



JUNE 2018

Focal Point

Newsletter of the Arizona Optometric Association

AZOA 2018 Spring Congress Was a Huge Success!

Over 180 ODs and 40 exhibitors descended upon Loews Ventana Canyon in Tucson for the AZOA's 2018 Spring Congress held April 13-15. Fun was had by all on Friday night in our Carnival-themed exhibit hall as attendees enjoyed cocktails, corndogs, games, popcorn and cotton candy while they visited with our industry partners to learn about the latest innovations in Optometry. There was even a roving magician to dazzle the crowd!

Saturday night's AZOA awards dinner was also well-attended as guests wine and dined on delicious local Mexican fare. This year's well-deserved award winners are:

O.D. of the Year: Frank Akers II, O.D.

Young O.D. of the Year: Logan Ragan, O.D.

Legislator of the Year: State Representative Bob Thorpe

Key Legislative Person of the Year: Caroline Griego, O.D.

President's: Danielle Lanzer, O.D.

Sight Conservation: AZCOPT-Midwestern University

The 2018 Spring Congress noted faculty presented 16 hours of COPE-approved CE, and included:

Dr. Josh Johnston, Dr. Ron Melton, Dr. Brad Sutton, Dr. Randall Thomas and Tucson VA Residents: Drs. Loren Rodgers, Ryan Martinez, Kaitlin Vass, Lauren West, Yang Pan & Krista Reuland

THANK YOU AGAIN to our Generous Meeting Sponsors:

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE: BY DR. BETH PYLE-SMITH

This spring the AZOA has been busy representing you. We were at the State Capitol, at Capitol Hill in Washington, DC, at the Arizona College of Optometry Residents Day, and the Open Eyes Special Olympics Vision Screenings just to list a few. We have been protecting and connecting! How about you?



Another win at the State Capitol!

Our Legislative Team, lead by Dr. Annette Hanian and our Lobbyists, Don Isaacson and Cheyenne Walsh, with the help of our members reaching out to their Representatives, successfully passed SB1034 which was ultimately signed by Governor Ducey on April 12th. This was affectionately known as the Sunrise Improvements Bill which helps all the professions that require a Sunrise Process. Simply put, it shortens our disclosure time for when we want to present a new bill and assumes benefits and savings (not harm and cost) and takes competition and insurance costs out of the legislative voting process. This opens up the door for better opportunities to expand our scope of practice to provide better patient care. Besides changing legislation, many doctors served their Representative corn dogs at annual **ODs at the Capitol** this past March. It was a great success as we are again nominated for Best Event at the Capitol.

On behalf of the AZOA, Drs. Jon Wold, Stacey Meier, Gilbert Wong, Chris Parot, Chad Carlsson and myself went to Washington DC for the **AOA On Capitol Hill Day**. We stormed the halls of the Congressional Office Buildings talking to our Representatives and Senators. The mission: sign the Burgess-Rush letter that asks the **FTC** oppose the unnecessary burdensome proposal that would require optometrists to retain records that stated the patient received a copy of their contact lens prescription and focus more on illegal sales of contact lenses. Along with Dentists, we asked our representatives to support **HR 1606, the DOC Access**

Bill and to sign on as a cosponsor. This bill targets anti-patient, anti-doctor mandates that force doctors to charge patients specific rates for services and materials not covered by the plan, forces doctors to participate in vision plans in order to provide medical care and restricts choice of lab. The final topic was spreading the word to about **TECS** where the VA is trying to move towards basically replacing optometrists with auto-refractors. This was not received well by most if not all the Representatives we spoke with. Keep your eyes and ears on the Legislative updates and take an active role in helping protect our profession.

At our **Annual Spring Congress**, I was honored to be sworn in as your new AZOA president along with the Board of Directors. We had over 179 doctors turn out for the exceptional continuing education; the most we have ever had at the Spring Congress! The Awards Dinner was memorable with the presentation our **Young OD of the Year Award to Dr. Logan Ragan**, the **President's Award to Dr. Danielle Lanzer**, and the **Optometrist of the Year went to Dr. Frank Akers**. It was special to see Dr. Akers family fly out to surprise him. The President's Reception was a true carnival! Besides the usual food and beverages, there were lots of carnival games to entertain: Water gun races, knock down bottles, ring toss, kissing booth, tattoos and more. It was a blast and an honor to know that I have the support of the members this year.

