



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 11, 2014

College of Opticians of British Columbia

### **Unauthorized Practice of Eye Health Examinations by Michael Lougheed of Imperial Optical**

Vancouver – The College of Opticians of British Columbia (the “College”) is advising past patients of Michael Lougheed (an optician) and the Imperial Optical staff in Kelowna, B.C. to seek an eye health examination.

The College received complaints regarding alleged unauthorized practice at Imperial Optical. A College investigation provided evidence that Michael Lougheed and the staff at Imperial Optical may have misled patients to believe they had received an eye examination. While Michael Lougheed is certified by the College to conduct automated refractions to assess visual acuity, he is not an optometrist or ophthalmologist and does not have the authority to examine eye health.

Until the outcome of the investigation is known, the College has decided to take action to protect the public during the continued investigation of Michael Lougheed. Effective immediately, the College is placing limitations on his license and not allowing him to conduct automated refractions until several conditions are met.

Opticians certified by the College to conduct automated refractions can assess visual acuity for healthy patients between the ages of 19 and 64. Automated refracting opticians receive advanced education and are trained to recognize eye health issues that should be treated by an optometrist or ophthalmologist. Following a screening process and client notice, an optician is required to advise patients the difference between an automated refraction and eye health examination before assessing visual acuity. Opticians have been safely conducting automated refractions in B.C. since 1997 and there are now more than 300 automated refracting opticians across the province.

The College is the regulatory body that protects the public by ensuring B.C. opticians are competent professionals who are ethical, accountable and practice a standard of care. You can find out more about the College at [www.cobc.ca](http://www.cobc.ca).

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#### **Quotes:**

##### **Gary Corner, Chair, Inquiry Committee, College of Opticians of B.C.**

“The College of Opticians of B.C. upholds regulations and standards of care to ensure that certified opticians provide safe sight testing services to assess vision. The investigation has so far provided evidence that Michael Lougheed may be risking public safety by not adhering to the College’s standards for sight testing.”

**Connie Chong, Registrar, College of Opticians of B.C.**

“As a health profession regulator, the College of Opticians of B.C. has a duty to protect the public by holding opticians accountable to professional regulations to ensure safe patient care.”

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