

Better Access to Quality Eye Care

Nebraska's Doctors of Optometry

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 16, 2014

Media Contact:

Alissa Johnson

(402) 474-7716

noa@assocoffice.net

What Parents Should Know About The Pediatric Optometric Care Benefit

Affordable Care Act Includes Eye Exams for 19 and Under

Lincoln, NE – According to the Nebraska Optometric Association, children in Nebraska and across the country will benefit from better eye care as a result of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) that took effect January 1. Optometric eye health and vision care for children has been deemed essential and will be included in new health insurance coverage.

Dr. Darren Wright, President, Nebraska Optometric Association, said the new requirement recognizes that regular comprehensive eye exams during childhood are critical to ensuring visual health and readiness for school.

“Early and annual comprehensive eye examinations contribute to healthy development and a child’s success in school and later in life. For the first time, the federal government is recognizing eye health care from birth through age 18 as essential and is linking both medical eye care and vision care together under the same plan,” Wright said.

Unlike limited stand-alone plans that can be offered as add-ons to coverage but are not required, the new pediatric eye care essential health benefit will be included as a core benefit and embedded within the overall health plan.

“The limited screenings, which many children receive at school or pediatricians’ office, check only for far vision difficulties and are not a substitute for a comprehensive eye examination performed by your local Doctor of Optometry,” Wright said.

“Although it is important that children see the whiteboard, it is equally important that their eyes are healthy and that their vision is clear. And, maintaining focus and eye alignment is critical to reading comprehension. A comprehensive eye examination can

help prevent school and social achievement problems by detecting near eye focusing and alignment difficulties, eye diseases, life-threatening conditions, and developmental delays with the highest level of accuracy.”

Additional Resources

To find a Doctor of Optometry in your area, please visit:

www.BetterEyeCareNebraska.com.

For more information about this topic: <http://www.aoa.org/news/health-care-reform/4-things-to-know-about-the-pediatric-optometric-care-benefit>.

Fact sheet: <http://www.visionandhealth.org/documents/Childrens-Eye-Vision-Care-Fact-sheet.pdf>.

To learn more about children’s vision: www.nechildrensvision.org,

About the Nebraska Optometric Association (NOA):

The NOA represents over 240 doctors of optometry serving in more than 80 communities throughout the state. Doctors of Optometry (ODs) are the independent primary health care professionals for the eye. Optometrists examine, diagnose, treat, and manage disease, injuries, and disorders of the visual system, the eye, and associated structures as well as identify related systemic conditions affecting the eyes. Association members in Nebraska are also leading providers of pediatric vision care and offer two statewide public service programs to serve children. Learn more about both programs and other valuable eye care information on the Nebraska Optometric Association website at www.BetterEyecareNebraska.com