As promised, the first **Young Professionals Event** was held on April 19 at the Pomelo at the Orchard. It was Co-Hosted by Essilor and we had a great turn out! We are encouraged at the energy this new program brings to the AZOA members. Connecting young doctors to form new friendships and avenues to grow in our profession is exciting. If you're out of school 10 years or less, you can join in on the fun! Come join the next event in June. Stay tuned for more information. Invite non-members to join the AZOA so they too can be a part of this new dynamic group.

If you love to do community service, make sure you come out next year to help at **Special Olympics Vision**

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE: BY DR. BETH PYLE-SMITH

Screenings. This year it was held on May 5th with over a dozen doctors and a bunch of students from AZ college of Optometry. It's such fun watching the athletes go through the stations and sharing their excitement about the awards they had won. They are given glasses at the end provided by Essilor.

This year we were honored to present Dr. Joshua Baker and the Arizona College of Optometry with the **Conservation for Sight Award at their Resident's Day.** This award goes to an individual or company who has made a significant contribution to the preservation of sight through promotion of projects and programs to eye care. They have truly given back to the students and the community. Following the great case presentations from the Optometry Residents, everyone headed over to Zipps for a celebration co-hosted by the AZOA and Coopervision. Dr. Todd Smith's class of 3rd year students filled the restaurant until they kicked us out! Too much fun was had by all!

I just listed a few of the events that occurred in April alone! Did you know that your AzOA is actively fighting to protect our profession, actively finding ways to connect you with other members and serving our community like that? As AZOA President this year, I'd like you to be aware of the **Values of the AZOA** and how we can all be of value to each other. If you know of other Doctors that are not members, we encourage you to invite them to join! Invite them to go with you to our Cope and Cocktails (dinner + education), Young Professionals Group or attend any of our Congresses. If you're a member, feel free to share how valuable the AZOA is to you. We would love to share! We look forward to seeing you at our events. **Come, join in on the fun, be an active AZOA member!**

Connect, Evolve and Thrive.

AZOA President, Dr. Beth Pyle-Smith

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LEGISLATIVE UPDATES: BY DR. ANNETTE HANIAN

Legislation Committee Update by Annette Hanian OD, Chair

The AZOA is the only organization in AZ that represents our profession in the public and at the legislature. All AZOA efforts rely on member participation and enthusiasm. As Legislation Chair for the past 11 years, I have seen the membership participation and enthusiasm grow exponentially. As we plan for future legislative sessions, it is easy to get wrapped in what we don't have and what we need as a profession. It is helpful to look back and see what we have accomplished as a profession through the efforts of the AZOA and AOA member-volunteers.

- 1907: AZOA Founded
- In the 1960s optometrists could only “detect” and then refer – were not allowed statutorily to “diagnose,” much less treat a condition. Optometrists could not use drugs to facilitate the exam.
- 1970s RI, WV, NC enacted the first laws in the country allowing the use of legend drugs.
- In the 1980s optometrists in more than half the states could now use diagnostic drugs to facilitate the exam. Some states can treat conditions of the eye and adnexa.
- 1982 AZ OD's licensed to use diagnostic drops.
- By the mid-1980s optometry moved from billing under “optometry codes” (COIT/COPT) to CPT codes to address ophthalmology's assertion that optometry services were “different”.
- 1987 optometry was included as a “physician” in Medicare
- By 1990, optometrists in every jurisdiction could now use diagnostic drugs to facilitate the exam.
- In 1993 AZ OD's licensed to use topical therapeutic drugs to treat eye disease. By the end of the 1998, optometrists in all remaining jurisdictions gained authority to prescribe topical therapeutic drugs to treat conditions of the eye and adnexa.
- 1999 AZ OD's authorized to use a restricted list of oral medications to treat eye disease.
- In 2007 AZ added all oral anti-histamines to authority.
- In 2010 AZ added oral anti-virals and macrolides to authority.
- In 2011 AZ added all oral NSAIDS to authority & added layperson to our licensing board.

