

the EXAMINER

DECEMBER 2009

As per section 16 of the HPA, the duty and objects of the College at all times is to serve and protect the public and to exercise its powers and discharge its responsibilities under all enactments in the public interest.

VISION STATEMENT

The College of Optometrists of British Columbia is committed to serving and protecting the public interest by guiding the profession of optometry in British Columbia.

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MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Dr. Gerald S. Komarnicky

BEING CHAIR OF THIS COLLEGE CONTINUES TO encompass my days and nights but fortunately this is less time consuming than during the repeal of the Optometry Act and the creation of the College. Make no mistake about it, no one works harder to run the day to day workings of the College than the CAO Stanka Jovicevic and the Registrar Dr. Lawrence MacAulay. It has only been a year since we sought out a new office location, negotiated a lease, subleased our former office, made a physical move, completed the bylaw discussions with government and stakeholders, established the Standards Limits and Conditions of practice for TPAs and finalized the Optometrists Regulations. It has only been eight months since we repealed the Optometrists Act, came under the HPA, set up the six mandatory committees, added public representatives to these committees and hired a new lawyer for the Inquiry Committee. Recently under the leadership of past Chair Dr. Tanya Flood, we completed the College Policies and Advisories. This train is rolling. Like me, the members of the Board continue to carry a heavy load; however, in time, that load should be reduced as new College staffing provides greater assistance to the mandatory committees. With that, I

am pleased to join the entire College staff in welcoming Gordon Purchase to our team.

Some work has now become an electronic transaction thanks to the online registration renewal process. This year long project was managed by the CAO Stanka Jovicevic who worked overtime to integrate this software on time for the 2010 registration renewal. Jela Vuksan also contributed significantly to the completion of this project. While this transition was not without its growing pains, the end result will prove to be cost effective and time efficient for everyone concerned as you can now pay your registration fees by VISA or Master Card, update your profile online and review your CE status at any time.

I recently enjoyed one of the most fulfilling days of my career when I met with the Registrar and a Deputy Registrar of the College of Physicians and Surgeons. After some pleasant introductions, the meeting proceeded to discuss optometry's scope of practice and the regulatory framework surrounding therapeutic prescription authority. You should all be pleased to know that the working relationship between the two colleges is healthy and one of mutual respect.

The College is now in the process of interviewing persons interested in becoming the deputy registrar of the College. The demands on our registrar under the HPA are great. Employing a part time deputy registrar will allow the College to operate at a more efficient level and deal with matters the registrar's office must take responsibility for in a timely fashion as mandated by the HPA. We should all expect that the College will one day need to employ a full time registrar.

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All College meetings are open for both registrants and the public for their observation. Please see the College web page for the posting of the meeting dates and location.

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

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I want to thank those of you who contacted me to comment on my (rant) letter regarding the evolution of national reciprocity and international developments in the regulated professions. Although these movements are not without their flaws, they are part of a paradigm shift in policy whose time has come. There is no stopping this wave – we can only adapt to this new reality, work within the guidelines in a co-operative way and continue to act in the interest of protecting the public.

Finally, we had something of a historic day at our September meeting when registrants came to view the workings of the College at its quarterly meeting. In the interest of fulfilling our mandate to be objective, fair, transparent and unbiased, you are welcome to observe these meetings.

As always, thank you for giving me this opportunity to serve your College. I respect you all and applaud the public service optometrists provide.

REGISTRAR'S REPORT

Dr. Lawrence MacAulay

Greetings to all! By the time you read this you will probably have renewed your registration with the College. Thank you to all who used the College website to renew online! I encourage everyone to use the website when renewing registration as it is easy to do and takes far less office time. Most people did renew online and were pleased with the process.

Policies and Advisories: We have posted the *Policies* and *Advisories* of the College on our web site in the Registrants' section which you should have a look at and consider printing a hard copy for reference. The *Policies* are "interpretations" of the Bylaws and Regulation and may change from time to time.

