

# ANNUAL REPORT

2007/2008



## College of Opticians of British Columbia

Regulating and Improving the Practice of Opticians to Ensure Quality Professional Care for BC Consumers





# ANNUAL REPORT 2007/2008

*This 2007/2008 annual report presents highlights of initiatives in the COBC fiscal year, April 1, 2007 to March 31, 2008.*

## Table of Contents

2	Chair's Message	13	Quality Assurance
3	Registrar's Message	15	Examinations
4	Board of Directors	16	Administration
7	2007/08 Achievements	18	Financial Management
8	Registration		
11	Public Inquiries		
			<a href="#">Attached</a> - Audited Financial Statements

## Our Mission

The College of Opticians of British Columbia (COBC) is charged with protecting the public interest in the regulation of the profession of opticianry, as directed by the *Health Professions Act*, the *Opticians' Regulations* and *COBC Bylaws*. The COBC is responsible for the administration of the Act and accompanying regulations and it is accountable to the public through its board.

The mission of the COBC is to ensure British Columbia opticians provide safe and effective care to help people achieve better vision.

The COBC is responsible for:

- ▶ Assessment, registration and licensing of all opticians and contact lens fitters in B.C.
- ▶ Interpretation of the *Health Professions Act*, the *Opticians Regulation* and the *COBC Bylaws*
- ▶ Public and registrant complaints and inquiries
- ▶ Establishment of standards of practice and guidelines

**College of Opticians of BC  
12th Annual General Meeting**

Sunday, October 19, 2008

Executive Airport Plaza Hotel  
7311 Westminster Hwy.  
Richmond, B.C. V6X 1A3



# CHAIR'S MESSAGE

## **Kent Ashby, Chair**

This is my first year as Chair of the College board, after several years as a director. In that time I have gained valuable insights into both the eye care continuum, and the role and practice of a self-regulating profession in the current environment. The College has an important role to fill. As a public appointee, and as a member of another self-regulating profession (I am a lawyer), I have a unique view of how the College fulfills its mandate to protect the public interest in the practice of the profession. A profession by definition is an occupation or calling requiring specialized skill practiced in the interest of those being aided over those of the practitioner. In assisting with the preparation of this report, two areas affected by this come to mind.

The first area is the importance to British Columbia health care consumers of the specialized skills of those in the profession of opticianry. Through setting standards for admission to the profession and standards for how members of the profession should practice, we ensure that registered opticians have the specialized skills needed and are qualified to provide a range of vital services. Whether the service they seek is the fitting of eyeglasses or contact lenses, or refracting (sight testing) as part of improving or maintaining visual acuity, the public should feel justifiably confident when visiting a registered optician.

The second area is the necessary component of enforcement and the rigour with which this profession ensures its standards are met. I am aware that there can be suspicion of a process in which a profession, essentially, police itself. But the oversights that are in place – through provisions such as the requirement to have public members involved in the complaints process – ensure an effective balance between lay members of the Board and members of the profession who can provide technical information. It is clear to me that opticians can be more demanding than lay members in their expectation that registered opticians provide a high level of service to clients. The public must be provided, and are entitled to expect, a high quality of care from BC opticians. In the rare cases where a member of the public questions this, or problems arise, the public should be just as confident that concerns — will be taken seriously and acted upon appropriately.

The 2008 Annual Report is provided as an overview and explanation of the College's activities, both because it is required by the Health Professions Act, but also because I believe it provides a level of reassurance to the public of British Columbia about the profession of opticianry in British Columbia and the organization which provides its oversight.



## REGISTRAR'S MESSAGE

### Nick Atkinson, Registrar

The 2007/08 report on the activities of the College of Opticians of British Columbia certainly reflects the COBC's desire to continuously respond to the needs of the public, as is befitting of an organization tasked with the protection of the public. As the needs of the public are always changing, our activities as a self-regulating profession must also change. The administration of the COBC is never static.

In the past year, there have been a number of notable efforts to address changing needs. There is growing concern regarding the effect of an aging population and a looming skill shortage in British Columbia's health system. One way to address these challenges is to ensure greater professional mobility both nationally and internationally. The COBC's Registration Committee has been reviewing the administration of the registration process in order to ensure unnecessary barriers to national and international mobility are removed, while still maintaining high standards for admission to the profession. It requires some balance, but by working with organizations across Canada, a number of solutions have been identified.

Another change is the way we report our activities and communicate with the public. It is important that we not only respond to complaints and concerns in a timely manner and in accordance with the *Health Professions Act*, but we also must be seen to be doing so. We have provided a standardized complaint form to make the complaint process more accessible to patients and to ensure the patient understands the process and what to expect. We have also published a summary of actions taken by the inquiry committee and have made increased information available on our website. While this change also requires balance – between privacy and the public's right to know the professional standing of its health professional – it is an important part of being transparent and accountable.

This report also includes important updates on the COBC's Quality Assurance process, including Advanced Automated Refraction Training, ensuring sight testing by BC opticians continues to meet high standards of public service and protection.

