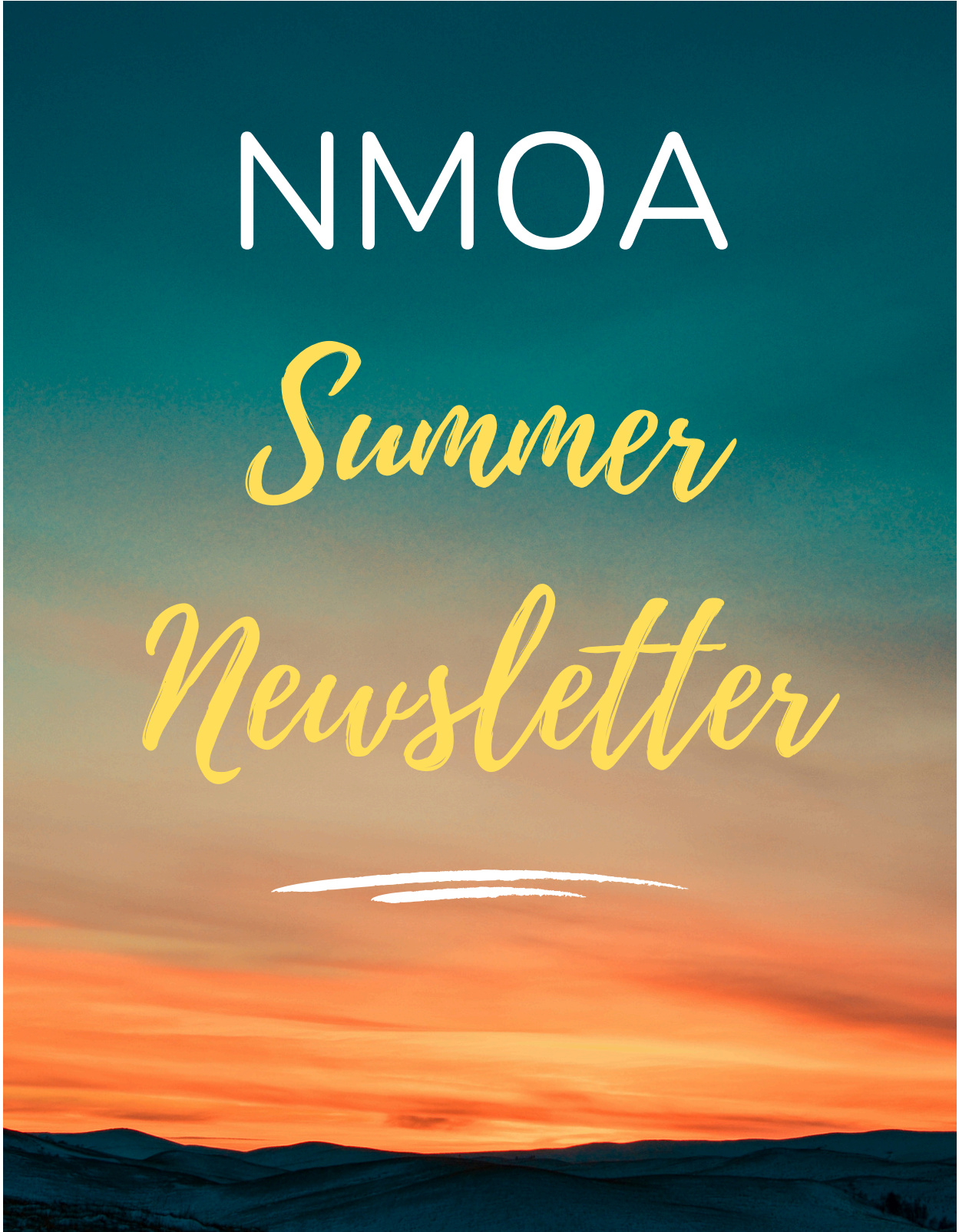


NMOA

NMOA

*Summer
Newsletter*



President's Message: Building on Our Progress Toward 2027

By Spencer Franz, OD

Over the past two years, the New Mexico Optometric Association has made significant progress toward modernizing our profession and expanding access to care. We have introduced legislation, built relationships with legislators, educated policymakers, mobilized our members, and demonstrated that there is strong legislative support for allowing appropriately trained optometrists to perform certain in-office laser procedures.

While we did not get the outcome we wanted in either 2025 or 2026, it is important to recognize how far we have come.

The question now is not whether we will continue the effort. The question is how prepared we will be when the next opportunity arrives.

