

Subject: RE: Optometrist Registration Standards
Date: Wednesday, 2 March 2011 6:25:43 PM

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing in response to the proposal for compulsory therapeutic qualifications for Optometrists.

I concur that "public protection" is imperative. I however fail to believe that an Optometrist whom does not have therapeutic qualification poses any risk to their patients. All qualified Optometrists have a comprehensive understanding of both topical and systemic medications. I agree that further studies are necessary to ensure the safe prescription of ocular medications, yet I do not expect that if all Optometrists undertake these studies that there is any benefit for public safety.

Whilst an Optometrist whom is therapeutically endorsed has the ability to prescribe a limited number of non-PBS medications, those whom are not endorsed to provide their patients with a prescription for these medications will diligently make a referral to an appropriate allied health professional to ensure appropriate treatment is sought. The public safety is thus at no risk.

Within metropolitan areas, the majority of patients seeking topical medications obtain their prescriptions from their General Physician or an Ophthalmologist. It is unreasonable to expect Optometrists, particularly those who consult part-time, to undertake a qualification that would not be of significant benefit to themselves, their patients or their community.

Both the time and cost involved with obtaining the additional qualification for practicing Optometrists must also be considered. For all Optometrists, there already exists strict requirements to meet continuing professional education requirements to ensure public safety. An additional requirement for therapeutic endorsement is both unnecessary and unreasonable.

It is the consensus within my professional colleagues that the proposal for compulsory therapeutic qualifications for general registration should be denied.

As per current standards, Optometrists should be able to elect whether they wish to undergo therapeutic endorsement. It should not be compulsory.

Kind Regards,

Christopher Smith
Optometrist