year’s workshop is “Education and Scholarship.”

**Contact:** LaShawn Sidbury, ASCO’s Manager of Programs and Meetings, lsidbury@opted.org.
Topcon: Striving for Excellence in Product Development, Manufacturing and Support Services

For more than 40 years, Topcon Medical Systems has been providing a full line of innovative diagnostic equipment and software solutions for the optometric community. Topcon utilizes the latest cutting-edge technology to develop products that aid in the detection and treatment of a variety of eye diseases, including diabetic retinopathy, glaucoma and cataract. All Topcon products are manufactured with utmost precision and developed with the expressed goal of helping to preserve and restore vision.

Topcon’s unique product line, which includes retinal cameras, auto refractors, slit lamps, optical coherence tomography (OCT) and digital imaging systems, comprises the largest selection of optical equipment from any one manufacturer. Our Connecting Visions initiative seeks to provide product integration through an all-inclusive networking solution. Topcon continually strives for excellence in product development, manufacturing and support services.

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*Information for this Industry Spotlight was supplied by Topcon and not independently verified by Eye on Education.