

Subject: OBA therapeutics proposal
Date: Friday, 4 March 2011 6:38:28 PM

Dear Sir/Madam

I wish to make comment regarding the OBA's request for comment on therapeutics training as a potential future requirement for registration.

As an optometrist with 15 years experience, I don't feel that I or other experienced optometrists should be forced to do therapeutics training to stay registered. I wish to undertake this extra training some time in the future but don't feel that I should be forced into it. I see therapeutics as a specialty like pediatrics, sports vision etc. I acknowledge that more optometrists will obtain this 'specialty' over time however some optometrists may sub specialise again in the future into specific areas eg glaucoma, iritis etc.

Therapeutics training is a heavy impost on many optometrists both in terms of monetary expense and more critically the considerable time spent away from practice to undertake the necessary training. Personally having a very young family, living in rural WA and running 2 practices, this would be a massive burden at this stage of my life to undertake. I would like to consider doing the training in later years when my young family is more mature and better positioned to handle my absence. Obviously, therapeutically trained optometrists deserve recognition for their extra qualifications but this should not serve to penalise existing practitioners without therapeutics endorsement. I see that optometrists without therapeutics endorsement could quite easily refer to those that are endorsed when the need arises. This has always been the case where optometrists referred to other medical practitioners (usually ophthalmologists) for treatment of conditions that optometrists were not previously qualified to treat.

The general public is still well served by optometrists that are not therapeutically endorsed. Those that are endorsed only add to the overall public benefit. In simple terms, the public register should simply state which optometrists are therapeutically endorsed to recognise their skills and to help the public get the most appropriate care they need. Those that are not therapeutically endorsed shouldn't be penalised (or deregistered) for providing the high standard of care that they have always maintained. In addition, it does not serve the public interest either. I suppose that it wouldn't be unreasonable to consider not allowing foreign trained optometrists to practice, that aren't therapeutically endorsed or at least consider putting some restrictions on them.

Kind Regards
Yours Sincerely

Graham Shipway
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