The College board approves or amends *Policies* on an ongoing basis and you will note that the date the amendments are current to is at the top of the *Policies* Page. The *Advisories* will be sent out periodically. They are not amended, but may be deleted or replaced and new ones will also be circulated as a new "edition".

A huge thank you goes out to Dr. Tanya Flood who prepared most of these documents in consultation

with our legal counsel and board members. This took up a great deal of her personal time and we appreciate it!

Please check out the *Policy* on Internet sales of contact lenses and glasses and the *Policy* on provision of Spectacle Rx, Contact Lens Rx (which is technically the "Contact Lens Specifications"), and PD Measurement. Please consider providing a copy of these to appropriate patients and your staff.

Complaints: The College receives complaints from the public or registrants on a regular basis. The complaints are processed by the Inquiry Committee who has been meeting at least every 6 to 8 weeks under the guidance of the Inquiry Chair, Dr. Dale Dergousoff. Most complaints that we receive are based around one of two main topics - poor communication and not dilating appropriately. I urge you to go out of your way to ensure good communication with your patients by yourself and your staff. Also, please be aware of the dilation policy in the new *Policies* referred to above.

I am saddened to report that the College is dealing with a record number of complaints from the public. Many of the complaints the College receives surround registrants who do not adequately explain the difference between an eye examination and a contact lens examination – a spectacle Rx and a contact lens Rx – and the fees associated with these two separate but related parts of practice. Please be sure your office policies are clear to the public and that your communication to the public is polite, professional and fair. None of us want a complaint registered against us with the College and more times than not, a dispute could be resolved within a registrant's workplace without involving the College, by having office policies which are in line with the Regulation and the College's *Policies* and *Advisories*.

Peer Circles: The College sponsored a "CE day" on October 17, 2009. On that day some registrants wrote the ICLO exam (Indicator of Current Learning in Optometry) and attended two Peer Circles. The day was very successful and most came away satisfied with time well spent toward quality assurance in their practices. I would like to thank Dr. Bart McRoberts and Dr. Louise Myshak as facilitators, as well as all the participants for attending the Peer Circle Review Sessions. The Quality Assurance Committee (Chair Dr. Rebecca Counts) will provide guidance to the College

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REGISTRAR'S REPORT *(cont.)*

board on the continuation of the provision of Peer Circles.

AGM: The College's first AGM will be held on Sunday February 7, 2010 at the Harrison Hot Springs Resort. I encourage all registrants to attend. I am pleased to consider any topics that you may wish to add to the agenda.

College Staff: As you may know, the College has a new employee, Mr. Gordon Purchase who is currently our receptionist. We are very pleased to have him as an addition to our staff. The full time staff is now comprised of Stanka Jovicevic, Jela Vuksan, Amanda Eggins, Gordon Purchase and also me as Registrar. I consider these people to be part of the "family of optometry" in BC. I am pleased to report that they are all working very diligently under the direction of Stanka to help complete the mandate of the College. It is a pleasure to work with all of them. Please treat them with friendliness and respect.

Examination Charts: There are many inquiries about the ownership of examination charts at the College. Please refer to section 103 of the Bylaws with regard to "ownership of records". There is a requirement for registrants to own their patient examination records or to ensure that the records are owned by another registrant, a BC optometric corporation, an ophthalmologist, a hospital, or the Armed Forces. You are responsible for the safeguard of the records while you are practicing in a given location and you are also responsible for them if you leave that location or retire. You may not leave them with someone who is not in the list above, and you must inform the College in writing when you leave a practice location what provisions you have made for this.

Elections for College Board Members: The elections for College board members will be held in the spring of 2010. It will not be held at the AGM in February. You will receive notice of the election date soon by email and it will also be on our website as soon as it is set.