Lastly, the administration of an organization such as the COBC requires considerable commitment by members of the profession and the public. I would like to thank these members for their efforts and their contribution to the profession and the public.

Should you have any questions regarding this report, I invite you to contact us at 604-278-7510, or visit our website at [www.cobc.ca](http://www.cobc.ca).



# BOARD OF DIRECTORS

## 2007/2008 Board of Directors

**Chair**, Kent Ashby, Public Appointee

Lutz Sprecher, District 5

**Vice-Chair**, David Nelson, District 1

Elizabeth Cytra, Public Appointee

Inderjit Bamrah, District 1

Mary Jane Stenberg, Public Appointee

Stephanie Weir, District 2

David Martens, District 1 (expired 12/31/07)

John Kerns, District 3

Patti Young, Public Appointee (resigned 12/31/07)

Bradford Benson , District 4

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As a self-regulating profession, the COBC is governed by a Board of Directors comprised of elected and appointed members. Of the 10 board members, six are elected from the profession and four are appointed by government. Each board member serves a three-year term commencing at the beginning of the calendar year.

The Board of the College is responsible for ensuring that the duties and objectives of the college are met. The Board is also responsible for ensuring that the vision needs of the public of British Columbia are met by BC opticians through safe and effective means. In addition, the Board forecasts the long-term needs of the public in order to guide educational priorities and practice standards for BC opticians.

In the course of performing its duties and exercising its powers under the *Health Professions Act* and other enactments, the board is required to promote and enhance collaborative relations with other provincial entities including other colleges established under the *Act*, post-secondary academic institutions and the government.

The Board is also required to promote and enhance inter-professional collaborative practice between its registrants and persons practicing other health professions; as well as to promote and enhance the ability of its registrants to respond and adapt to changes in practice environments, advances in technology and other emerging issues.

## Biography of the 2007/2008 Board of Directors

### **Chair - Kent Ashby, Public Member (Appointed)**

Mr. Ashby retired this year as legal counsel to The University of British Columbia. Mr. Ashby holds a Masters of Law with Honours from the University of Sydney Law School in Australia, a Bachelor of Law from Osgoode Hall Law School in Toronto and a Bachelor of Arts from University of Alberta. Mr. Ashby's expertise in business law has involved high technology, corporate governance, conflict of interest, policy development, and legislative research and analysis. He has also completed the Foundations of Administrative Justice course, developed by the BC Council for Administrative Tribunals.

### **Vice-Chair - David Nelson, District 1 (Elected)**

Contact Lens Fitter

Mr. Nelson has been in the optical field for over 25 years, and has completed the OAC/NAIT program in dispensing and contact lenses. He is a member of the Dispensing Opticians Association of BC, the Opticians Association of Canada and the Association of Sight Testing Opticians of BC. He has also served on the Douglas College advisory committee and has completed courses at the Justice Institute of BC, including administrative justice.

### **Inderjit Bamrah, District 1 (Elected)**

Contact Lens Fitter

Mr. Bamrah has been an Optician for over thirty years and he received his Opticianry training at City and Islington College, London, England. He has served as a volunteer with various Opticianry associations, participated as an instructor in various opticians programs and have guest lectured at both provincial and national association educational programs.

### **Stephanie Weir, District 2 (Elected)**

Contact Lens Fitter

Ms. Weir has been an Optician in Victoria for over twenty-four years and is presently sitting her second term on the Board of the COBC. Ms. Weir has successfully completed her Certificate in Business Administration at the University of Victoria and is presently working towards completing her Diploma.

### **John Kerns, District 3 (Elected)**

Contact Lens Fitter

Mr. Kerns has over 20 years of optical experience which includes both retail and manufacturing. He has also achieved a Masters Optician Certificate (U.S.) and the ABO/NCLE License (American Board of Opticians/National Contact Lens Examiners).

### **Bradford Benson, District 4 (Elected)**



#### Dispensing Optician

Mr. Benson has been an Optician for 36 years and has had his own independent practice for 25 years. He has contributed to the profession of Opticianry by making continuing education more accessible for all BC opticians by spearheading the online continuing education campaign and making live broadcasting of seminars possible.

#### **Lutz Sprecher, District 5 (Elected)**

##### Contact Lens Fitter

Mr. Sprecher has been an independent full service Optician working in Surrey for almost 30 years. He has served as a volunteer Board member for the DOABC, various charitable, strata, networking organizations and has worked as an education coordinator for the OAC/NAIT program.

#### **Elizabeth A. Cytra, Public Member (Appointed)**

Ms. Cytra is a retired legal administrator and since retiring has devoted herself to serving her community. She has a Professional Manager designation from the Canadian Institute of Management as well as a diploma in Financial Management from BCIT. Ms. Cytra is a former Trail City Councilor, a past President of the Greater Trail Community Skills Centre, and served five years on the Trail Chamber of Commerce. Ms. Cytra is a member of Rotary International, an organization devoted to "Service Above Self". She gives her time and energies to raising funds for various humanitarian projects, both in the local and global community. She was Governor of Rotary International in 2007-2008.

