

Joint statement

25 November 2014

Guidelines on glaucoma diagnosis and management

The Optometry Board of Australia will modify its guidelines on glaucoma diagnosis and management to make sure there are clear referral pathways to support patient safety and well-being.

Modifying the guidelines will resolve a long-standing legal matter between the Board, the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Ophthalmologists (RANZCO) and the Australian Society of Ophthalmologists (ASO).

The Board and the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA), RANZCO and the ASO all acknowledge and respect the roles, responsibilities and restrictions of optometrists who provide primary eye care and ophthalmologists who provide secondary, tertiary or subspecialty care in the treatment of people with glaucoma.

Registered health practitioners, including optometrists and ophthalmologists, are qualified to practise independently and are accountable and responsible for clinical management decisions within their professions.

Collaboration and communication between treating optometrists and ophthalmologists after each patient consultation is in the best interest of patient safety and optimal eye health care and is fundamental to the delivery of safe, high-quality health care services.

Competency levels achieved by endorsed optometrists are underpinned by accredited programs of study in the use of scheduled medicines to treat conditions of the eye. Optometrists must also meet mandatory registration standards set by the Optometry Board of Australia and are held to account against the standards set in the Board's code of conduct.

A robust collaborative care arrangement that strengthens communication, referral pathways and ongoing management for patients is in the best interests of optometrists, ophthalmologists, patients and the public.

The ASO, RANZCO, the Optometry Board of Australia and AHPRA agree modifying the guidelines is a constructive solution that protects patient safety and supports access to health services, without compromising standards of care.

Media inquiries:

AHPRA and Optometry Board of Australia: Nicole Newton 03 8708 9200 or (m) 0407 998 611.

RANZCO: Luke Vanem (m) 0425201874

ASO: David Russell (m) 0466359617