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- In 2012 AZ addressed access by ensuring in statute no discrimination against ODs (HMO and ERISA covered under Federal law).
- In 2013 AZ got MD off our licensing board.
- In 2014 AZ added oral glaucoma meds, oral steroids, oral FQ, schedule II narcotics and ended OMD oversight/ mandatory referral and limitations on epi-pen injection use.
- In 2015 AZ successfully fought 1-800's attempts to end CL UPP by manufacturers.
- In 2016 AZ successfully fought 1-800's attempts to eliminate CL expirations.
- In 2016 and 2017 AZ successfully fought added Sunrise requirements.
- In 2017 AZ successfully fought against eliminating Opticians board.
- Efforts 2016 through 2018, ODs are no longer restricted from performing licensing exams for Boxers and MMA fighters.
- In 2018 successfully modified Sunrise Process to make it more equitable.

With all that being said, we have a long way to go with reimbursement equity, vision plan fixes, full taught & tested scope and more. Some members also have interest in school vision screening regulations and online eyewear sales and eye-care license plates. A planning session is scheduled for June 30th where all these options will be explored and a plan for our future efforts will be made. All members that are interested in being committee members are welcome to attend. Garcia's off I-17 1-3pm. It is through your continued enthusiast participation that we can add to the evolution of our profession.

GETTING TO KNOW OUR NEW AZOA BOARD MEMBER

Dr. Ragan joined Northsight Vision Care in June 2015 after graduating with Beta Sigma Kappa Honors from Midwestern University. He did extern training at the Regional Hospital Eye Clinic in Nome, Alaska & Bowden Eye Surgical Centers of Jacksonville, Florida; both of

Logan Ragan, OD

which gave him extensive ocular disease experience. Dr. Ragan is great with kids and has experience with all the latest contact lens technology. He has been a superb addition to our practice. Dr. Ragan is very active as a community volunteer. He earned the 2016 AZ Optometric Association Visionary Award for his work and was the 2018 AZOA Young OD of the Year.



AOA-PAC UPDATE: BY DR. CHAD CARLSSON

Summer is here and “THE HEAT IS ON!” Great song by the legendary Glenn Frey for those that don’t know the classic rock stuff. Anyway, just wanted to briefly talk about our recent successful visit to Washington, DC near the end of April and how well the AZOA represented our Members before our State’s elected Congressmen during the Annual AOA PAC Capitol Hill Conference.



This meeting gathers several Members of each State’s Optometry Association together for a 2 ½ Day “binge briefing” of what’s going on in DC with Congress, lobbyists and the AOA. We quickly get up to speed on what Bills are being considered that either threaten or promote Optometry and what we need to do as State representatives for our profession with elected Congressmen from our State.



I must say, the AOA puts on a top notch event for our representing Members as they prepare us for “Storming Capitol Hill” and sometimes literally talking face to face with our elected officials about what’s going on at a Federal level with our profession and simply asking them to support our views regarding certain Bills that are being considered. We respectfully ask them to consider cosponsoring certain Bills that we find will either favor us or vice versa, agree to defend us when it comes to Bills that would hurt us. This simple meeting can then drum up more support from their fellow colleagues as they learn more about our cause and agenda.



For instance, we recently got great news that Representative Paul Gosar from the AZ 4th District agreed to support and cosponsor our cause in defending against the latest FTC proposal regarding contact lens prescriptions and a requirement to sign a document with patients stating that we prescribed and issued a contact

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AOA-PAC UPDATE: BY DR. CHAD CARLSSON



lens prescription to patients besides the prescription itself. This of course is a waste of time and money besides a potential liability if such a signed document was required to be issued to the patient. Yet another tactic by 1-800 and other online sellers to burden the prescribing Doctor with more red tape!

This is exactly why we as AZOA Members need to support our State PAC (OPACA) fundraising goals besides the AOA PAC fundraising goals. Otherwise, what was good for us now could turn real bad quickly! And the same goes for what limits us now could really advance us and our profession by simply talking and gaining support from our elected officials that frankly don't know about a Bill or concern unless we educate them about it.

Our next and only big fundraising event will be this fall at the Annual AZOA Fall Congress meeting as I host our 3rd Annual Fine Bourbon & Wine Tasting Event in one of the hospitality suites at the Hilton Sedona. So

either simply sign up now through the AOA PAC website for your monthly donations or for sure when I see you at Fall Congress so we can continue to gather the funds we need to support our profession and the AOA's fight on Capitol Hill to "Make Optometry Great Again!"