#### **Mary Jane Stenberg, Public Member (Appointed)**

Ms. Stenberg has a Masters Degree in Leadership and Training and is currently the External Affairs Advisor, Office of the President for Kwantlen University College. She brings to the Board more than 23 years of executive and management knowledge and expertise, which includes being the former owner and CEO of Stenberg College. Ms. Stenberg has extensive board experience, most recently with Coast Capital Savings, but also as President of the BC Career Colleges Association, and Vice President, Langley Stepping Stone Rehabilitation Association.

#### **Term Expired 2007 - David Martens, District 4 (Elected)**

##### Dispensing Optician

Mr. Martens has been an Optician for many years, serving the Williams Lake area. He was Chair of the COBC Board of Directors in 2003-2007 and has been involved with the COBC for many years.

#### **Resigned 2007 - Patti Young, Public Member (Appointed)**

Ms. Young is Vice-President of Chartek Consultants Ltd. Some of her contract positions include corporate sponsorship for the Grey Cup Festival, and Director of Corporate Sales and Marketing for the Coast Airport Hotel. She has a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science from the University of Alberta. Ms. Young has an extensive background in the not-for-profit sector in Canada and has served on many boards and

committees. Her current involvements include the Corporate Advisory Council for the Heart & Stroke Foundation; Co-Chair of the Heart of Gold Gala Auction; and a Government Relations Committee for the Y.M.C.A.



## 2007/08 ACHIEVEMENTS

### **Labour Mobility**

To address provincial and national concerns about a shortage of skilled and professional workers, particularly in the field of health care, the COBC is developing processes to create an open, transparent and fair path to registration for internationally-trained workers. The COBC continues to work with other regulatory bodies across Canada to ensure it is doing its part towards full professional mobility within Canada.

### **Increased Access to Quality Eye Care Services**

Another important element in addressing the shortage of health care professionals is ensuring all professionals are able to practice to the full extent of their training. For opticianry, this means ensuring those professionals who choose to provide sight testing meet high standards. The COBC added new bylaws on October 1, 2007 that required all opticians who conduct automated refraction, or who are planning to offer the service, to complete an advanced training course and undergo a COBC certification examination. This element of the COBC's quality assurance program has received full compliance from opticians who are currently conducting automated refraction.

### **Transparency and Accountability**

Just as there is value in choosing to receive vision care from a registered optician, the public also has the right to know the status of their registered optician. The COBC now publishes a summary of actions taken by the Inquiry Committee concerning complaints against registrants. This includes the nature of the complaint, actions taken to resolve the complaint and/or any additional practice conditions imposed by the Committee. This is just one step the COBC is taking to ensure its disciplinary process is transparent, and that – as a self-regulating body – it remains accountable to the public.



# REGISTRATION

## Registration Committee Annual Report

To ensure safe, accountable and effective visual care for the public, legislation requires all dispensing opticians, contact lens fitters and student contact lens fitters in British Columbia to register with the College. The goal of the Registration Committee is to ensure that competency and standards of entry to the profession are maintained and the public is assured safe effective service.

In 2007/08, the Registration Committee began to address the issue of changing demographics and concerns regarding the shortage of skilled labourers in British Columbia. To address the skills shortage, the COBC is building on the success of the 1999 adoption of the Opticians Mutual Recognition Agreement (MRA) as well as its full compliance with the Trade Industry and Labour Mobility Agreement (TILMA). Due to the adoption of both agreements the COBC is developing processes for international applicants which create an open, transparent and fair path to registration for new Canadians.

## Registration Renewals

Registrants must meet the renewal standards of continuing education, professional liability insurance and pay annual fees in order to renew registration. By March 31, 2008 the COBC renewed the registration of 1160 Opticians, including 440 Dispensing Opticians, 629 Contact Lens Fitters, and 91 non-practicing registrants.

