

## BRIEFING NOTE

**TO:** Board of Directors

**FROM:** Patient Relations Committee

**DATE:** October 4, 2021

**SUBJECT:** 10.0 Proposed Amendments to the Code of Ethics for Registrants

☒ For Decision ☐ For Information ☐ Monitoring Report

---

**Purpose:**

To review proposed amendments the Code of Ethics for registrants.

**Background:**

The Code of Ethics defines the expectations the College has for every registrant and is intended as a guide to maintaining the dignity and integrity of the profession. The Code of Ethics was created in January 2002 and have not been revised since March 25, 2004.

The Standards of Practice require all registrants to engage in ethical behaviour and act in a manner that's consistent with the Code of Ethics. Breaching the Code of Ethics could therefore amount to an act of professional misconduct.

On April 15, 2021, the Patient Relations Committee reviewed proposed updates to the Code of Ethics which were aimed at:

- Making the document clearer and more relational
- Reflecting changes to the profession since the Code was last reviewed in 2004, including updates to the Standards of Practice and the introduction of the Patient Bill of Rights
- Incorporating the Board's refreshed Core Values, in particular with respect to diversity, equity and inclusion

The goal of the updated Code is to continue to ensure that it forms a foundation of professionalism and outlines the duties and responsibilities registrants of the profession are expected to adhere to in their relationships with the public, with their patients and with their fellow practitioners.

On the Committee's recommendation, the proposed updates were circulated to registrants and other stakeholders to provide feedback. The survey was posted on the COO website for 60 days, and invitations were circulated via eblast, Facebook and Twitter. A survey was also forwarded to members of the Citizens Advisory Group (CAG).

## For Consideration:

### *COO Survey*

A total of 100 registrants responded to the primary stakeholder survey. This represents approximately 3% of the College's membership. A summary of the survey results, together with comments, is attached for review and consideration (**Appendix A**).

Although this is a relatively low response rate, most of the registrants did respond favourably to the proposed amendment to the regulation. Some feedback/suggestions included:

- The proposed Code of Ethics was seen as clear and understandable
- Suggestion that the Code of Ethics should address insurance fraud
- It is proposed that the Code of Ethics should protect Opticians
- Opticians should have the right to refuse service for abusive language
- Definition of "Respect" is subject to different interpretations
- Setting reasonable value for service may be difficult

### *CAG Survey*

A total of 24 respondents answered the survey. Respondents were overall in favour of the changes. A summary of the survey results, together with comments is attached for review and consideration (**Appendix B**). Some feedback/suggestions included:

- Clearly written, succinct and easy to understand in layman's terms
- Most respondents found the section headings improved the readability
- Respecting patient dignity and providing the same level of care was of paramount importance
- Wondering whether the Code will be available in other languages/braille, etc.
- Question as to whether caregivers will have access to patient info
- Request for clarification of "a reasonable value for service"
- Suggestion to include obligation for opticians to provide patients who are struggling financially with information about where to find financial assistance
- What are the expectations of the patient's role; is this a different document?
- Suggestion to include a line about respecting Indigenous persons and working toward reconciliation
- Question as to why there is an exclusion of item No. 12 from original Code of Ethics
- Is access to the Code of Ethics readily available to the public? Can it be posted in stores?
- Request for a brief introductory statement which would be helpful to frame the 16 items listed and information on who to contact if being violated by a service provider

On review of the stakeholder feedback, the Committee made two revisions to the proposed updated Code:

1. An addition to the preamble that indicates that the Code of Ethics should be read in tandem with the Standards of Practice and Practice Guidelines

2. Paragraph no. 17 was added to stress the importance of respectful communication with a patient including optician/patient relationships through social media

The current Code can be found in **Appendix C** and the updated version in **Appendix D**.

**Public Interest Considerations:**

As regulated health professionals, opticians must ensure they maintain the public's confidence in the profession and provide the highest level of safe, ethical and quality care. This is accomplished by exercising professional judgment and integrity.

**Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Considerations:**

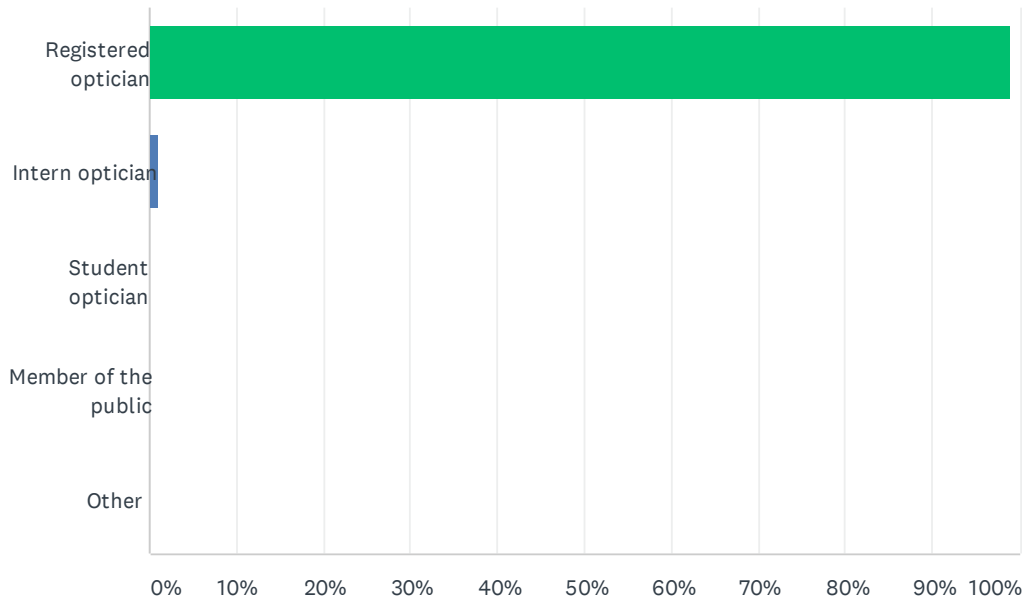
It is incumbent on the Board to consider whether the proposed Code of Ethics is consistent with the COO's organizational values relating to diversity, equity and inclusion.

**Recommendations:**

To approve the proposed amendments to the Code of Ethics as recommended by the Patient Relations Committee.

