



The Opticians of Manitoba

"Our Focus Is Your Eyesight"

Annual Report 2011

President's Report Todd Smith

This past year we have been busy with working on changes to our organization as we work towards compliance with the new Umbrella Health Legislation, which will be proclaimed in 2011. We have been expecting this to take place for a number of years and now it looks like we are under way. Some of the changes we have been working on include rewriting and updating our bylaws, rewriting policies, terms of reference for our committees, standards of practice and bringing our MOC/Continuing education up to par with the rest of Canada.

As recommended in mid 2010 by our Legal Counsel and the legislators and as you are all aware, we have changed our procedure for registration and renewing our licenses. This change in procedure has been or is being adopted throughout the regulated health professions. Despite the fact that implementation of the changes meant that there were some hoops and hurdles to jump through, it went somewhat smoothly. I was one who had to go through them myself. Thanks' to Carol in the office who knew a lot about where to turn to for answers when we ran into problems. Way to go Carol, for keeping on top of this project. A big Thank you also goes out also to the OAC staff in the office that also had to take the brunt of the problems when they arose, and answer the questions we had about where to go and what to do next. They were trying to do their job as well as direct us through the Process for example of obtaining criminal record checks.

This year we have students enrolled in the following classes:

- Eye Glass year 1 number of students: 17
- Eye Glass year 2 number of students: 9
- Contact Lens year 1 number of students: 12
- Contact Lens year 2 number of students: 9

As we move along in 2011, we will also be addressing the responses gathered from our MOC seminars. We want to bring you the information that you are looking for to meet your requirements for continuing education.

In 2011 we will also likely see more changes in how we do things. This demonstrates that we are moving ahead and meeting the changing requirements of the Health Care industry.

I have tried through the years to bring you, the members, what you require and what you would like to have provided for you through your continuing education program. It has been a lot work and as any council members will tell you, planning the events requires a lot of thinking, planning and meetings.

We/council also participated in a second strategic planning exercise this year. We are fortunate to have Barb Gemmell, who was our strategic planning facilitator, here this evening to explain to you where we are headed and why. Barb has led this same process with other Health Care professional organizations in Manitoba and other parts of Canada, which are experiencing the same need for change due to legislation and we were very grateful for her knowledge and expertise and help in formulating a plan to guide our work over the next 3 years.

It has been a great year, filled with work, but it also gave me the opportunity to work along with you our members. After all we are all in this together and let's work together as one voice. Thank you for your input and ideas keeping us moving in the right direction.

Advertising And Public Relations Committee Report 2010 Chair Sandra Blanchette

Our radio and TV campaign was as successful in 2010 as it was in 2009. The campaign ran from June to November and piggy backed with the National advertising that the OCC was doing. At this point the OOM has no advertising plans for this year but will continue to support the OCC.

Education Committee Report 2010 Chair Todd Smith

2010 was the last year of our 3 year cycle for continuing education. We continue to address challenges regarding members who fail to fulfill their mandatory continuing education requirements. Each year the OOM arranges an average of 8 continuing education lectures, the majority of which are worth 2 credits per event. This means that most of us can get the majority of our con ed requirements for 3 years in just over a year. Remember if you are an OAC member, you also have available to you, as part of your annual membership, 4 credits each year in your con ed bank, worth \$15.00 each, which you can use towards the cost of completing the OAC online con ed credit modules.

The MOC/Education committee tries to make available to you more than enough credit hours each year so there should not be a problem for any of our members to fulfill their required credits. The feedback that we are requesting on the evaluation forms that you are now being asked to submit at the end of our lectures also gives us the very valuable information that we need in order to provide you with more interesting, informative and professionally meaningful presentations.

As a result of your feedback, we are exploring the possibility of having Ophthalmologists and Optometrists to conduct seminars for us and in particular we are presently trying to arrange for an Ophthalmologist to speak to us about Laser surgery and its pros and cons. This request came to us via an evaluation form submitted by one of our members.

The CNIB tour was well attended and we look forward to seeing if they can provide us with another series of lectures and a similar tour and presentation in Brandon. As we all know, we have had concerns about the present location for our events, including the floor being locked off, the food not ready on time, etc., and if space permits, we would like to hold our lectures at the CNIB. It seems central and also supports our Vision Care industry by supporting the CNIB.

Member's told us that they liked the location; it had an elevator and the facility was good. So that being said, we will try and hold events there rather than down town but remember we are still open to other suggestions.

Keep the ideas coming! If you would like to send us your ideas, please feel free to call Carol at the office and let her know so that she can let your education committee know.

NACOR Report

2011 Heather Power

There were 2 meetings of the National Association of Canadian Optician Regulators, in Quebec City, Quebec in May 2010 and Gatineau, Quebec in October 2010. Sandra Blanchette and I represented the Opticians of Manitoba. Our registrar, Carol Ellerbeck also attended. The next meeting is scheduled to take place in Moncton, New Brunswick in April of 2011. A great deal has been accomplished this year, with some major long-term projects being completed. Several more projects are underway and are in various stages of development.

The Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) pathway to licensing has been completed along with an on-line Gap Analysis Tool to assess foreign trained professionals' knowledge and comparative level of competence. PLAR was developed as a joint initiative by Alberta and BC and they received funding from their respective provincial governments. The full process has been revised and standardized approaches have been developed. It now has been accepted as the national approach to licensing which all signatory provinces to NACOR will follow. All applicants go through this process, but if the applicant has attended an accredited school in Canada they are able to skip several steps in the process.

A Licensed or Registered Optician in good standing in another jurisdiction also has a shortened pathway, as they fall under the Mutual Recognition Agreement and are able to be licensed in another province without further examination. Canadian and international applicants who have not graduated from an accredited and recognized program or are not registered in good standing with another Canadian Optician regulator may be accepted for admission where they have a combination of knowledge, skills, experience and abilities which are, in the opinion of the registration committee, substantially equivalent to the requirements set out in the Bylaws for new applicants. Such applicants, after they have completed a PLAR, may be admitted with or without further examinations, education, training, experience and other upgrading and/or assessments as determined by the registration committee.

New amendments to the Agreement on Internal Trade (AIT), Chapter Seven Labour Mobility, which have clarified the expectations of the Forum of Labour Market Ministers (consisting of federal, provincial and territorial representatives) basically will require that once one province's regulatory body has reviewed the qualifications of a foreign trained applicant and has accepted them for licensing, all other provinces will have to accept that applicant for licensing, without further examination. Therefore there is a need to create a standardized and national approach to this process. It is also expected that under the AIT where possible, examinations, pathways to licensure, etc be standardized nationally for professions and trades. NACOR has already been working towards that goal for some time, so we are in good position to ensure compliance.

NACOR is in the process of receiving a grant for a Harmonization Project (national approach) from the funding arm of “The Pan Canadian Framework for the Assessment and Recognition of Foreign Qualifications”, which is the Canadian equivalent of our Fairness Legislation. The grant will cover a gap analysis of all competencies (eye glasses, contact lenses and refraction), database harmonization (original development completed by Alberta and BC), website harmonization, and complete review of registration examinations based on the competencies reviews.

NACOR has also undertaken a competency review project. The Canadian landscape for Opticianry has changed a great deal since the first MRA was inked. Therefore it was felt that it was time to redo the competencies upon which everything (education, examination, licensing, etc) is based.

Practicum requirements for the 4 accredited educational institutes are to be standardized nationally. Practicum information was submitted by the schools and analyzed. A document was produced that outlines the practical skills taught in the various teaching institutions. However these were just the first few steps; there is still much more work to be done.

NACOR is working on establishing a national standard for tolerances. At the last meeting it was looking like the ANSI standard would likely be adopted as it is the most easily defensible. A final report is due at the next meeting.

Submissions to NACOR for accreditation of continuing education activities have increased significantly. The fee for this service increased from \$15 to \$30 per module effective October 1, 2010. NACOR accredits continuing education activities for all provinces except Ontario and Quebec.

BC is the first province in Canada to be awarded independent automated sight testing. However, they lost their exclusive right to practice. However, persons registered with the college still have to comply with requirements of education MCE, insurance and retain exclusive use of title as an Optician. BC reports that most registrants have maintained registration with the college.

Legislation Report

2011 Representative Heather Power

We have had a very busy year with many meetings scheduled for the Fairness Legislation and the Regulated Health Professions Act. We still have more work to accomplish to become compliant with both sets of legislation. Professions are rolled into the legislation gradually, but we are expected to make changes prior to our “roll in”. We are slated to go through the Fairness Process later in 2011. In addition, we are learning more about the programs that are available for immigrants and the Fairness Commissioner’s office is learning a lot more about the various professions, so that there can be a synergistic approach between the government and the professions in helping new immigrants go through the process of Qualification Recognition as painlessly as possible.

We have been working hard to become compliant with both sets of legislation. In addition we have been incorporating new procedures to become compliant with National Standards through NACOR as part of the mandate from the newest revisions to the

Agreement in Internal Trade. This has entailed a great deal of work and there is more to come.

For more information on the “Fair Registration Practices in Regulated Professions Act” please see my report from 2010.

[The Regulated Health Professions Act \(RHPA\)](#) was assented to June 11, 2009. Copies can be purchased at Statutory Publications for approximately \$21 each. The act will not come into effect until the first profession-specific regulation, its accompanying council regulations, as well as the necessary Lieutenant Governor in Council and ministerial regulations are developed and approved. The Physicians are the first health profession to go through this process and it is expected that they will be completed by the middle of 2011. The RHPA has transitional provisions for professions until they come under the RHPA. It is expected that this process will take between 3 to 5 years.

We had a positive meeting with the Minister of Health September 22, 2010 where the OOM was represented by myself, Mary Field and Carol Ellerbeck. We managed to discuss several concerns in our hour long meeting.

We are working through the various requirements for a scope of practice increase and taking the necessary political steps to make this happen. Community involvement is a big part of raising the profile of our profession with politicians. Events like the Teddy Bear Picnic, Vision Health Month, and vision screening in schools by Opticians, etc., become even more important in this context.