### Registration Committee

Chair - John Kerns, Kamloops  
*Contact Lens Fitter*

Kent Ashby, Richmond  
*Appointed Member*

Clara Mainville, Vernon  
*Contact Lens Fitter*

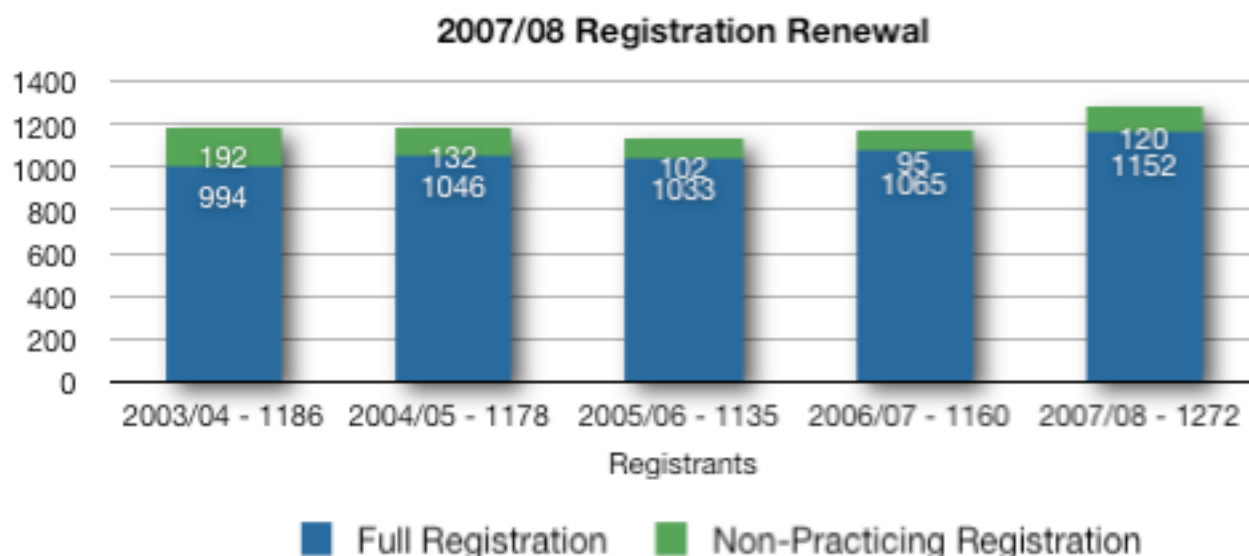
Wayne Mullen, New Westminster  
*Contact Lens Fitter*

Stephanie Weir, Victoria  
*Contact Lens Fitter*

### Meetings in 2007/08

In-person: 1

By Correspondence: Bi-weekly



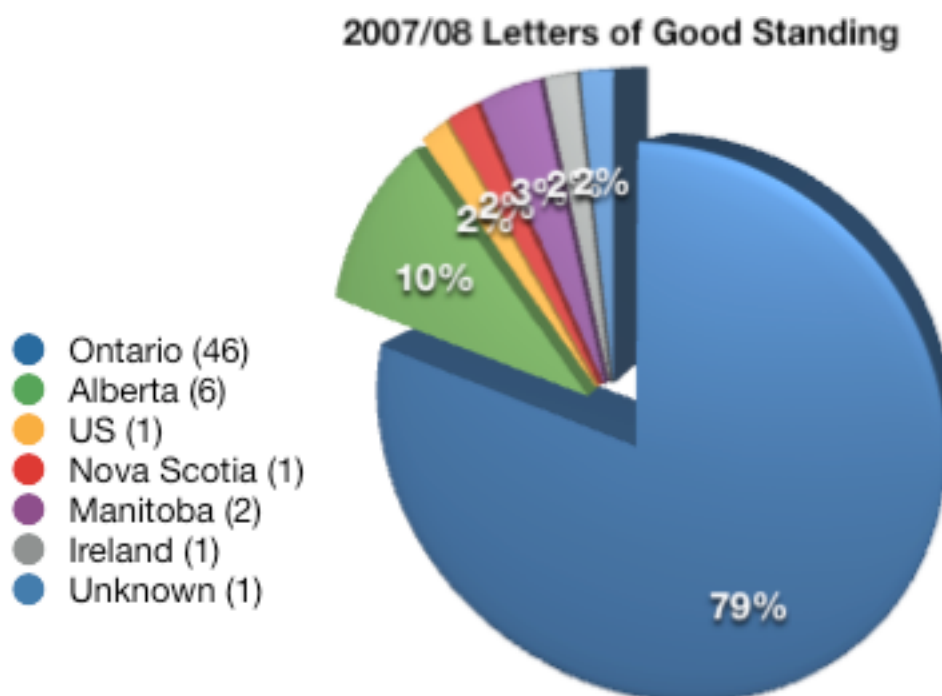
Renewal trends since the 2003/2004 fiscal year show that numbers for both renewals of practicing registrants and non-practicing registrants have continued to increase. This is mainly due to the increased demand for opticians and the value of maintaining registration and the title “optician” to the registrant. The COBC protects the use of the titles under the *Health Professions Act*. Only active registrants of the COBC can use the title “optician” and other associated terms. No other person can claim to be an optician or suggest that s/he is a member of the college without completing an appropriate education program, undergoing a rigorous examination and registering with the College. BC opticians are coming to fully understand the importance of protecting their reserved title. Correct use of the reserved titles allows the public to know they are dealing with a registered professional who has: met standards of practice and training, committed to ongoing education, is insured, and meets the standards of a regulating body.