College Board Members: Thank you to all of the College board members (elected and public), and in particular to our board Chair, Dr. Komarnicky, for the time that they continue to devote to the College and

the regulation of optometry in BC, and for their continued guidance to the provision of the mandate of the College. Please take the time to thank them for all that they do when you next speak to them.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

REGISTRATION COMMITTEE

Dr. Mario Pozza

The College continues to have numerous applications for registration from all over the country and beyond. Since the last Examiner there have been 33 new registrants in BC. Of the 33, two are previous registrants in BC who have returned and one has arrived through the International Optometric Bridging Program (IOBP). We now have 522 Full A registrants and 63 Full B registrants. There are now 448 members registered with Pharmanet as of August 28, 2009. Welcome to the 33 new registrants:

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|-----------------------|---------------------|
| Dr. Lyndon Balisky | Dr. Ryan Magyar |
| Dr. Joshua Bernot | Dr. Cheryl McKinnon |
| Dr. Mark Bourdeau | Dr. Kelly Newhouse |
| Dr. Sharanjit Burmy | Dr. Trevor Peddle |
| Dr. Clement Chan | Dr. Karen Pinchak |
| Dr. Sheeta Chui | Dr. David Schwirtz |
| Dr. Andeep Deol | Dr. Jodi Sehn |
| Dr. Steo Ebata | Dr. Jasdeep Sidhu |
| Dr. Melissa Gardiner | Dr. Sandeep Sidhu |
| Dr. Stephanie Gautier | Dr. Poonam Sharma |
| Dr. Jeffery Guthrie | Dr. Bryan Thome |
| Dr. Andrew Huhtanen | Dr. Tommy Tseng |
| Dr. Kylvin Ho | Dr. Angelee Verma |
| Dr. Ji Youn Kim | Dr. Cleo Yeh |
| Dr. Scott Lake | Dr. Joyce Yu |
| Dr. Gloria Lee | Dr. Jan Zackowski |
| Dr. Wendy Li | |

In addition to these new members there are three registrants who have returned to practice. Welcome back to Dr. Gloria Surh, Dr. Stephanie Pietralla, and Dr. Harjit Purewal.

There was a sitting of the BC Jurisprudence Examination on June 15, 2009 which 39 applicants wrote and passed. There were an additional 3 applicants who wrote and passed on August 17, 2009.

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REGISTRATION COMMITTEE (cont.)

Portability of Licensure

The AIT now allows Optometrists who are in good standing and are in current (active) practice in other Canadian jurisdictions to move jurisdictions without having to complete any other test of competency. These applicants must still provide letters of good standing from all the previous jurisdictions in which they have practiced, authorizations for criminal records check, sit and pass a local jurisprudence exam and submit appropriate application forms and fees.

The Registration Committee will continue to review all application issues out of the usual patterns as well as proposing policies and guidelines to help the College staff in efficiently enforcing our mandate of protection of the public.

QUALITY ASSURANCE COMMITTEE

Dr. Rebecca Counts

The Board of the College recently approved two important changes to the QA Policies concerning Continuing Education:

1. You can now receive 1 hour of CE credit in the ocular health category for every 3 hours of private (unpaid) instruction/mentoring with an ophthalmologist, up to a maximum of 4 hours CE credit per year. To receive credit, you should obtain a CE provider form from the Registrar of the College. This form must be signed by your sponsoring OMD, and will confirm the area in which you worked and the number of hours spent.

2. For taking the initial course for CPR HCP or equivalent, you will be receiving 6 hours CE credit. For taking the re-certification course for CPR HCP or equivalent, you will be receiving 2.5 hours CE credit.

The QA Committee continues to work towards developing a program that will foster best practices in our registrants for the benefit of our patients and to enhance the integrity of the profession.

INQUIRY COMMITTEE

Dr. Dale Dergousoff

An early Season Greetings to all. It has been a very active eight months for the Inquiry Committee as we have dealt with a fairly large volume of complaints

that has kept the committee working hard. On behalf of the Inquiry Committee, I would like to take this opportunity to thank Dr. Lawrence MacAulay and Stanka Jovicevic for their exceptional work and assistance to the committee. In addition, the committee has benefited immensely from the guidance of the *Health Professions Act* and knowledge that our legal counsel, Angela Westmacott, brings to the College.