Q1 Please indicate if you are a:

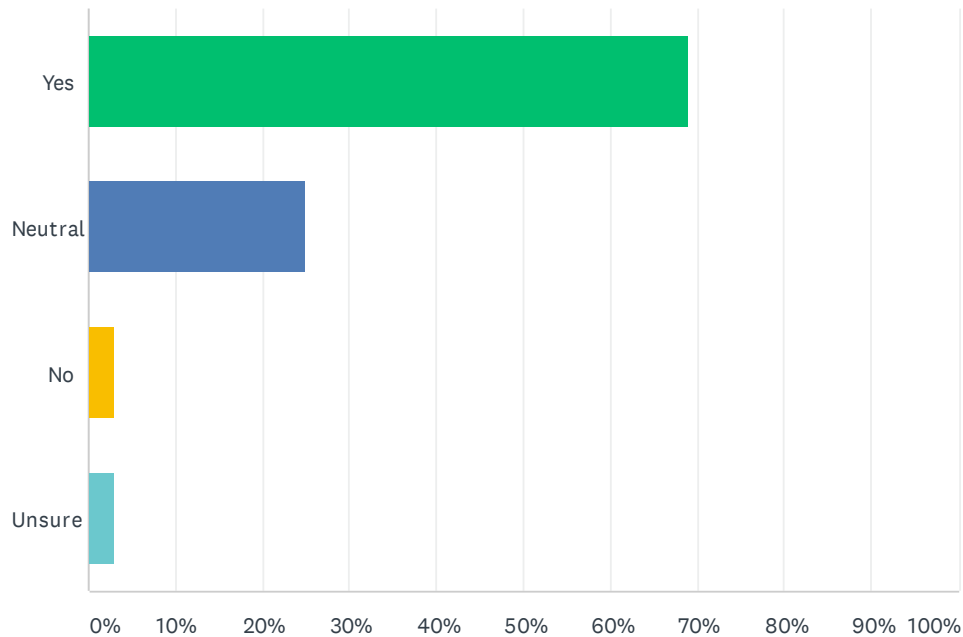
Answered: 100    Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Registered optician	99.00%	99
Intern optician	1.00%	1
Student optician	0.00%	0
Member of the public	0.00%	0
Other	0.00%	0
TOTAL		100

## Q2 Do you believe the proposed new Code of Ethics is clear and understandable?

Answered: 100 Skipped: 0

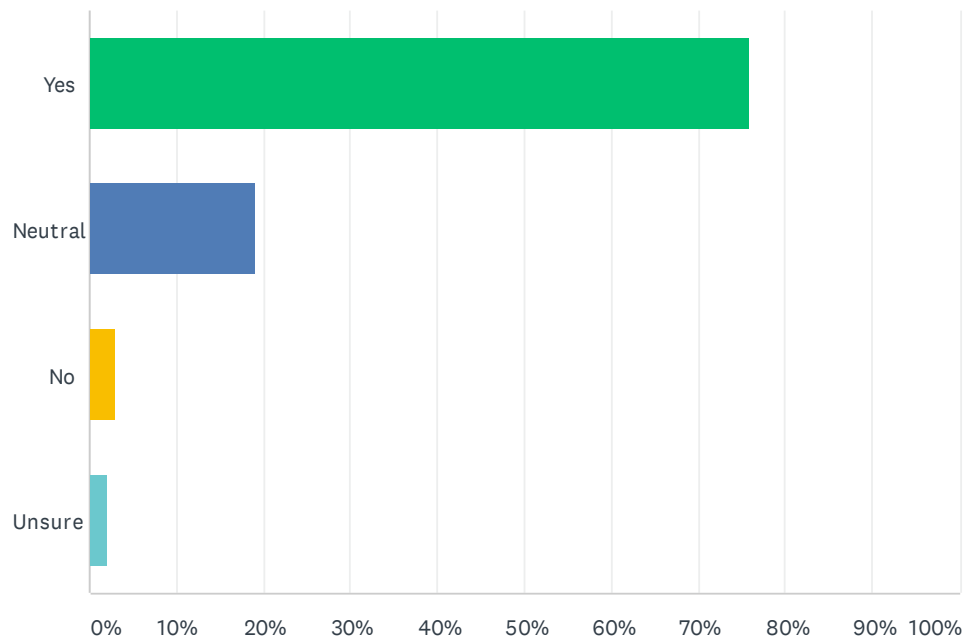


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	69.00%	69
Neutral	25.00%	25
No	3.00%	3
Unsure	3.00%	3
TOTAL		100

#	COMMENTS	DATE
1	Is it a reg? bylaw? guideline? what is it?	6/4/2021 6:28 PM
2	much better	6/2/2021 9:18 AM
3	There needs to be an EXPLICIT mention of insurance fraud in our code of ethics and IMMEDIATE punishment of all those who commit it.	5/28/2021 4:26 PM

### Q3 Do you believe the proposed new Code of Ethics reflects the ethical principles and values that opticians should demonstrate in their practice?

Answered: 100 Skipped: 0

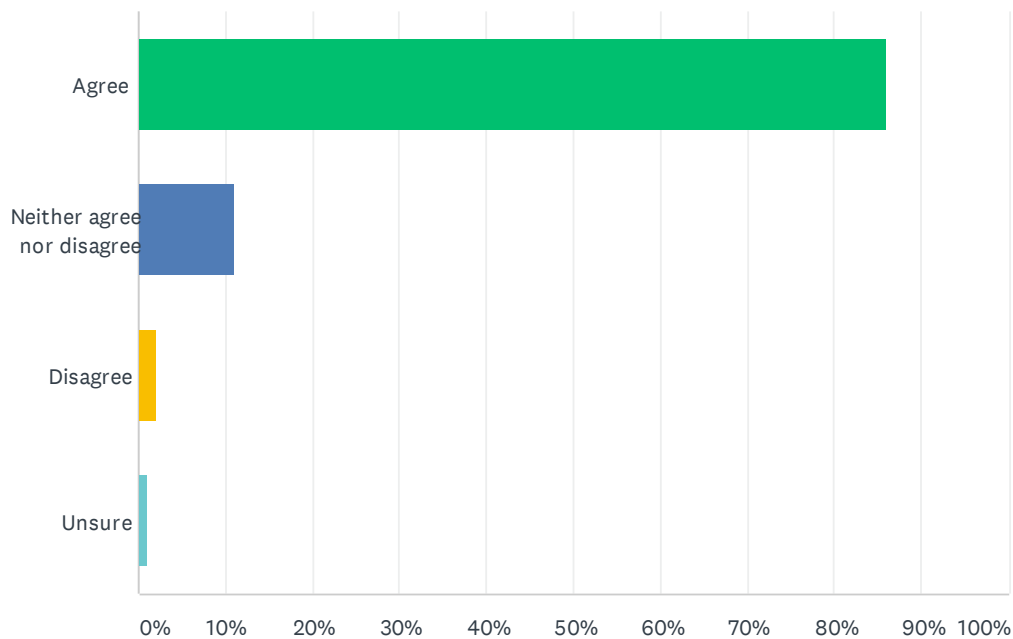


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	76.00%	76
Neutral	19.00%	19
No	3.00%	3
Unsure	2.00%	2
TOTAL		100

#	COMMENTS	DATE
1	There needs to be an EXPLICIT mention of insurance fraud in our code of ethics and IMMEDIATE punishment of all those who commit it.	5/28/2021 4:26 PM

**Q4 Do you agree that the Code of Ethics should specifically reference the expectation that opticians respect the dignity of all patients, regardless of their race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, religion/creed, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, marital status, family status, or disability?**