The COBC has two official registration statuses: suspended or registered. The suspended status includes a large number of opticians who have not renewed their membership. Most of these opticians have retired or moved to another jurisdiction. Few are suspended for failure to pay annual dues, complete the continuing education program or other disciplinary action. In 2007/08, there were 124 suspensions of registration, including 37 Dispensing Opticians, 47 Contact Lens Fitters, and 40 Non-Practicing registrants. The COBC has an important ongoing responsibility to ensure any individual practicing opticianry in British Columbia, regardless of their employer, meets registration requirements.

## Labour Mobility and Letters of Good Standing

Canadian opticians have always recognized the importance of labour mobility occupational requirements across Canada. The Mutual Recognition Agreement among optician regulators ensures that no barriers exist regarding labour mobility for Canadian opticians.

The COBC received 58 requests for a Letter of Good Standing in 2007/08. A Letter of Good Standing acts to verify that the registrant is in good standing with the COBC and is required by the individual before s/he can register and practice opticianry in another jurisdiction under labour mobility agreements.



## Applications for Registration

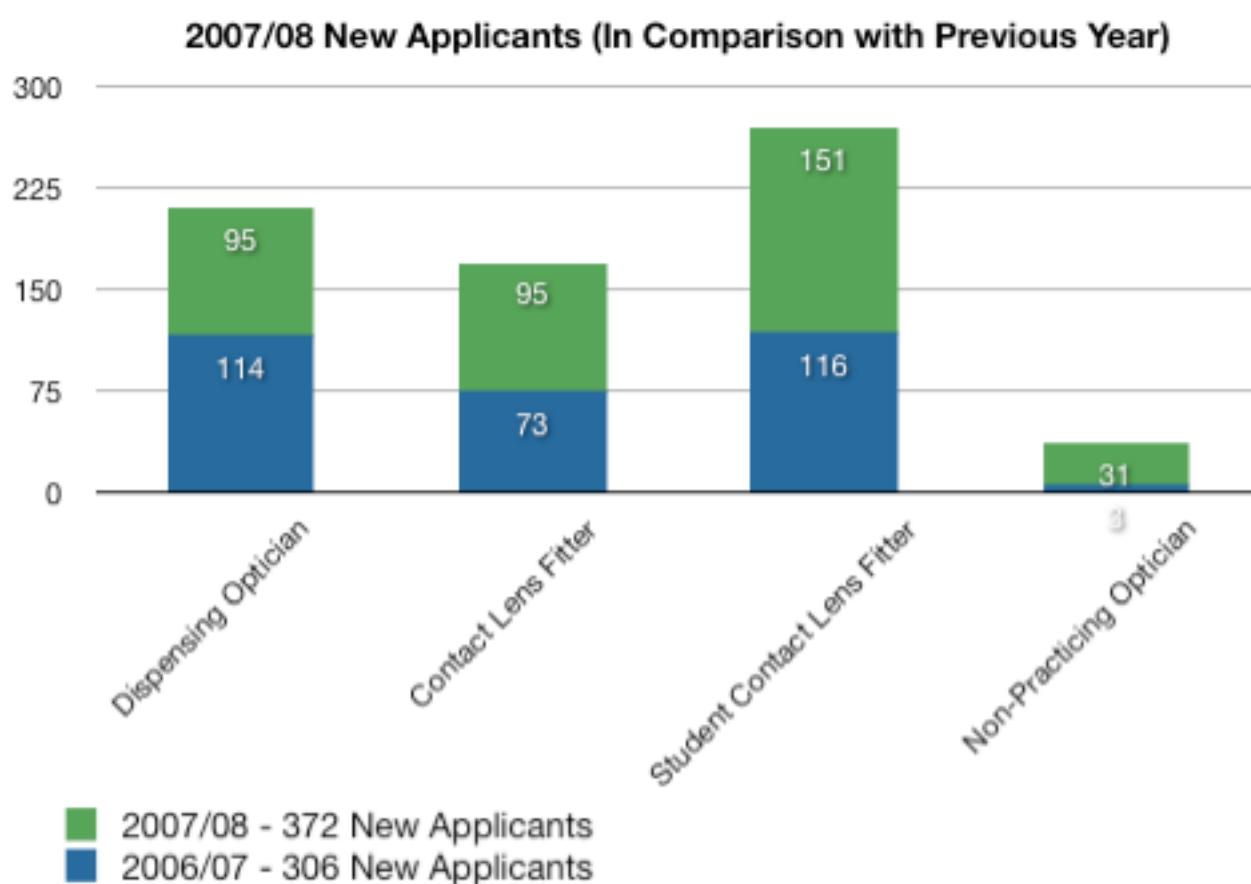
The COBC granted registration to 372 new applications between April 1st, 2007 to March 31, 2008.

Number of New Applicants	
New Dispensing Opticians	95
New Contact Lens Fitters	95
New Student Contact Lens Fitters	151

Number of New Applicants	
New Non-Practicing Opticians	31

In 2007/08, the COBC received 8 requests for registration from internationally trained opticians; the Registration Committee accredited the education of the 8 applicants.