Although the work for the Inquiry Committee can take up a fair amount of time, it has been a pleasure to have the opportunity to take on this role for the College. I certainly feel I have become a better optometrist through my work with this committee and the previous Discipline Committee.

The Inquiry Committee has been meeting regularly, every 6-8 weeks to ensure our complaints are dealt with in a timely fashion as required by the *Health Professions Act* (HPA). We are a busy committee as there are usually at least twenty active cases on our agenda. The work of the committee has gone smoothly and all registrants should be pleased to know that complaints are dealt with in an efficient, fair, unbiased and respectful manner. Even though it can be stressful for a registrant having to face a complaint, the Inquiry Committee would like to assure our registrants that we work hard to minimize the stress involved, for both the complainant and the registrant. The Inquiry Committee works diligently to fulfill its mandate under the HPA, and strives to make the whole process as positive as possible hoping the registrant will be a better optometrist once having gone through the experience.

The details of the work done by the Inquiry Committee must remain confidential. But I would like registrants to understand that any complaint that comes to the Inquiry Committee must go through the Inquiry Committee process. It would be significantly less time consuming and certainly less stressful for a registrant to deal with concerns of a patient before a complaint is filed with the College. Please review the Registrar's report as Dr. MacAulay mentions a few of the more common situations that come before the Inquiry Committee.

As they say, "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure." It's more prudent to head off a disaster beforehand than to deal with it after it occurs.

F.A.Q.S FROM REGISTRANTS

Dr. Murray Hurlbert

QUESTION: *Patients are often asking for a contact lens prescription to take with them when I don't yet have one for them and some are upset with our contact lens professional fees. At what point is this released and why are people so upset?*

ANSWER: The criteria for this are spelled out in our Optometry Regulations that were deposited with the Ministry of Health on March 13, 2009. The spectacle and contact lens prescription release is described in "Limits or conditions on services and restricted activities" 6 (3). A registrant must provide to the named individual, free of charge, a legible written or electronic copy of

- (a) the prescription for a corrective eyeglass lens, on completion of the eye examination, and
- (b) the record of the contact lens specifications derived from fitting a contact using information contained in a prescription for a corrective eyeglass lens, on completion of the fitting.

To avoid any problems, provide all new contact lens patients with a written explanation of when you would consider a contact lens fitting to be completed and what fees and follow up exams are applicable. For instance, some registrants might not consider a fitting to be complete until a person has experienced 6 or even 12 months of problem free wear. Whatever your office policies, inform patients of them ahead of time and in writing. Also, give them a written explanation of what your contact lens training, fitting exams, and/or routine contact lens health care checks entail. A layperson may not realize what your services entail, and the value of them, unless you fully explain them.

Our Optometry Regulation is easily accessible on the public section of our website at www.optometrybc.com.

KEEP UP TO DATE

Registrants should review Worksafe BC requirements to ensure that they are in compliance with provincial law. For more information visit:

<http://www.worksafebc.com/insurance/>
http://www.worksafebc.com/insurance/need_coverage/default.asp

IMPORTANT DATES

College Board Meeting
December 6, 2009
9:00 AM
Metropolitan Hotel, Vancouver
Connaught Room

First College AGM
February 7, 2010
9:00 AM
Harrison Hot Springs Resort

Board of the College

ELECTED MEMBERS:

- Dr. Gerald S. Komarnicky, Vancouver
- Dr. Dale Dergousoff, Prince George
- Dr. Mario Pozza, Kamloops
- Dr. Rebecca Counts, Terrace
- Dr. Michael Dennis, Prince George
- Dr. Murray Hurlbert, Maple Ridge

PUBLIC MEMBERS:

- Mr. Thomas F. Beasley, Vancouver
- Mr. David MacPherson, Victoria
- Ms. Barbara Buchanan, Burnaby

College Staff

REGISTRAR:

Dr. Lawrence MacAulay

CAO/ASSISTANT TO THE REGISTRAR:

Stanka Jovicevic

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT/ACCOUNTANT:

Jela Vuksan

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT:

Amanda Eggins

RECEPTIONIST:

Gordon Purchase

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