2027 Starts Now

The months between legislative sessions are some of the most important months in the advocacy process.

We have an opportunity to continue educating legislators, strengthen our relationships, identify new legislative champions, address concerns, and make sure policymakers understand why this legislation matters to their constituents.

And we need you to be involved.

If your legislator supported our legislation, thank them. If you have not yet met with your legislators, now is the time to introduce yourself. If you have a patient who has experienced a significant delay in receiving a laser procedure, remember that story. Those real-world experiences help legislators understand that this is not simply about expanding the scope of our profession—it is about improving access to care for New Mexicans. If you need help connecting with your legislator or if you want to find out if your legislator is supportive of our efforts, please contact Rich Montoya at newmexicooptometry@gmail.com

Our message remains straightforward:

New Mexico patients should have access to optometrists who are educated, trained, and credentialed to provide in-office laser procedures.

We should not lose sight of the progress we have made simply because we have not yet crossed the finish line.

President's Message continued

What You Can Do Now

There are several simple things every member can do between now and the next legislative session:

1. Build relationships.

Invite your legislators to visit your office. Introduce yourself if you have not already. Help them understand what you do and the role optometrists play in their communities.

2. Stay engaged.

When NMOA asks you to contact a legislator, make the call, send the email, or respond to the request. A handful of constituent voices can make a meaningful impression.

3. Share patient access stories.

Let us know about patients who have faced significant delays or difficulty accessing appropriate eye care. These stories help us demonstrate why modernizing our scope matters.

4. Show up.

When our legislation comes before a committee, your presence matters. Legislators notice when New Mexico optometrists take the time to travel to Santa Fe and participate in the process.

We Are Not Starting Over

Perhaps the most important message I can leave you with is this:

We are not starting over in 2027.

We are building on years of work.

We have legislation that has received strong support. We have legislators who understand the issue. We have members who have become more engaged in the legislative process. We have developed relationships that did not exist before this effort began. And we have demonstrated that NMOA is willing to do the hard work necessary to modernize our profession.

Now we need to keep building.

The next chapter of this effort will not be written during the few weeks of the legislative session. It will be written in our offices, in conversations with legislators, at NMOA events, through our PAC, and in the relationships we build over the coming months.

Persistence got us here. Preparation will move us forward.

Thank you to every doctor who has made a phone call, sent an email, attended a hearing, met with a legislator, shared a patient story, contributed to the PAC, or simply asked, "What can I do to help?"

There will be another opportunity. And when that opportunity comes, I know the NMOA will be ready.

NMOA Sponsors

Our 2026-2027 NMOA Sponsors are committed to the NMOA and Optometry.

Our Diamond Level Sponsors are:

**Eye Associates of New Mexico
Pacific Cataract & Laser Institute**

Our Gold Level Sponsors are:

**Engstrom Cataract and Laser Center
EssilorLuxottica Eye Care
Juliette Eye Institute
Walman Optical**

Our Silver Level Sponsors are:

**Coleman Vision
LENZ Therapeutics
Versant Health
VSP Vision**

Our Bronze Level Sponsors are:

**Carl Zeiss Vision
EssilorLuxottica**

Our Turquoise Level Sponsors are:

**House of Modo
Topcon Healthcare**



Eye Associates
FOR NEW MEXICO

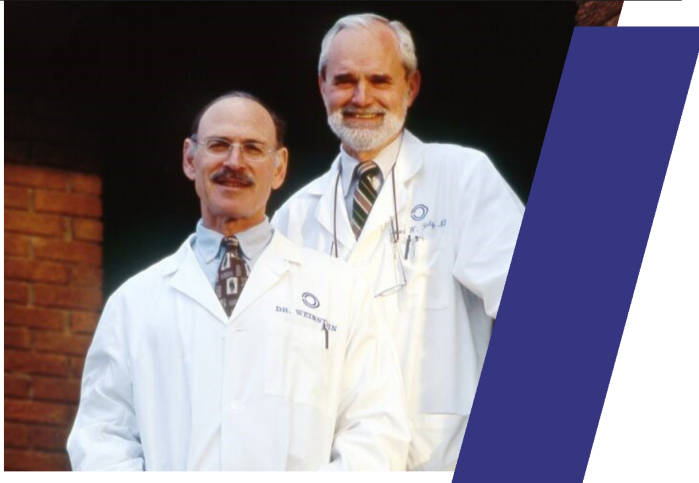
**DON'T
COMPROMISE
YOUR EYES.**



Call Doctor2Doctor
for more info



505.345.4433 - ABQ
877.345.4433 - NM



**THE
ORIGINAL**
Est. | 1976

Eye Associates for New Mexico is celebrating 50 years of serving communities around the state.