Answered: 100 Skipped: 0

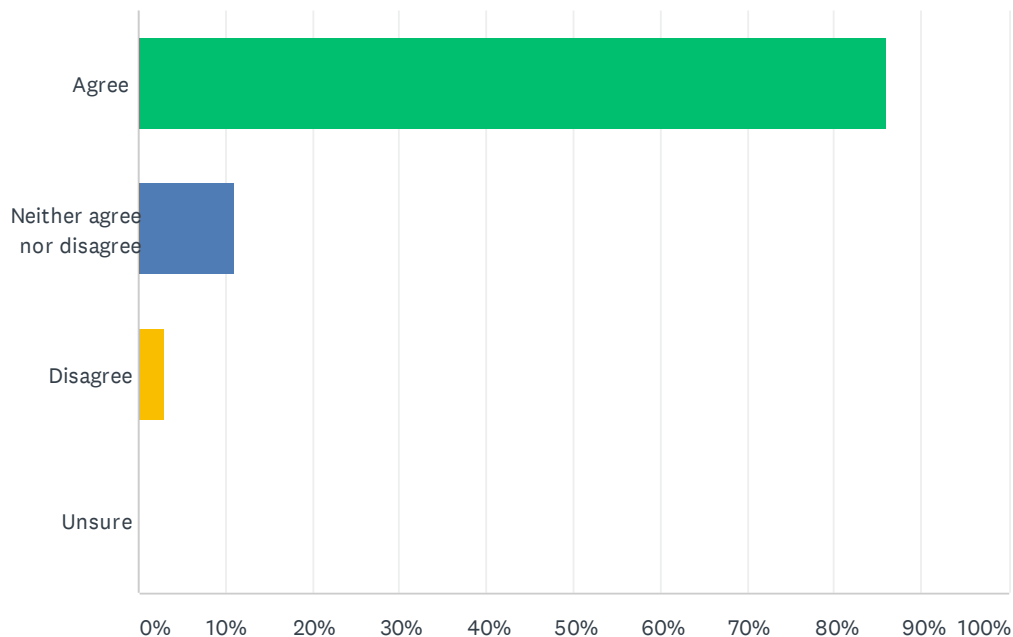


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Agree	86.00%	86
Neither agree nor disagree	11.00%	11
Disagree	2.00%	2
Unsure	1.00%	1
TOTAL		100

#	COMMENTS	DATE
1	If my contact lens room is not wheelchair accessible does this mean I am not respecting a person with a disability?	6/9/2021 10:52 AM
2	The dignity of all patients should be recognized without specifically stating it.	5/29/2021 4:51 PM

## Q5 Do you agree that the Code of Ethics should specifically reference the expectation that opticians respect the dignity of all patients, regardless of their financial position or ability to pay?

Answered: 100 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Agree	86.00%	86
Neither agree nor disagree	11.00%	11
Disagree	3.00%	3
Unsure	0.00%	0
TOTAL		100

#	COMMENTS	DATE
1	"Respect" means many things to different people. I've been accused of racism because I wouldn't alter my fees to accommodate a person on social assistance. Does this mean we can't send an account to collections? Subject to too many different interpretations.	6/9/2021 10:52 AM
2	time is money..	6/4/2021 6:28 PM
3	must always respect their dignity regardless of financial situation. However, an inability to pay can cause an order to be cancelled, but handling the conversation must always be done in a dignified manner	5/30/2021 1:58 PM
4	Same answer as previous	5/29/2021 4:51 PM
5	There needs to be an EXPLICIT mention of insurance fraud in our code of ethics and IMMEDIATE punishment of all those who commit it.	5/28/2021 4:26 PM
6	Agree: Regardless of their financial position Unsure: Ability to pay ( part of statement)	5/28/2021 3:33 PM



## Q6 Is there anything in the proposed new Code of Ethics that you think is unclear or inappropriate?

Answered: 34 Skipped: 66

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	No	7/26/2021 3:18 PM
2	Not all Opticians work in a place where they can set the value of their services. This may need to be adjusted.	6/25/2021 4:31 PM
3	No	6/25/2021 3:50 PM
4	It's a bit of a potential minefield.	6/9/2021 10:52 AM
5	There should be some protection for us as opticians. Maybe the new code of ethics should/ could protect us. Lately I'm feeling very abused verbally by patients/customers if they don't get the answer they want -ie if the Rx is expired they're demanding for us to just give them lenses/glasses even with an rx from 5+years ago	6/8/2021 10:54 PM
6	No	6/5/2021 11:01 PM
7	No	6/4/2021 10:46 AM
8	seems clear to me	6/2/2021 9:18 AM
9	I think that how it is worded is understandable.	5/31/2021 8:55 AM
10	Everything is clear	5/30/2021 1:25 PM
11	Number 2 on Putting patients first Not clear is that a yes or no	5/30/2021 7:44 AM
12	No	5/30/2021 7:04 AM
13	No	5/29/2021 1:50 PM
14	No	5/29/2021 10:55 AM
15	No	5/29/2021 10:28 AM
16	No	5/29/2021 1:25 AM
17	No	5/28/2021 9:33 PM
18	Wasn't this always the case. People are people. Common sense	5/28/2021 9:12 PM
19	NO	5/28/2021 8:35 PM
20	Not at the moment	5/28/2021 7:51 PM
21	No	5/28/2021 7:30 PM
22	No	5/28/2021 7:14 PM
23	Not applicable	5/28/2021 6:10 PM
24	No	5/28/2021 5:57 PM
25	none	5/28/2021 4:57 PM
26	No.	5/28/2021 4:26 PM
27	No	5/28/2021 4:24 PM
28	I believe an optician can provide optical service to family members which include spouse	5/28/2021 4:21 PM
29	No	5/28/2021 4:16 PM

## Proposed Updates to the Code of Ethics

30	no	5/28/2021 4:01 PM
31	No	5/28/2021 3:33 PM
32	No	5/28/2021 3:33 PM
33	No	5/28/2021 3:25 PM
34	No	5/28/2021 3:25 PM

## Q7 Is there anything else that should be included in the Code of Ethics that is not currently included?

Answered: 24 Skipped: 76

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	No	7/26/2021 3:18 PM
2	No	6/25/2021 4:31 PM
3	As previously mentioned, maybe some code of ethics to protect us	6/8/2021 10:54 PM
4	No	6/5/2021 11:01 PM
5	Unsure	6/4/2021 10:46 AM
6	The right to refuse service for abusive language	6/3/2021 10:31 AM
7	Not that I can see	6/2/2021 9:18 AM
8	Mention that opticians should not disparage or make inappropriate negative comments any other health healthcare professionals or patents.	5/30/2021 7:04 AM
9	No	5/29/2021 1:50 PM
10	No	5/29/2021 10:55 AM
11	Opticians should be permitted to date patients in a more timely manner as long as they transfer the patient to another Optician during the dating time. 1 Year is to long.	5/28/2021 9:33 PM
12	No	5/28/2021 9:12 PM
13	NO	5/28/2021 8:35 PM
14	No	5/28/2021 7:51 PM
15	No	5/28/2021 7:30 PM
16	NA	5/28/2021 4:57 PM
17	There needs to be an EXPLICIT mention of insurance fraud in our code of ethics and IMMEDIATE punishment of all those who commit it.	5/28/2021 4:26 PM
18	No	5/28/2021 4:24 PM
19	No	5/28/2021 4:21 PM
20	No	5/28/2021 4:16 PM
21	no	5/28/2021 4:01 PM
22	Not sure	5/28/2021 3:33 PM
23	Not that I can think of	5/28/2021 3:25 PM
24	No	5/28/2021 3:25 PM

# Default Report

*Citizen Advisory Group (CAG) - Opticians Survey*

August 18<sup>th</sup>, 2021, 7:36 am EDT

24 Respondents

**Q1 - Please take a moment to read COO's new proposed Code of Ethics. What are your initial thoughts after reading our proposed new Code of Ethics?**

---

There are no major concerns. One element. may be added for consideration would be under communication and transparency and the utilisation of digital services: such as email and online booking, and or any other digital application online services

---

The code of ethics is very clear. I did not find anything that needed to be added or amended.