Compared with 306 new applicants in 2006/07 there was an increase in new applications for registration, largely from members upgrading their status to that of a Contact Lens Fitters, as well as a number of new individuals entering opticianry as new Student Contact Lens Fitters. No qualified applicants were refused registration.





# PUBLIC INQUIRIES

## Inquiry & Discipline Committee Annual Report

The investigation and resolution of complaints is one of the most important mandates of the COBC. Complaints regarding members are received from the public, other health care professionals and opticians. The Inquiry Committee and the COBC responds to complaints in a timely manner and within the parameters of the legislation. The COBC has made available a standardized complaint form that further stream-lines the process. The form also provides information that allows the public of BC to know what to expect when lodging a complaint.

The COBC now publishes a summary of actions taken by the inquiry committee concerning complaints. This includes the nature of the complaint, actions taken to resolve the complaint and/or any additional practice conditions imposed by the committee. The Committee may resolve issues using alternative dispute mechanisms such as mediation and signed undertakings.

Before coming to a resolution, the Inquiry Committee will invite the registrant to respond to the complaint, however, in the absence of a response by the optician the committee will act unilaterally. If the issue cannot be resolved by mediation, the complaint will be referred to the Discipline Committee for further action.

The Inquiry Committee will take further actions to increase the transparency of the complaint, inquiry and disciplinary process to the public of British Columbia. This includes publishing specified actions taken by the Inquiry Committee to resolve complaints with named opticians, ensuring that the College processes are open and fair.

## 2007/08 Inquiries

The Inquiry Committee reviewed 7 complaints carried over from 2006/2007, and reviewed 19 new complaints in 2007/2008.

Complaints generally fall into 4 categories: breach of professional conduct, standards of practice, Health Professions Act or professional ethics. The COBC also investigates complaints regarding unauthorized practice.

### Inquiry Committee

Chair - David Nelson, Abbotsford  
*Non-Practicing Contact Lens Fitter*

Alan Chang, Richmond  
*Contact Lens Fitter*

Raheem Savja, Vancouver  
*Contact Lens Fitter*

Lutz Sprecher, Langley  
*Contact Lens Fitter*

Mary Jane Stenberg, Langley  
Patti Young, Vancouver - re-  
signed 2007  
*Appointed Members*

### Meetings in 2007/08

In-person: 4

### Discipline Committee

Chair - Kent Ashby, Richmond  
*Appointed Member*

Ron Boyce, Victoria  
*Contact Lens Fitter*

Colleen Laferrier, Surrey  
*Dispensing Optician*

Debra Szteina, Port Coquitlam  
*Contact Lens Fitter*

Patricia Vaz, Surrey  
*Contact Lens Fitter*

### Meetings in 2007/08

In-person: none



<b>Complaints Summary by 2007/08 Inquiry Committee</b>	
Allegations of unauthorized practice	3
Allegations of breach of professional conduct	1
Allegations of breach of Standards of Practice	12
Allegations of breach of Health Professions Act	2
Allegations of breach of professional ethics and/or business practice	1

The Inquiry Committee completed 23 decisions in 2007/08. At March 31, 2008, 3 files that were submitted in 2007/08 remained open, pending further action by the Committee. There were no files referred to the Discipline Committee in 2007/08.

<b>Complaints Resolution Summary by 2007/08 Inquiry Committee</b>	
Resolved by signed undertaking	2
Resolved by letter to remind registrant of the Standards of Practice	1
Resolved by mediated result	12
Resolved by remaking eyewear	2
Resolved by registrant-initiated resolution	1
Dismissed after redirection to Board of Examiners in Optometry	3
Dismissed due to frivolous nature or complaint does not contain allegations that are subject to investigation	2



# QUALITY ASSUR- ANCE

## Quality Assurance Committee Annual Report

Quality Assurance is a cornerstone of the COBC. Rapid changes in health care technology, research impacting eye care and eye care services challenge opticians to constantly update and add to their expertise. The public also rightfully expects the profession to continually demonstrate proficiency in their chosen field. Quality Assurance programs ensure all COBC registrants are aware and engaged in continuous improvement of their competency.

In addition to ensuring that COBC registrants maintain high professional standards of practice, the Quality Assurance Committee administers and monitors the Mandatory Continuing Education (MCE) program. The COBC participated in two education events in 2007/08 - the 2007 Annual General Meeting (AGM) and a Continuing Education Day hosted by a professional provider. Both of these successful events had a large number of registrants who participated in workshops and round table discussions. The workshops drew attention to the skills and knowledge opticians require in order to meet current and future demands.

Highlights from 2007/08 include full compliance with the advanced continuing education standard of practice for automated refraction opticians and continuing revision of the COBC *Professional Standards of Practice* and the MCE *Accreditation Policy*.

## Advanced Automated Refraction Training

The COBC not only believes that automated refraction will increase the accessibility of vision care services in BC and provide a much needed benefit throughout the province, but also that BC opticians conduct automated refraction with high regard for public safety. The COBC added new bylaws on October 1, 2007 that required all opticians who conduct automated refraction, or who are planning to offer the service, to complete an advanced training course and undergo a COBC certification examination.