We appreciate the trust you place in Eye Associates for New Mexico each time you refer a patient to us.

OUR SPECIALTIES



CATARACT



REFRACTIVE



RETINAL DISEASE



CORNEAL DISEASE



GLAUCOMA



OCULOPLASTICS



NEURO-OPHTHALMOLOGY

PCLI

PACIFIC CATARACT + LASER INSTITUTE

A photograph of a middle-aged man with a wide smile, wearing a blue shirt and a brown vest, holding a young child. The child is also smiling and wearing a white shirt and brown overalls. In the background, another man is visible but out of focus. The overall tone is warm and family-oriented.

COMMITTED TO SERVING OPTOMETRY

ALASKA | IDAHO | MONTANA | NEW MEXICO | OREGON | WASHINGTON

New study adds to growing body of evidence supporting contemporized optometric scope

Patient interviews reinforce what decades of research and practice continue to show: expanding optometric scope improves access to timely, patient-centered eye health and vision care. AOA+ is an immersive track at Optometry's Meeting and beyond, specifically for optometry students, new grads and faculty, focused on career growth, leadership development and building a powerful professional network. Will you be looking to hire an optometrist for your practice or are you looking for an optometrist to purchase your practice?

Key Takeaways

- Unlike previous studies that focused primarily on clinical outcomes and access, this research examined the patient perspective.
- Patients consistently valued timely access to care, trusted relationships with their doctor of optometry and the convenience of receiving primary medical eye care close to home.
- The findings complement years of research demonstrating that modernizing optometric scope improves patient access without compromising quality of care.
- The findings arrive as momentum for scope advancement continues nationwide. Seventeen states now authorize qualified doctors of optometry to perform laser procedures.

Another peer-reviewed study is adding to the growing body of evidence supporting the modernization of optometric scope of practice, reinforcing that when doctors of optometry are authorized to provide in-office procedures they are trained to deliver, patients benefit through greater access, convenience and continuity of care.

Published in [*Clinical and Experimental Optometry*](#), the qualitative study, *Patient experiences of laser and surgical lid procedures performed by optometrists*, examined the experiences of patients who underwent laser and minor surgical procedures performed by doctors of optometry at Northeastern State University Oklahoma College of Optometry.

Unlike previous studies that focused primarily on clinical outcomes and access, this research examined the patient perspective. Through interviews with 30 patients following selective laser trabeculoplasty (SLT), YAG laser capsulotomy, laser vitreolysis and minor surgical lid procedures, researchers found patients consistently valued timely access to care, trusted relationships with their doctor of optometry and the convenience of receiving primary medical eye care close to home.

"This study reinforces a simple truth: patients care most about receiving safe, timely, high-quality care from the doctor they trust," says AOA President Teri K. Geist, O.D. "Across the country, a growing body of research continues to demonstrate that when states modernize optometric scope of practice to reflect today's education and clinical training, patients experience greater access, continuity of care and convenience."

Adding another piece to a growing body of evidence

The findings complement years of research demonstrating that modernizing optometric scope improves patient access without compromising quality of care.

New Study (*continued*)

The findings complement years of research demonstrating that modernizing optometric scope improves patient access without compromising quality of care.

Previous studies have shown that states authorizing doctors of optometry to perform laser procedures have expanded access to essential eye care, particularly for Medicare beneficiaries and patients in rural and underserved communities. Other research has demonstrated increased availability of procedures such as YAG laser capsulotomy while helping address longstanding shortages of ophthalmic care in many regions.

This latest study adds an important dimension by showing how patients experience that care firsthand.

Many participants cited shorter travel distances, faster access to treatment and the ability to receive care from a provider they already knew and trusted as key reasons for choosing an optometrist.

In Oklahoma, where doctors of optometry outnumber ophthalmologists by approximately three to one, particularly in rural communities, that access can make the difference between receiving timely treatment and delaying care.

For one patient who underwent a YAG laser capsulotomy, the improvement was immediate.

"I do a lot of sewing, and... Before that, I was having a terrible time threading the needle."

Strengthening the case for contemporary legislation

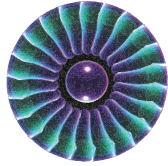
John Whitlow, O.D., chair of the AOA State Government Relations Committee (SGRC), says studies like this continue to strengthen the evidence supporting scope modernization efforts underway across the country.