---

I did not find your previous Code of Ethics to complete a comparison but I found proposed Code easy to understand and well organized.

---

The Code of Ethics is written in clear and concise language for the general public to understand.

---

The proposed Code of Ethics proposed changes is concise, ethical, professional policy that serves the current environment of providing care and the way in which members should provide care.

---

Very solid statement on the ethics and standards behind this college and the principles they stand behind.

---

Transparent and showing a strong commitment to principles, laws, values governing the safety of the patient.

---

I like the way you have divided it up by themes. It makes it easy to read and helps me understand the broader area. I am unsure of what you mean by "a reasonable value for their services". Does this mean that the price you are charging is reasonable? I think there are various ways of interpreting this item. I think that 16 is a good amount.

---

I believe that this Code of Ethics, is very thorough. It protects both the client and the optician. I particularly agree the honesty, integrity, accountability and that fact that services cannot be denied and a client cannot be refused services based on gender identity or financial ability to pay. Is the Code of Ethics posted in a visible location in their place of business? Does the Code of Ethics state how and to whom a complaint is to be addressed? Is the Code of Ethics readily available in different languages? Is the Code of Ethics available in Braille for clients with limited vision who may require optical products.

---

I think it is well written and covers all the areas I would expect to be included.

---

The new proposed Code of Ethics appears to be comprehensive and concise. The six main themes are clearly highlighted.

---

I like the updated version..it is very clear and concise

---

Excellent. I particularly like the first section "Putting patients first" "An optician puts the benefit and well-being of their patients above all other considerations, including their commercial or business interests." From past experience I found an optician to be pushing for a whole new set of frames and lenses, rather than just replacing lenses with a new prescription.

---

Upon reading the new proposed Code of Ethics, I found this document to be clear and concise and that it explains clearly the role of the optician in his or her dealings with clients.

---

I like the inclusion of "not taking mental, social or cultural advantage" under the Honesty and Integrity section.

---

I am curious as to why number 12 from the original code of ethics was removed from the new version. ( 12 - Will inform the College when a physical or mental disease/condition has affected or may affect over time, their ability to practice safely or competently) Aside from that it seems to mostly convey the same messages only slightly re-worded and categorized.

---

It is very thorough and covers all areas of ethics. There is a lot to read and I found it onerous to read. It needs to flow better - could you put at the top "The Ethical Optician WILL (perhaps bolded and emphasized) then go on without it in the main text. 2,3,6,11,17,18,19 also need the Will but when it is included in every item it is a barrier to reading ahead - to me information is more clear in this method. I am not sure but should they be respecting the clients wish to have a second opinion - some clients are afraid to do this in case of retaliation -- may not be as crucial in this profession.

---

It is short enough, general, comprehensive and seems well drafted. It is a high level document and does not get into many details.

---

I think the code is well laid out and easy to read. The headings and built points are clear and flow well together. The language is at appropriate reading level for the general public.

---

This document is well set up, appears complete and is easy to comprehend.

---

The Code of Ethics is succinct and effectively communicates what the requirements are.

---

The document is impressive, with its focus on the dignity, needs and unbiased approach for patients/clients. It seems timely and in-step with the current climate of inclusivity.

---

It is exactly what I would expect to be reading in a Code of Ethics of any health care practitioner. It is well written and easy to understand

---

I found the proposed Code of Ethics easy to read and understand in layman terms. It was concise but covered all areas of profession.

---

Clear and concise. Easy to understand but admitted the green hyperlink text seemed a bit hard to read in #16 but it was readable. Older eyes? :)

**Q2 - Readability: One of COO’s goals while updating the Code of Ethics is to make the document clearer and more understandable. Do you think that we achieved this goal in our proposed new Code of Ethics?**

The document is clearly written.

#	Question	False		True		Total
4	Strongly agree	0%	0	100%	22	22
5	Somewhat agree	0%	0	100%	2	2
6	Neither agree nor disagree	0%	0	0%	0	0
7	Somewhat disagree	0%	0	0%	0	0
8	Strongly disagree	0%	0	0%	0	0

The document is easy to understand.

#	Question	False		True		Total
4	Strongly agree	0%	0	100%	22	22
5	Somewhat agree	0%	0	100%	2	2
6	Neither agree nor disagree	0%	0	0%	0	0
7	Somewhat disagree	0%	0	0%	0	0
8	Strongly disagree	0%	0	0%	0	0

### Q3 - Please elaborate on your answer above. What (if anything) was unclear or confusing in the proposed new Code of Ethics?

---

I appreciate literacy level and vocabulary used. It is crucial to attempt to keep everything at a grade six reading level

---

I did not find anything confusing in the document.

---

I just located the previous Code of ethics and read it. A direct link in this survey would have been helpful. I found the proposed code more detailed and better organized.

---

The document is clear and concise.

---

The document is concise, allows for understand on the ethical statement in which professionals work under and the oath in which they take for patient care, well being and transparency

---

Nothing unclear quite the contrary it is very clear and understandable

---

As noted earlier, #9 is not clear to me. #8 - seems to be that should be understood and not sure whether it is "ticking off the box" by stating it here. #7 - I don't understand "and recognizes any personal limitations".

---

The Code of Ethics was written using words that were easy to read and understand. Simple yet get the point across in no uncertain terms. Words were written that have the same meaning for both the client and the professional. I did not see any words that could be misconstrued.

---

To me this document was very clear and easy to understand.

---

I believe it is a clearly written document. The six sections help to make it easy to understand.

---

It is clear on each of the topics - what the ethics are eg re: privacy or more about honesty etc

---

Clear, concise, easy to understand language.

---

I totally understood the intent of this document and found it clearly written and very easy to understand. It is written in a language that the average person will easily understand and the wording used was such that even people with a basic understanding of the English language will understand. I was a freelance translator in the past and I know first hand that any document should be written in a language that even someone with only a grade 6 education will understand when the document is intended for the general population. It is my humble opinion that this was achieved when I read the document.

---

I didn't find anything unclear. I also appreciated the brevity of the document.

---

I especially appreciated that the code of ethics included the patient's right to access their personal health information.

---

Again hard to read - that repeated "will" is a stopper. If the key concept word is bolded or something perhaps that would make it easier to grasp the concepts Maybe you could insert general subject areas or something like that.

---

In number 9, I am not sure what is meant. I am making an assumption that service fees are set by an association or governing body.

---

I did not find anything to be unclear or confusing. I thought the document was well laid out and easy to read.

---

Some individuals may not comprehend the term "mandate", but otherwise, I would consider this document comprehensible.

---

There was nothing unclear or confusing.

---

I found it well-written and very clear.