This quality assurance program has received full compliance from opticians who are currently conducting automated refraction. BC opticians have a history of swiftly meeting education requirements necessary for public protection. As a result, they continue to demonstrate that public interest is the top priority in their professional lives.

### Quality Assurance Committee

Chair - Inderjit Bamrah, Surrey  
*Contact Lens Fitter*

Cindy Koszegi, Abbotsford  
*Dispensing Optician*

Raj Mann, Vancouver  
*Contact Lens Fitter*

John Moss, Abbotsford  
*Contact Lens Fitter*

Mary Jane Stenberg, Langley  
Patti Young, Vancouver - re-  
signed 2007  
*Appointed Members*

### Meetings in 2007/08

In-person: 3

The COBC also hosted round table discussions on automated refraction. Over 300 refracting opticians met with COBC representatives to fully understand the COBC *Bylaws* and *Standards of Practice* as related to automated refraction and to gather valuable feedback for future dialogue.

## Continuing Education

The COBC Mandatory Continuing Education (MCE) program continues to be a major component of quality assurance. The Quality Assurance Committee has continued revising its *Accreditation Policy* to ensure that MCE activities add to the knowledge and skills of the members. Positive results from continuing education in 2007/08 included the expansion of MCE events hosted in areas outside the lower mainland, networking among peers, exchanging ideas, constructive feedback, as well as developing alternative methods of providing MCE such as online courses and study groups.

A requirement specified in the *Accreditation Policy*, is that registrants must obtain 2/3 of their continuing education credits from “professional providers” which include the COBC, opticianry schools and associations. It is the belief of the board that public interest is best served when professional providers cooperate and work together. Therefore, the COBC has been working on innovative partnerships for delivering continuing education to opticians. In 2007/08, the COBC worked with Douglas College, the OBC: Opticians of British Columbia and the Opticians Association of Canada to provide rewarding seminars. An important theme identified by the board was developing leadership in the opticianry community. Continuing education components on leadership training are a new initiative to encourage involvement in leadership roles within the profession and their community.

## Standards of Practice

The committee has continued working on the *Professional Standards of Practice* with the board to ensure that the standards remain current, relevant and allow opticians to best meet the needs of the public. The board approved the final revised draft of the *Standards* at the end of 2007 along with a completely revised “Client Notice for Automated Refraction” form. The new form explains automated refraction in a clear and concise manner in order to ensure the public easily understands the automated refraction procedure, and how it differs from a full eye health exam. The new standards will be circulated once the changes have been deposited with the government.



# EXAMINATIONS

## Examination Annual Report

The COBC adopted the National Examinations administered by the National Accreditation Committee of Opticians (NACO) in 2006. Candidates are examined on the national Optical Sciences 1 - Eyeglass and Optical Science 2 - Contact Lens, to measure their competency before seeking registration with the college. The examination is accepted across Canada and is used by nine provincial opticianry regulatory bodies as their entry-to-practice examinations.

The administration of examinations requires the dedication of many opticians who volunteer their time over two weekends a year. It also requires close cooperation between the COBC, the NACO office and opticianry schools - Douglas College and BC College of Optics. The examination coordinators conduct orientation sessions for the examiners and ensure that examinations in B.C. are held under the same strict standards established nation wide.

## NACO Examination Results

Within the group of 119 candidates who took the Optical Science 1 - Eyeglass Examination in June and November 2007, 112 passed and 7 failed. Within the group of 132 candidates who took the Optical Science 2 - Contact Lens Examination in June and November 2007 94 passed and 38 failed.

