

Subject: consultation on therapeutic qualifications
Date: Friday, 4 March 2011 1:39:07 AM

Dear Mr Waldron,

Thankyou for your invitation to respond to the proposal on making therapeutic qualification of optometrists a requirement for registration.

I come from a long line of optometrists who have practiced in Western Australia since the beginning of the 20th Century. My grandfather and his brother opened their practice and fought hard for the recognition of Optometry as a profession. In the early days, eye examinations involved skilled measurement, prescription and fitting of spectacles but fitting of contact lenses was not included in their scope of practice. Even since my graduation from UNSW in 1984, the content of an eye examination has expanded greatly, and I am proud to say that I have mastered many new skills to keep up with best practice standards for my patients.

Therapeutic endorsement is a logical next step for our profession, and I believe it will benefit some patients in some circumstances. I will definitely do a Therapeutics course in the next few years (ie when I can include it in my yearly money and time budget).

I do NOT however believe it can be made compulsory for existing Optometrists.

The patients themselves will be able to decide whether they will seek out a therapeutically endorsed optometrist, in the same way they seek out behavioural optometrists, or practitioners with OCTs or other sub-specialists, in our current environment. Those who choose to stay with their therapeutically un-endorsed optometrist can still go to their GP for prescription medications as they do at the moment. Remuneration of the profession will not increase to mirror the increased liability associated with this extra responsibility.

By all means, steer the profession in the direction of therapeutic endorsement, by making it a requirement of New Registrants, but in no way can this be forced upon Current Registrants who are providing competent, ethical and professional Optometric service of the highest quality and integrity.

Yours sincerely,

Karen Edelman

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