---

It was put into words that any individual with average intelligence and reading skills would understand

---

The area of spousal treatment and an exclusion from responsibility could be a little more detailed for complete understanding

---

Is there any need to explicitly call out privacy -- opticians I suppose are not likely to encounter privacy concerns, just as a comment to consider.



#### Q4 - Please expand on your answer below. Why or why not? Are there similarities or differences?

I would like to know the reasoning for the exemption. Why were the optometrist exempt

I understand the difference between an optician and an optometrist but it doesn't seem to make sense that an optometrist can treat their spouse by writing the prescription and performing an eye exam but an optician is unable to help their spouse with the fitting and adjusting of eyeglasses and contact lenses.

I'm sorry, now I'm confused. I didn't know that Optometrists could treat their spouse. Perhaps I missed this information in your introduction. I don't agree that Optometrists should treat a spouse. But if optometrists already have this right, Opticians should as well.

Equal treatment for both areas of professional treatment should exist.

N/A

yes agree to this amendment

In a shared practice environment the client should have the option of receiving all their care from the same "team".

My answer to this question contradicts my answer from the previous question. I believe that if Optometrists are granted permission to treat their spouses than Opticians must be permitted to treat their spouses.

Fitting someone for glasses, contacts is a bit different in my opinion and more at arms length. With an optometrist they are dealing with not only vision but health of the eye and my concern is when emotionally involved may make decisions regarding treatment on a more personal and emotional level which my possibly not be in the best interest of the patient.

Given opticians and optometrists often work together, it seems appropriate that the same rules/exemptions would pertain to both.

Unsure...not sure what the argument was and to my previous point..were those kinds of issues addressed etc?

Optometrists are medical practitioners and if they are allowed to treat their spouse so why not allow opticians to do the same.

I cannot see why a distinction should be made as both optometrists and opticians are professionals who must adhere to a similar code of conduct and both of these disciplines should have the same rights within their practice. As long as everyone is treated equitably and the code of ethics is followed, I am all for both of these disciplines to have this right.

I disagree with this exemption but if it's been offered to optometrists then opticians should receive it as well given their tendency to work in shared practice environments.

Although I find it difficult to back up my opinion - I feel that my relationship with my optometrist is more intimate than my relationship with my optician, and thus, personally, I would be more comfortable with opticians treating their spouses than optometrists treating their spouses. However, I understand the issue of fairness when considering that one is able to treat spouses and not the other. But again, I have to go back to the general rule that if all doctors are discouraged from treating spouses, family or even friends - why the exception for optometrists and potentially opticians? Is there a greater vision to change this rule throughout the entire medical profession? If not -- why is it different for optometrists and opticians?

This is a supporting level to the optometrist so should be covered as well.

---

Since I may not be aware of other subtleties on the issue, I have no objections nor strong convictions on the topic.

---

I think the treatment is fairly similar and therefore they should also be allowed to treat spouses

---

If it has been considered appropriate to actually diagnose/treat a spouse, I cannot see where it would be inappropriate to provide vision aids.

---

I believe this rule should extend to all regulated health care professionals. The exclusion of spouses as patients is not from the essence of the RHPA. Treating pre-existing spouses does not involve sexual 'abuse' assuming a healthy spousal relationship. The spousal exclusion was added more likely for easier administration of the law. To answer the question of the rule for optometrists should apply to opticians, the answer is yes. Optometrists and opticians often work in the same workplace, uniform rules improve the consistency of the environment.

---

I don't really see the danger for either group; it should be allowed for both groups.

---

To me they are very similar definition wise as healthcare practitioners. There shouldn't be any difference in the rules

---

The only reason I say neutral is that I feel it is necessary to deal with this area on a case by case decision.

---

Differentiating regulated health professions as having exemptions implies a lesser or greater level of health professionalism. It is acknowledged that regulated health professionals vary in their scope and capacity but they are no lesser or greater, merely different.

## Q5 - Why (or why not)? Are there any other ethical principles or values that you think opticians should demonstrate that aren't already listed?

---

I believe the above topics are typical for code of ethics in terms of regulatory health professionals. 1 supplementary suggestion would be information on how opticians are trained and how their role is to differ from an ophthalmologist

---

I liked how each of the principles was highlighted with a heading in the document followed by the points that correspond to the heading.

---

I think u have covered the essentials. Sometimes a long lists is less effective and confusing for patients.

---

All areas of principles and values appear to be covered.

---

Possibly a section on Harm or Negligence would allow the professional in there role in preventing harm and negligence in patient care

---

Everything valuable and noteworthy is already listed.

---

I agree with these 6 principles and values. They are written in lay terms (for example, not using the term beneficence).

---

With accountability, if an optician operates a practice that is solely their responsibility they MUST also ensure that ALL of their employees and any other person, an example, students who are training with them, that they also abide by the Code of Ethics. As a client, a friendly and welcoming first impression is not only important, it is a right. In today's world of so much cultural unrest I am wondering about acceptance of everyone regardless of colour, ethnic background, belief's etc,

---

It is helpful to have specific practices related to the respective six ethical principles.

---

Re: Privacy/Confidentiality - I would have hoped to see that the info would be shared with patients/caregivers consent Re: Transparency: will the patient/caregiver have access to their records? or it is recognized but may not have access? Overall - caregivers are often involved in decision making. What if the patient is unable to make decisions. Will caregivers get the respect, will they be able to access the info etc?

---

The section on Transparency and Communication is very important so that customers do not feel overwhelmed or pressured with the information offered when purchasing new glasses

---

I thought that this revised code of ethics clearly stated the role and responsibilities of the optician when dealing with his or her clients.

---

I think all the values are already listed.

---

The only principle I would wish to add is a high level of competency. Aside from competency, most important to me is integrity, honesty, accountability, transparency and communication, respect and dignity -- in that order.

---

Here are your subject areas and perhaps these terms could be specifically used in some of the statements

---

See previous comment. Also I think that the code could make reference to redress mechanisms in case of dissatisfaction of the client regarding the eye ware product. However, maybe that is addressed elsewhere.

---

I think the code of ethics clearly states what is expected from an Optometrist regarding ethics in their practice. I was wondering about the patients role in this, but maybe that is a different document?

---

These principles appear to cover all necessary aspects.

---

The ethical principles were clearly listed, elaborated right to the point. There was nothing left. One comment: above where the word "Honestly" is used, it should be "Honesty".

---

Each heading has bullet points that follow, giving more precise ideas of what the heading could include. I think the headings cover what is necessary.

---

Everything that could possibly be listed was listed

---

I feel all areas are covered but am still unsure about the accountability section.

---

As a health care professional, optician values seem very aligned with what one would expect as a patient/customer.