### Examination Coordinators

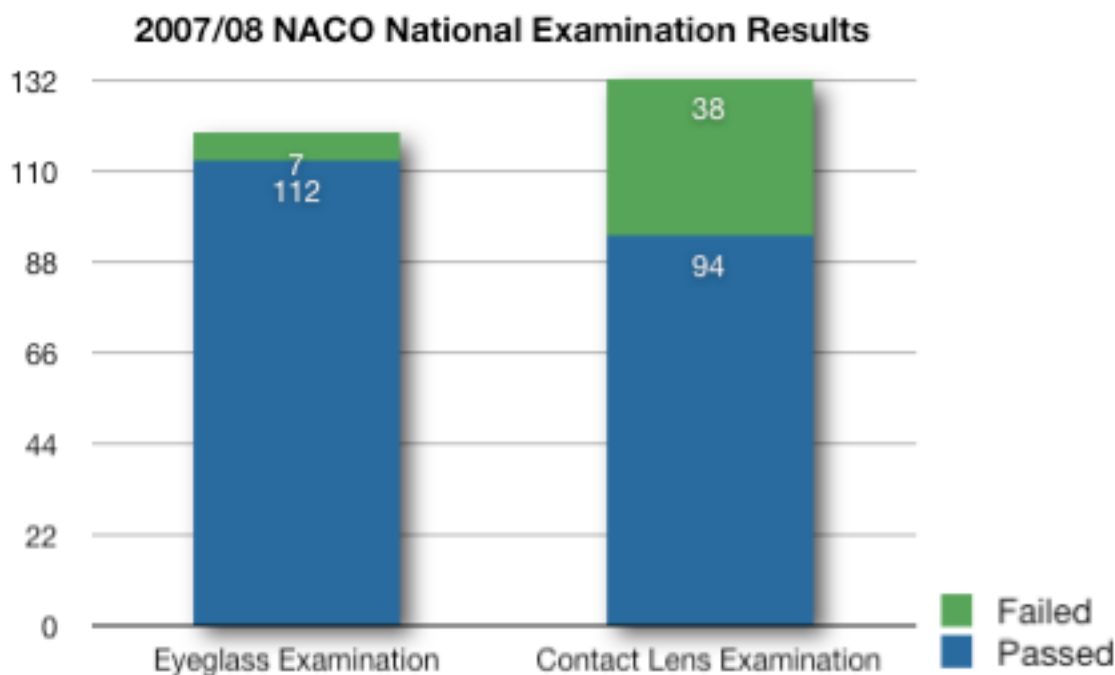
Debra Szteina, Port Coquitlam  
*Contact Lens Fitter*

Raj Mann, Vancouver  
*Contact Lens Fitter*

### Meetings in 2007/08

Telephone Conferences: 4

By Correspondence: Regularly in the four weeks leading up to each examination



## ADMINISTRATION

### Administration Annual Report

In order to fulfill its mandate, the COBC administration assists and supports the work of the Board and its Committees. The COBC office consists of four staff members whose purpose is to ensure that committee members and examiners have the necessary materials and organizational support to fulfill their COBC duties.

### Registrant Relations

The COBC staff is engaged in registrant relations on a daily basis. The majority of communication arises from registrants requesting more information about the COBC, whether assisting new and current registrants with registration issues, or informing registrants on regulations and standards of practice issues. The COBC staff is also committed to maintaining a registry of BC opticians, interacting with registrants at continuing education events, issuing regular reminders to registrants, and helping registrants communicate with their clients and the public more effectively.

### Accessibility and Communication

The COBC strives to be accessible, effective and transparent to registrants and the public, through the COBC website, publications and the office. The COBC website provides up-to-date highlights to all of its stakeholders and is used as the main source of information. The COBC has recognized the importance of its website in educating the public, and has begun re-designing its site to ensure easy navigation.

Staff works to respond to the needs of public interest and government direction. In 2007/08 numerous outreach and consultation sessions were held with registrants, the public, and national and provincial stakeholders.

## Board and Committee Meetings

The COBC staff is responsible for organizing, coordinating and writing materials for the Board and a total of eight COBC Committees. In addition, the COBC staff is responsible for the logistics of holding Board and Committee meetings, and for providing supporting documents, reports and research. Board and Committee members receive an honorarium, as well as allowances for travel, accommodation and meals.

## Examinations

Held in the spring and fall, the two-day examination sessions require time, commitment and dedication from registrants to help coordinate and act as examiners during this time.

The examinations require a large number of volunteers and administrative staff time. The efforts of examiners, coordinators, and staff help to ensure the examination is organized and every candidate understands the examination process.

### COBC Staff

Nick Atkinson  
*Registrar*

Michael Tsao  
*Deputy Registrar*

Connie Chong  
*Assistant Registrar (Sept 2007)*

Sherry Kaiway  
*Office Manager*

Stephanie Leung  
*Assistant Registrar (August 2007)*



## Financial Management Annual Report

The COBC Finance Committee delivers timely disclosures about the COBC's financial situation. The Board regularly reviews the financials at every meeting and the 2007/08 audited financial statements are available on the COBC website. The Chair of the Finance committee is a publicly appointed member and meets independently with the COBC's Auditor.

The Committee is striving for excellence in meeting budgets and maintaining control procedures to ensure that adequate budgeting and control procedures were in place for financial health and accountability.

The Board sees a need to promote and enhance the public's understanding of the profession by improving communication. Improvements in communication will help both opticians and the public adapt to changes to the profession and understand emerging issues relevant to their eye care. This will increase the cost of public awareness and promotion in the coming years.

Total expenses are lower than the previous year; however, this is not expected to continue with rising legal costs in dealing with unauthorized practice.

In 2007/2008, the total amount of (unrestricted Net Assets) money on reserve was \$466,539, which would cover a little more than 10 months of COBC expenses for 2007/2008.

The COBC remains committed to financial accountability and sustainability, and has control practices place to ensure these principles are maintained.

### Finance Committee

Chair - Elizabeth Cytra, Trail  
*Appointed Member*

Nick Atkinson  
*Registrar*

Michael Tsao  
*Deputy Registrar*

### Meetings in 2007/08

By Correspondence: Bi-monthly)