



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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College of Opticians of British Columbia

College of Opticians of British Columbia Certifies Competent Opticians

Vancouver – The College of Opticians of British Columbia (the “College”) would like to take this opportunity to clarify some aspects of the *CBC Marketplace* segment on prescription eyewear and to inform British Columbia’s healthcare consumers about the College’s role in public protection.

The College is a regulatory organization that assures the public an Optician is properly trained and will serve healthcare consumers ethically and competently within a defined standard of care. As regulated health professionals, Opticians are highly trained to provide healthcare consumers with quality eyewear. The College provides a complaints resolution process to B.C. healthcare consumers, holding Opticians professionally accountable for their products and services.

B.C. healthcare consumers who are looking for professional care can search for B.C. Opticians on the College’s online registry at www.cobc.ca. The College’s online registry is available anytime and allows B.C. healthcare consumers to locate opticians, contact lens fitters and automated refracting opticians within their community. The registry is current and allows consumers to identify and choose the services of a certified and regulated professional.

The B.C. Ministry of Health Services’ May 1, 2010 amendments to the Optician and Optometrist regulations provides a consumer greater choice in their purchase of eyeglasses or replacement contact lenses. The amendments also ensure a consumer is given their prescription and inter-pupillary distance at the time of examination. Finally, the amendments enable British Columbians to choose between an automated refraction (sight test) from an Optician or full eye health exam from an Optometrist or Physician.

Opticians in B.C. who refract must be certified, licensed, and registered with the College. Automated refracting opticians receive advanced training in automated refraction services and care and are trained to recognize eye health issues that should be treated by an Optometrist or Ophthalmologist. Opticians have been conducting automated refractions in B.C. since 1997 and there are now more than 300 automated refracting opticians across the province.

The College was established in 1994 and has a duty to serve and protect the public, as well as to exercise its powers and fulfill its responsibilities in the public interest. One of the main roles of self-regulating health professions is ensuring comprehensive life long competency programs are in place to ensure that members remain current with changing technology and are able to adapt to increased service demands of the health care consumer. You can find out more about the College and services and duties of Opticians at www.cobc.ca.

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