**Q6 - If COO's Board moves forward with the proposed spousal exemption regulation, what should the COO keep in mind when developing future Standards of Practice and/or Guidelines?**

I still think the sexual misconduct piece is critical and shouldn't be exempt under any circumstances
Not sure
I don't agree that medical experts should treat their spouse.
No recommendations at this time.
N/A
to allow for this practice to be given more consideration
I would provide a strong rationale as to why the spousal exemption was enacted.
Ask yourself, do these developing Standards of Practice and /or Guidelines align with our core Code of Ethics.? Do they produce a healthier and /or comforting patient result? Continue to reach out to professionals in your College, continue to partner with CAG, keep an open mind. Most of all how do these changes affect our patients?
I think the lines could possibly get very muddy when it comes to treating ones spouse and this must be thought through very carefully.
I believe the COO should always be looking to evolve and to establish leading best practices when developing future Standards of Practice and/or Guidelines.
How will it be monitored...who/how will the vulnerable be protected?
If spouses are allowed to be treated, what about other family members? Are they allowed to treat their children?
I would recommend that both the optometrists and opticians receive the same consideration as long as they adhere to the code of ethics outlined above. Our society continues to evolve and I do not see any problem in including a spouse in their practice. I also do not see a problem if these professionals would like to treat their children or other family members.
In future Standards of Practice, it should be stressed that a spouse needs to be treated the same as other patients and not afforded special privileges.
I would question if it's going to be permissible to treat spouses - why not children and other family members? I believe we need to fully understand how this spousal exemption would be ok for optometrists and opticians and yet not acceptable for all or any other medial professionals.
Should be same as for all others. Should they have to report that they are doing this? Not sure -
Provide enough details to address any situations that may arise and need a resolution. Be sure to have well detailed redress mechanisms..
That being a spouse is a different relationship that comes with its own challenges that differ from that of a regular patient. There could be concerns of abuse in the home that could transfer to the practice. As previously stated, a spouse should have the choice as to whether or not they chose to work with their spouse on a professional level.

Make sure that the health care professionals, opticians here, do not use the occasion of treating pre-existing spouses to express sexual interests

---

Perhaps a focus on the optician/optometrist lean heavily on his or her professionalism.

---

They should keep in mind that sometimes rules and regulations need to be adjusted to keep up with the times. Archaic rules and regulations become more trouble than if they are changed and altered

---

I feel that if the present procedure is carried forward with future standards of practice and guidelines using this team approach to implement changes, all will go well.

---

Conduct a detailed, thoughtful and representative 3rd party assessment with public consultation on the concern of precedent and the potential for unforeseen risks from allowing any exemption to regulation.

**Q7 - Please elaborate on your answer above and feel free to share any additional thoughts related to respecting patient dignity:**

---

It is important for the individual as well as the family and the support system if the individual to feel heard and their prospective respected.

---

It's important to outline all of these areas in order for anyone to know that they are being respected. Unfortunately at this time it needs to be covered but hopefully one day it will go without saying that all people should be and are treated with respect and dignity.

---

Respecting all patients and their dignity is absolutely important! Why would anyone think it was not important? I'm actually puzzled as to why this would be asked in the survey. I believe it is an expectation of all patients to be treated with respect and dignity.

---

Every patient/caregiver must be treated with the same respect to ensure the dignity of all.

---

Patient care should be the paramonenf of the Erhical Code document. That code needs to set down the role in which members of the college must follow in providing unbiased care

---

maximum protection for all patients is very important

---

I assume that cultural differences are part of ethnic origin and/or religion/creed.

---

As a post-op transwoman, it is very very, very, ..... important to be treated as a human. It is important to be addressed in the pronoun and name that a client performs, even if their legal name has not changed. It doesn't affect any billing procedures as they can still be billed in a client's legal name. Also, as a person who was diagnosed with poor to mild mental health, not illness, someday are not great. It is important that the optician meets the person where they are at. This is also where the receptionist is very important. The last thing a trans person wants is to be addressed in a name that makes them feel uneasy. An example, may be a recently transitioning person who may be dressed as their preferred gender but the receptionist or optician addresses them in a name of their birth gender; in front of an office full of people. Dignity is a huge key in the teamwork between the client and the professional.

---

I guess this covers my previous thoughts

---

To truly be inclusive, it is critical that this expectation be included.

---

Very important - it shows that you are inclusive. How about adding caregiver? "respects dignity of patients/caregivers..."?

---

As a disabled person, I want to be treated with the same respect afforded anyone else.

---

Too often, people with special needs, the elderly and racial minorities are not treated with as much respect, consideration and dignity as other segments of the population. This has not been my experience when dealing with opticians; however, I have witnessed first hand how people with disabilities, the elderly and racial minorities do not receive the same standard of care when dealing with other medical disciplines. I have worked with the elderly and the special needs population during one of my career paths. I also have friends who are members of racial minorities. Quite often, I was present when uncaring and unprofessional comments were made to these individuals. I am now a senior citizen and have experienced first-hand the prejudice that some health care workers have toward seniors. I once presented to a hospital emergency ward when I was throwing up blood and was told by the attending physician to go home and not to come back unless I was dying and that is only one of the many negative experiences that I have encountered as I have a very complex health situation.

---

I think it's incredibly important. I know a few individuals who have been the victims of sexual misconduct at the hands of their medical professionals

---

Well, I am sure we all have experienced or perceived that we have been judged or categorized by someone in a manner that is different than how we wish to be seen or understood. And as a society we are coming to terms

with some of our collective mistreatment of each other or at least are recognizing the fact that we can always find ways to treat each other better and with more respect and dignity. I believe, as I am sure many do, that it is of the utmost importance to focus our efforts on the dignity and respect of our fellow citizens, and for that matter, all human beings.

---

Fit some of this language in somewhere in your code.

---

This statement should be a given of human behaviour for a person working with the public. However, considering recent events in society and the media, it is good to list all the possible elements that can be mishandled.

---

A medical professional should respect all patients and be able to provide the same level of care to all. This is very important to be in the code of ethics as it shows patients that they are supported and going to be treated fairly. It also make them more comfortable seeking treatment.

---

Given everything that is going on within our country these days, it is extremely important that patient dignity be shown to everyone.

---

The part of the expectation is consistent with the Human Rights Code that the service sector must follow. Clearly spell out the expectation protects the patients, as well as protects the opticians.

---

It's an evolved, important statement that has the college members examine any conscious or unconscious bias.

---

It is obviously important that there is no predisposition by the optician regarding his/her views regarding all of the above. One wants to be treated fairly and get the proper care no matter what

---

Respecting patient dignity has become very important in the changing times of society. I know there are areas that many organizations question and are hesitant to accept but we must remain with the holistic approach.

---

This demonstrates that the profession at-large is keen to respect this important patient topic.



**Q9 - Please elaborate on your answer above and feel free to share any other comments you may have regarding a patient's ability to pay:**

Please elaborate on your answer above and feel free to share any other comments you may have regarding a patient's ability to pay:

Visual is one of our five senses. Much of the population rely on sight to interact with their everyday lives. Therefore, individuals quality of life shouldn't necessarily depend on their financial ability to pay

People should not feel inferior if their ability to pay is in question. If eyewear at an opticians office is beyond a person's budget, alternatives should be presented and their prescription should always be offered for them to shop elsewhere.

In our country no child or adult should be turned away from having proper eye care because they are not able to pay.

Opticians should respect the financial status of each patient/caregiver and be able to offer several price point options where possible.

N/A

yes this is very important as well and should be included

It's important to state this because of the inherent conflicts of interest where the optician is often the owner of the business or can be pressured by the owners to increase the profit. Being in the market for a \$90 frames as compared to a \$300 frames should not impact the level of service. To note, my experience of purchasing lower cost frames has been positive.