In the meantime, try to stay COOL while you enjoy the HOT, AZ Summer.

**Take-care and See You Soon,
Chad A. Carlsson, OD, FAAO
AOA-PAC Chairman of the AZOA**

AZOA Welcomes NEW MEMBERS!

(as of June 2018)

**Dr. Daniel Blanco
Dr. Eric Bushman
Dr. Andre Juarez
Dr. Gurjeevan Hothi
Dr. Joshua Lewis
Dr. Dennis Taylor
Dr. Jenna Williams**

2018 AZOA SPRING CONGRESS IN PHOTOS! - APRIL 13-15



GETTING TO KNOW OUR NEW AZOA BOARD MEMBER

Danielle Lanzer, OD received her Bachelors of Science degree in biology at Wittenberg University in Springfield, Ohio. She then graduated from The Ohio State University College of Optometry. Upon

Danielle Lanzer, OD



graduation from Optometry school, she was the recipient of the Low Vision Excellence Award as well as Shamir Insight Dispensing Award. Dr. Lanzer completed her ocular disease residency at Erdey Searcy Eye Group, a surgical practice where management of emergent and chronic anterior segment disease, diabetes, glaucoma and post-operative cataract care were emphasized. Outside of the office Dr. Lanzer enjoys being an active member of the American Optometric Association and Arizona Optometric Association. She is actively pursuing her candidacy for fellowship into the American Academy of Optometry. Dr. Lanzer also completed an Optometry Missions trip to Haiti to further enhance her Optometry education and commitment to care for those who are underprivileged. Dr. Lanzer interests include full-scope Optometric services, comprehensive examinations, diabetic eye exams, specialty contact lens fits, glaucoma evaluations and management, post-op care and emergency add on patients.

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MEMBER NEWS

AZOA GIVES BACK WITH ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL OPENING EYES PROGRAM AT THE SPECIAL OLYMPICS

On Saturday, May 5th the 2018 AZ Special Olympics Opening Eyes Program took place at Raymond S Kellis High School in Glendale. The AZOA worked hard and screened 232 athletes.....74 of which received new Rx glasses. We had approximately 16 ODs, 4 opticians, 36 AZCOPT students and 4 general volunteers in attendance. The AZOA would like to thank everyone again for donating their time and efforts.



Also of note, Veatch Ophthalmic Instruments was kind enough to donate ALL the equipment, GES donated the exam room pipe and drape, Safilo donated the sunglasses as well as

Rx frames and Meridian Optical/Essilor Laboratories of America mounted and surfaced our 74 pairs of glasses.

The Special Olympics Opening Eyes program (one of seven disciplines of the Healthy Athletes program) is a vision and eye health screening held in partnership with the Lions Clubs International Foundation. Led by volunteer vision care professionals, Opening Eyes is able to offer prescription eyewear, sunglasses, and sports goggles to Special Olympics athletes every year. The other six disciplines of the Healthy Athletes program are: Fit Feet (podiatry), FUNfitness (physical therapy), Health Promotion (better health and well-being), Healthy Hearing (audiology), MedFest (sports physical exam) and Special Smiles (dentistry). In between their athletic events, the athletes visit these 7 disciplines. Officially launched in 1997, Special Olympics Healthy Athletes organizes its events in a welcoming, fun environment and they educate athletes on healthy lifestyle choices and identify problems that may need additional follow-up. Through Healthy Athletes, more



than 155,000 health care professionals and students have been trained to treat people with intellectual disabilities. These health care professionals provide improved care to millions.



AOAExcel
American Optometric Association
243 N. Lindbergh Blvd., Floor 1
St. Louis, MO 63141
1 (800) 365-2219
www.ExcelOD.com



New AZOA Benefit: Save on items from cell phones to car rentals

AZOA members can receive double digit discounts through AOAExcel's new group purchasing program. This new benefit can help AZOA members save with [hundreds of vendors nationwide](#) including:

- **Verizon:** Members receive a 22% discount on their practice's corporate lines. Practice employees are also eligible for a 22% discount on their personal lines once they sign up and enroll in paperless billing.
- **BioD:** Save up to 40% on amniotic membrane tissue
- **Office Depot:** Save up to 65% on office products, plus annual rebates.
- **Pitney Bowes:** Receive a purchase discount up to 15% and an equipment lease discount of 25%

AOAExcel has partnered with Intalere, one of healthcare's largest group purchasing organizations, who aggregates purchase volume and uses the spending to negotiate discounts with vendors and suppliers ranging from medical supplies and office furniture to cleaning supplies and car rentals.

