



American Optometric Association



STUDY FINDS EYE CARE WORKFORCE IS ADEQUATE TO MEET PROJECTED DEMAND

June 10, 2014 -- Jointly launched by the American Optometric Association (AOA) and the Association of Schools and Colleges of Optometry (ASCO), the National Eye Care Workforce Study is based on the most current survey and health sector data, along with a computer model developed by the Lewin Group, a firm widely recognized for its health care policy research.

The just completed study was designed to help answer critically important questions about how America's eye health needs will be met over the next decade and beyond.

“The results clearly point to a supply of eye doctors – optometrists and ophthalmologists – that is adequate to meet the current and future eye health and vision care needs of the American people,” said Steve Loomis, O.D., vice president of the AOA Board of Trustees. “The study also demonstrates the opportunities for optometry to further expand its role in the delivery of medical eye care services for seniors, working adults and children.”

Highlights of the study findings include:

- There appears to be an adequate supply of eye doctors, optometrists and ophthalmologists, inclusive of projections of new doctors, to meet current and projected demand for eye care services through 2025.
- Demographic trends as well as public health and policy factors, including growth and aging of the U.S. population, an increased prevalence of Type 2 diabetes, expansions in health insurance coverage and the designation in federal law that coverage for eye health and vision care is essential for children are all projected to contribute to an increasing demand for optometric services through 2025.
- The data collected indicates that with increases in productivity, optometrists currently view themselves as able to accommodate much of the expected increase in demand. Responding optometrists reported that they could see an average of 19.8 additional patients per week if completely booked without adding hours to their practice schedule.
- The trend of optometrists to provide an increasing number of medically necessary eye care services correlates closely with projections for an increasing demand for these services, especially among senior citizens and those at risk for Type 2 diabetes.

Jennifer Smythe, O.D., M.S., ASCO President said, “While the study offers a snapshot of the workforce at this moment in time, one of the most important aspects of this project is that the Eye Care Workforce computer model will allow for continued analysis of the eye care market as external factors affecting both supply and demand change or are introduced. Workforce studies often generate as many new

questions as they answer, and we can see some intriguing new avenues for investigation as we seek to advance optometry's ability to meet the demand for services.”

AOA and ASCO organized the study project for which funding was provided by ophthalmic industry sponsors, including Alcon, Essilor, HOYA Vision Care, Johnson & Johnson Vision Care, Inc., Luxottica, TLC Vision, and Transitions Optical.

Mitchell T. Munson, O.D., AOA President, said, “Without a doubt, this is the most ambitious, comprehensive and forward-looking study of eye care supply and demand ever undertaken. It fully recognizes both optometrists and ophthalmologists as providers of the eye health and medical services, including diagnosis, treatment and management of an array of diseases and disorders, which will be increasingly needed by Americans in the years to come.”

To get all three documents from the National Eye Care Workforce Study go to AOA.org/Marketplace.

- **National Eye Care Workforce Study: Supply and Demand Projections Executive Summary**
Digital Copy:
Members: Included in membership (\$0)
Non-members charge is \$15
- **Report on the 2012 National Eye Care Workforce Survey of Optometrists**
Printed Book:
Members: Included in membership (\$0)
Non-member charge is \$125
- **National Eye Care Workforce Study: Supply and Demand Projections Final Report**
Printed Book:
Members: Included in membership (\$0)
Non-member charge is \$625

About the AOA:

The American Optometric Association, a federation of state, student and armed forces optometric associations, was founded in 1898. Today, the AOA is proud to represent the profession of optometry, America's family eye doctors, who take a leading role in an individual's overall eye and vision care, health and well-being. Doctors of optometry (ODs) are the independent primary health care professionals for the eye and have extensive, ongoing training to examine, diagnose, treat and manage disorders, diseases and injuries that affect the eye and visual system, providing two-thirds of primary eye care in the U.S. For information on a variety of eye health and vision topics, and to find an optometrist near you, visit www.aoa.org.

About ASCO

The Association of Schools and Colleges of Optometry (ASCO) is a non-profit association representing the interests of optometric education. Founded in 1941 and headquartered in Rockville, Md., ASCO is committed to achieving excellence in optometric education and to helping its member institutions prepare well-qualified graduates for entrance into the profession of optometry. Its membership encompasses the schools and colleges of optometry in the 50 states and Puerto Rico. A number of optometry schools outside the United States are affiliate members.

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