I believe that opticians respect a patients dignity regardless of their financial position or ability to pay. Just because someone doesn't have the ability to pay, does not necessarily mean that they do not want to pay. This is where the professionals knowledge comes in handy. Discussing viable options with the patient is important while respecting their dignity.

What does the optician do if a patient is not able to pay. I know physicians can not deny access to health coverage because a patient cannot pay. Is it the same for optician's?

To truly be inclusive, it is critical that this expectation be included.

It shows others who may not be able to pay - that they will be treated equally and you have thought about it

You want to feel that you are given the same information to make an informed decision regardless of your financial status

Some people who are struggling financially who do not have additional health insurance are quite often having to make a choice between putting food on the table and paying the rent or buying prescription eyeglasses when they need them. This places an additional burden on this segment of the population and the government and private insurance companies must come to the realization that there needs to be more financial assistance available to ensure that anyone who needs prescription lenses is able to purchase this. For instance, our personal additional health insurance company only allows 80% of \$300.00 for prescription glasses when in fact, most eyewear is much more expensive. This coverage is only allowed to be claimed every two years. Last year, I purchased new prescription eyeglasses after the two year time frame was allowing me to make this purchase. My eyeglasses ended up costing me more than \$600. Three months later, I was encountering a lot of eye pain and my ophthalmologist recommended that I purchase moisture chamber eyeglasses. Given that I had already had paid for my previous eyewear six months ago, I had to pay an additional \$550. for these new eyeglasses. Thankfully, I have the means to purchase these without too much financial stress. However, this is not the case for far too many people and this needs to be addressed.

There's a perception that this profession sometimes takes financial advantage of patients

For this I can speak passionately from experience. There was a time when I experienced extreme financial hardship and had it not been for a government program to help fund the medicine and medical procedure that I required I would most certainly not be here today to contribute to this consulting opportunity. I believe that if we

as a society truly value each and every human life then we must treat health care as an inalienable human right and thus everyone should be entitled to equal access to health care and access to medication regardless of status , wealth or lack of wealth.

---

Every person in this country deserves to see as well as they can be helped to . Something like this gives leverage for further actions. I don't really see language that specifically indicates this. Perhaps it is needed - perhaps use the term respect more liberally - or add one item that covers respect for disability, culture, financial detriment, diversity etc -- not sure how specific you need to get but use

---

All people deserve to be treated with respect and dignity. I'm not sure how one would know ahead of time the person's ability to pay, unless the person divulges the information prior to obtaining any services. Regardless, the optician should be respectful and provide any help required to helping the client about sources of financing. eg special programs Also, the optician can discreetly guide the client towards less expensive options.

---

This is important as health care is for everyone, not just people who can afford it. Sometimes going to see an Optometrist is seen as a luxury, and people do not seek treatment because they are afraid of the cost. Having this stated in the code of ethics may make more people comfortable about seeking treatment and discussing payment options or ways to have costs covered.

---

No one should be made to feel "less than" because they rely on social services to aid with payment of services/products.

---

The Code of Ethics states that the optician "puts the benefit and well-being of their patients above all other considerations, including their commercial or business interests". Judging patients with their financial positions undermine their dignity and trust in the profession. It makes the environment unpleasant.

---

I think it's a generous inclusion, but I'm not sure it's fair for the opticians who have to make a living.

---

A person's financial status should not have any bearing on their care

---

We are well aware of the financial difficulties of society in today's financial situation. Not all salaries have kept up with the percentage increase in costs. A primary contributor to this situation is the COVID strain on society.

---

Discrimination is a sensitive topic and where there may be programs available to assist or support, that should be something that can be discreetly and sensitively be made aware to a patient.

**Q10 - Closing: Is there anything else you think that should be included in the proposed new Code of Ethics that isn't currently included? Why?**

---

Supplementary documents along with the code of ethics. For example, Opticians shouldn't discriminate/ refuse service based on someone's Financial ability yep they can also be helpful to include different programs. Such as the infant low vision program and ODSP that can be a avenue for financial support

---

No, I thought it was very well written.

---

No I cannot think of anything else to include.

---

The current COO Code of Ethics is concise in it's content.

---

None

---

no omissions that i can think of

---

I like the brief introductory statement. It would be especially helpful for people who are not involved in professions that have a Code of Ethics. I think it's essential to frame the 16 items.

---

Very thoughtful, well written. Descriptions were simple and easy to understand. I did not see any room for a loophole. It is either a violation if the Code of Ethics or it is not. Simple as that.

---

I think patient's inability to pay should be explained more as to what exactly the procedure would be in such a case.

---

I find the document to be very comprehensive.

---

No...already mentioned some points earlier

---

None that I could think of

---

There should be mention that if a patient is struggling financially, the optician should provide information to the client to help them find some financial assistance to cover the cost of their glasses if they are not in a financial situation that allows them to pay for the required frame and lenses. Every Canadian/Ontarian should have the right to get financial assistance to buy eyewear that is recommended by an ophthalmologist or an optometrist. That is a basic need and no one should have to choose between putting food on the table and a roof over their head or purchase much needed eyewear.

---

I feel all the appropriate areas are covered in the document. As an Indigenous person, I feel that a line about respecting and working towards Reconciliation should be included. I appreciated it's brevity and use of plain language.

---

It could include as part of putting patients first that those with financial struggles will be given every effort to find ways and means for them to acquire the service or products they are medically in need of. Also - I already mentioned the curious exclusion of number 12 from the original code of ethics.

---

Just perhaps a specific statement about respecting diversity disability etc. and respect the right of the client to see someone else - although I am struggling with whether there is lots of freedom here to do so.

---

No, except for the comments I have made.

---

I would like to see information of what to do or who to contact if you feel that this code is not being practised or violated by the service provider.

---

No. This document is thorough and covers everything relevant to patients from all walks of life.

---

Not anything I could think of

---

To me, it seemed thorough.

---

These code of ethics touch on everything and is very well put together. So there is nothing more that I would include

---

Nothing comes to mind at this time that needs to be added.

---

#11. An optician treats all members of the public, patients, colleagues and peers with respect, and does not engage in harassment, abuse or discrimination in their professional practice. Should this not be made more broadly beyond that of their professional practice? As a professional representative of a regulated health profession, it seems reasonable that this should be a core value that is upheld at all times. For instance, as a patient, I would actively avoid and seek to avoid any health professional that engaged in harassment, abuse, or discrimination anywhere.

**Q11 - Alternatively, is there anything in the proposed new Code of Ethics that you think shouldn't be included or is inappropriate? Why?**

No

Nothing I read was inappropriate.

I think what is included is important and should remain.

I have nothing to suggest amendment to the current COO Code of Ethics.

None

no to this as well

I think you have done a great job. Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback.

No .There is not any points in the Code of Ethics that should not be there. There can never be too many points in a Code of Ethics. The Code of Ethics is there for a reason. How ever many points and Codes are require to have a better and rewarding experience which results in better health are totally worthwhile.