There is no cost for to join the program, and there isn't any spending threshold.

Please visit <https://www.aoa.org/aoaexcel/> for more information about this new AZOA member benefit and to enroll your practice today.

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AZOA Members: Does Your Malpractice Policy Have These Common Exclusions?

It's important to make sure the coverage by your professional liability insurance policy matches the treatment you provide. Your policy may not cover every procedure you perform, even if you are legally allowed to do so under Arizona's scope of practice.

Malpractice insurance policies may contain exclusions that can be left open to interpretation, and policies that bundle business and liability insurance might contain a surgical exclusion. AOAExcel's endorsed partner, Lockton Affinity, offers a [complimentary policy review](#) for AZOA members to help identify this type of coverage exclusion.

Procedures associated with the following ICD-10 codes may fall within a surgical exclusion:

- 65205 – Removal of a foreign body, Conjunctiva
- 65222 – Removal of corneal foreign body, Cornea
- 65435 – Adjust tissue, Corneal debridement
- 66984 – Ophthalmology co-management
- 68761 – Punctal plugs, Closure of puncta

AOAExcel's endorsed business partner, Lockton Affinity, offers professional liability insurance with guaranteed full scope of practice coverage and no surgical exclusions. Discounts are available to ODs in their first and second year of practice, and group practices with 2 ODs or more. Receive an [instant quote](#), or call Lockton's dedicated customer service line for AOA members at **1 (888) 343-1998**. This line is staffed by a team of live representatives from the moment your call is answered, Monday thru Friday from 6am to 5pm MST.

To learn more about the coverage available through Lockton Affinity and AOAExcel, visit [ExcelOD.com/business-liability](https://www.ExcelOD.com/business-liability). If you're locked into your current policy, [schedule a reminder](#) about Lockton's professional liability insurance closer to your current policy's expiration date.

AZOA TPC UPDATE: DRS. GRIEGO & PAROT

AZOA 3rd Party Committee: Drs. Caroline Griego and Chris Parot

The following information was addressed at the AOA meeting in Washington DC last month. The changes to Medicare are here and anyone who bills less than 90k can take an exemption for reporting MIPS. I have asked multiple doctors and most are either not seeing Medicare patients or not participating in reporting MIPS data. If you are reporting and collecting data for CMS that is great. You can report the data through your EHR directly or by using a registry. An account with EIDM and QPP needs to be set up first. If you are not participating you should at least keep up on how the process is performed because all insurers might be requiring this in the future. The AOA website has all this information.

At the Capital Hill meeting the discussion on the proposed changes to the Contact Lens rule were identified. These changes were sent out earlier in the year, and the proposed changes can effect every practice that fits contact lenses. The agency over seeing the changes to the Contact Lens Fairness is hearing complaints about contact lens selling problems ,but these complaints are not being formally documented. The websites listed below are the places where you can go and let your words be heard.

aoa.org/stopillegalcls this site can show you how to report adverse events and violations to the AOA.

Reporting to FTC: Go to FTC's Complaint Assist Portal: FtcComplaintAssistant.gov Instruction on how to use the Portal can be found on AOA's webpage: aoa.org/stopillegalcls

Report adverse events to FDA's MedWatch , Report illegal online sales to FDA's Unlawful Sales of

Medical Products on the Internet portal. Instructions on how report to the FDA can be found on the AOA's webpage:

Reporting to the AOA aoa.org/stopillegalcls helps build evidence for AOA's advocacy efforts and these complaint numbers are being registered and heard. Also register your contact lens complaints to the AZOA so this data can help local legislative actions.

These are the requirements that a doctor is supposed to follow.

Prescriber requirements in Providing Rx:

- 1) You must give the patient a copy of their contact lens prescription upon the completion of the fitting of the contact lenses
- 2) You must do so automatically , even if the patient does not make such a request
- 3) You may not require the patient to make such a request
- 4) You can require the patient to pay for an examination and fitting before releasing their prescription
- 5) You can only require payment for the current examination and fitting fees, not from other past due balances owed
- 6) You must require that all your patients pay you up front - even those who do not need any ophthalmic goods

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7) Proof of insurance is sufficient to constitute a payment

Prescriber Requirements in Verifying Rx:

1) Failure to verify the request of an Rx will permit the seller to sell the lenses after 8 business hours have elapsed

Retailer requirements for Rx Verification must contain:

- 1) Patient's full name and address
- 2) CL power, manufacturer, BC, Diameter
- 3) Quantity of lenses ordered
- 4) Expiration date - one year unless state law requires longer. Can be shorten by documented medical interest.
- 5) May not alter the prescription
- 6) Date of the patient request
- 7) Date and time of the verification request
- 8) Name of the contact person at the seller's company, including facsimile and telephone numbers
- 9) A clear statement of the prescriber's regular Saturday business hours

Report all contact lens requests that are either incomplete data or incoherent voice messages, one or two from every doctor goes a long way. Keep a copy for your record and patient's file. If you have any questions you can reach out to the AZOA office or contact me directly. Have a great summer.

SAVE THE DATE FOR 2019 BRONSTEIN SEMINAR!

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MEMBER NEWS: AOA ON CAPITOL HILL - DR. WONG

AOA on Capitol Hill, formerly known as the Congressional Advocacy Conference was held April 22-24, 2018. Representing the Arizona Optometric Association were Doctors Stacey Meier, Chad Carlsson, Beth Pyle-Smith, Jon Wold and Gilbert Wong.

The issues discussed were HR 1606, The Dental and Optometric Care Access Act, The Federal Trade Commissions' proposed rule changes to the Fairness to Contact Lens Consumers Act, and Optometry within the Veterans Administration.

HR 1606, The Dental and Optometric Care Access Act was introduced by Representatives Buddy Carter (R-GA) and Dave Loebsack (D-IA). The Act would prohibit health plans from limiting what can be charged for non-covered services, requiring participation in a vision plan in order to be on a medical plan, and dictating which lab must be used to fabricate a patient's glasses. Representatives Paul Gosar D.D.S. and Andy Biggs are cosponsors of the bill. Many states have similar laws on the books, but HR1606 would apply to the exempt from state regulation ERISA plans.

The Federal Trade Commission held hearings on an update to the Fairness to Contact Lens Consumers Act. The hearings are over and the comment period is closed. The proposed rule change would mandate that contact lens prescriptions must be released, and in addition, the patient would have to sign and acknowledge receiving the prescription, and the Doctor would have to keep it on file. We urged our Congressional delegation to write a letter to the Federal Trade Commission stating that the proposed rules are misguided, unnecessary and place an undue financial burden on our practices.

The Veterans Administration is in a state of flux. Dr. David Shulkin is no longer Secretary of Veterans Affairs but stated in the past that since there are so many Optometrists practicing outside of the Veterans Administration, why does the Veterans Administration have Optometrists? Dr. Ronny Jackson, President Trumps' personal physician withdrew his nomination. Peter O'Rourke is the acting secretary and Robert Wilkie is the current nominee. We really won't know which direction the VA is heading until we know who the Secretary of the Veterans Administration will be.

There has been talk about privatizing the Veterans Administration or eliminating Optometric Services. The Veterans Administration began a pilot program in Atlanta, The Technology-based Eye Services utilizing technicians and unproven screening devices to perform so called eye exams on our Veterans. If successful, Optometrists would be replaced by technicians and screening devices. This is not an eye exam and our veterans deserve better.

Optometrists provide a vital role within the Veterans Administration and the Veterans Administration provides crucial residencies for our newly minted doctors. In 2017 the Optometry Service provided primary eye care services to the tune of 1,800,000 veteran visits.

On Wednesday, June 06, 2018 President Trump signed the VA Mission Act into law. The new Secretary of the VA when confirmed will need to promulgate the law and enact the rules. The act replaces the Veterans Choice Program and will expand health care choices for our veterans in the private sector.

Sincerely,
Dr. Gilbert Wong

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