No I believe they are all very important

No

Instead of "An optician declines to provide services that, in their professional opinion, are unsafe or not appropriate to meet the patient's needs" - it could be "an optician may decline... Instead of "An optician is aware of, and complies with, the relevant laws, regulations, by-laws, policies, Standards of Practice and guidelines that govern the profession" - it could be " an optician is governed by.... also not sure what "relevant laws" means...relevant to whom? "An optician demonstrates honesty and integrity in all professional activities and relations" - could be rephrased as " an optician is responsible for ..... Change the language overall to make it consistent . An optician ensures that they do not take physical, mental, social, sexual, cultural or financial advantage of their patients" ..... "An optician is responsible..... " .

None that I could think of

Aside from my comments above, I think that the new Code of Ethics has covered all the bases.

Na

After re-reading it a couple of times I cannot find anything I believe shouldn't be included or is inappropriate

To me it seems very inclusive so good - happy to see it includes an incompetence clause.

No

No, I did not see anything that could be deemed unclear or inappropriate.

No. All inclusions are necessary to ensure everyone receives the best care.

Nothing I can think of

I think it's a slippery slope to include the point about 'inability to pay' as it could be exploited by members of the public.

Nothing at all

I am not saying there is something that shouldn't be included but would like to see a little more detailed information on the second part of the spousal exemption

Perhaps something to the effect that outside-of-the-profession standards for health professionals are expected to be higher than that of the general public. This partially acknowledges the professional background, health expertise, and specialized training of health professionals but also that in our society, the general public continues to look up and look to the expertise of professionals, especially health professionals. It is as much about protecting the patient as it is ensuring that the profession is held in the highest opinion by the general public.

## CODE OF ETHICS

---

The ethical foundation of the practice of Opticianry consists of general principles of conduct, which the profession has come to accept as a prerequisite to maintaining the dignity and integrity of the profession. This Code is intended to outline in broad fashion the duties and responsibilities which registrants of the profession are expected to adhere to in their relationships with the public, with their patients and with their fellow practitioners.

The Optician-patient relationship is therapeutic and based on trust and respect.

### TRUST

Patients entrust their vision care to the Optician based on the Registrant's unique knowledge and professional skills in eye care.

### RESPECT

Respect for the dignity and worth of the patient is a fundamental concept of all health care professions. This requires that the Optician always take into account all aspects of individuality of the patient when providing opticianry services.

## THE CODE

### Ethical Opticians:

1. Will have as their first consideration the well-being of their patients.
2. Maintain professional integrity and conduct all professional activities, programs, and relations honestly and responsibly.
3. Maintain a respectful relationship with members of the public in order to facilitate awareness and understanding of the profession of Opticianry.
4. Will strive to improve the standard of Opticianry services in the community.
5. Will report to the respective College, where they have reason to believe incompetence, misconduct, incapacity, sub-standard and/or unethical behaviour, or sexual abuse of a patient by another Registrant of any of the regulated health professions.
6. Commit to the highest level of professional care through the maintenance and application of current relevant knowledge and skill.
7. Will practice their profession with all the knowledge and ability of which they are capable.
8. Will uphold the honour and dignity of the profession by standards of integrity and behaviour.
9. Will be responsible in setting a value on their services.
10. Will abide by the laws of the jurisdiction in which they practice.
11. Maintain awareness of the *Regulated Health Professions Act (RHPA)* and College regulations and programs and comply with same.
12. Will inform the College when a physical or mental disease/condition has affected, or may affect over time, their ability to practice safely or competently.
13. Will not practice under conditions that may adversely affect the quality of their treatment.



14. Will participate in ongoing professional development and integrate relevant learning into their area of practice to improve their standard of care.
15. Will kindly, but firmly, insist upon doing only those things which their professional knowledge dictates to be in the best interest of their patients' welfare.
16. Will ensure that their conduct in the practice of their profession is above reproach and that they will not take physical or emotional advantage of their patients.
17. Communicate relevant information clearly to the patient through verbal, non-verbal and/or written means while also establishing a feedback process to ensure mutual understanding.
18. Act at all times with respect for other health care professionals and unregulated personnel.
19. Will recognize their limitations and, when indicated, recommend to patients that additional opinions and services be obtained.
20. Keep confidential all information received in the course of the professional relationship except when reporting is required by law (i.e. RHPA, etc.) or when the sharing of pertinent information is appropriate for collaboration with other health care providers involved in the care of the patient.

### **OBLIGATION**

The obligation to maintain standards of professional competence and ethics always lies with the Registrants. Therefore, responsibility for ensuring that the Registrants do not incur or participate in any act of abuse lies solely with the Registrants. Any act of abuse by the Registrants, whether it is sexual, physical, verbal or emotional is a betrayal of the Optician-patient relationship.



## CODE OF ETHICS

---

The mandate of the College of Opticians of Ontario is to regulate the profession of opticianry in the public interest.

As regulated health professionals, opticians have an obligation to act competently and ethically in the practice of their profession. Opticians have a responsibility to ensure that the optician-patient relationship is built on trust and respect, in a manner that enhances the integrity of the profession and protects patients' interests.

This Code of Ethics identifies the ethical principles that all opticians must follow in order to meet their professional obligations and serves to help opticians make ethical decisions in their practice. The Code of Ethics must be read in conjunction with the [Standards of Practice and Practice Guidelines](#).

### Putting Patients First

1. An optician puts the benefit and well-being of their patients above all other considerations, including their commercial or business interests.
2. An optician declines to provide services that, in their professional opinion, are unsafe or not appropriate to meet the patient's needs.
3. An optician recognizes a patient's right to make an informed decision about the services that are being offered, and the patient's right to decline services.

### Accountability

4. An optician accepts responsibility for their behaviour and decisions in the professional context.
5. An optician is aware of, and complies with, the relevant laws, regulations, by-laws, policies, Standards of Practice and guidelines that govern the profession.
6. An optician participates in ongoing professional development and integrates ongoing and relevant learnings into their practice.

7. An optician practices only within the limits of their professional competence and recognizes any personal limitations.

### **Honesty and Integrity**

8. An optician demonstrates honesty and integrity in all professional activities and relations.
9. An optician is responsible for setting a reasonable value for their services.
10. An optician ensures that they do not take physical, mental, social, sexual, cultural or financial advantage of their patients.

### **Respect and Dignity**

11. An optician treats all members of the public, patients, colleagues and peers with respect, and does not engage in harassment, abuse or discrimination in their professional practice.
12. An optician respects the inherent dignity of all patients, regardless of race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, religion/creed, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, marital status, family status, disability, financial position or ability to pay.

### **Privacy and Confidentiality**

13. An optician respects the privacy of their patients and holds patients' personal information in confidence, except as permitted or required by law (e.g. for the purposes of collaboration with other health care providers involved in the care of the patient).

### **Transparency and Communication**

14. An optician provides the patient with the information they need to make an informed decision about the services they are being offered or are receiving, and answers questions appropriately.
15. An optician provides clear information about the eyewear being dispensed, including information about warranties, billing and returns (where applicable) and what to do if the eyewear does not perform as expected.
16. An optician recognizes the patient's right to access their personal health information.
17. An optician communicates with patients in a respectful manner, whether in person, by telephone or online (e.g. social media, review websites, etc.).