"This gives us more depth when we're questioned about our education and training," he says. "We should be in the position to serve our patients. We're safe in doing these procedures and should be doing them."

While the study includes a relatively small number of participants, Dr. Whitlow says it should be viewed alongside the expanding body of evidence documenting the clinical, economic and access benefits of modernized optometric scope.

The findings arrive as momentum for scope advancement continues nationwide. Seventeen states now authorize qualified doctors of optometry to perform laser procedures following major legislative victories in [Kansas](#), [Tennessee](#) and [Vermont](#) in 2026. Together, those efforts reflect growing recognition that allowing doctors of optometry to practice to the full extent of their education and training improves access to essential eye health care while helping meet increasing patient demand.

As additional states modernize their laws and more data become available, Dr. Whitlow expects the evidence supporting expanded patient access through optometry will continue to grow. "We just continue to beat the drum of where we're capable," he says, "and we want to be able to treat our patients in a timely manner."



ENGSTROM CATARACT AND
LASER CENTER

G. Sally Mellgren, M.D.
Paul F. Engstrom, M.D.



THE 1ST PROVIDER IN NEW MEXICO
WITH SMILE TECHNOLOGY

Offering ICL's, Cataract Surgery, and Pediatric Ophthalmology
575.625.0123 • www.engstromeyecenter.com

EssilorLuxottica | Eye Care



ROBERT MELENDEZ, MD
CEO/FOUNDER



LASIK & BEYOND

**CREATING AN EXPERIENCE CENTERED
AROUND EXCEPTIONAL PATIENT CARE.**

LASIK

SMILE PRO

PRK

EVO ICL

RLE

**PREMIUM
CATARACT**

GOLD SPONSOR OF NMOA 2026

505.355.2020

JULIETTEEYE.COM

PEAK
LOYALTY PROGRAM

More than a loyalty program
A smarter way to grow.



Lab



Contacts



Frames



Marketing



ENROLL TODAY!

www.walmanoptical.com/peak



WALMAN
OPTICAL

Focused on your success.



COLEMAN
VISION

LASIK



LENZ
THERAPEUTICS



VersantHealth[®]

vsp **VISION[™]**

New Member Resource: A Better Way to Access Coding & Reimbursement Support

The **AOA Billing & Coding Help Desk™** is an exclusive benefit of the NMOA/AOA membership designed to help doctors of optometry build stronger, more successful practices by making trusted coding expertise, reimbursement support and practical resources easier to access than ever before. Whether you're looking for coding references, real-time code lookup, continuing education or personalized guidance from AOA experts, the Help Desk brings these trusted resources together into one streamlined experience—helping you save time, support accurate reimbursement and focus more on patient care.

About the AOA Billing & Coding Help Desk™

Whether you're looking for a quick coding reference or personalized guidance, the Help Desk connects you to the right resource based on what you're trying to accomplish.

Included with your membership:

- **Ask the Coding Experts** – Get personalized answers to coding and reimbursement questions from AOA experts.
- **AOA Coding Today** – Search CPT, ICD-10 and HCPCS codes with optometry-specific guidance.
- **Optometry Guide Coding Library** – Download quick-reference coding resources.
- **Coding Education** – Build confidence with coding-focused CE through AOA EyeLearn.
- **Denials & Reimbursement Support** – Report reimbursement and payer concerns while accessing practical guidance.

Why Doctors Use It

Every day, doctors make coding decisions that impact reimbursement, compliance and practice efficiency. The Billing & Coding Help Desk helps members save time finding trusted answers, support accurate coding and reimbursement, build confidence in coding decisions and access expert guidance specifically designed for doctors of optometry, allowing them to spend more time focusing on patient care.

Check out the Help Desk today and discover how NMOA/AOA membership supports you throughout every stage of practice.

[Explore the Billing & Coding Help Desk](#)

Expert Answers. Real-Time Guidance. Confidence in Every Claim.





**BILLING & CODING
HELP DESK™**

As the efforts continue, we need your support!

By Lynn Davis OD, PAC Chair

Although our efforts to modernize our scope of practice to include the use of lasers fell short this session, it does not change the fact that our profession is well-educated, highly trained, and fully capable of providing these procedures. More importantly, patients across all corners of our state would benefit from improved access to this level of care.

It is critical that we remain strong and engaged politically—not only to complete the work we have started, but also to defend against any challenges to our scope of practice. With 2026 being an election year, New Mexico will elect a new governor, and every seat in the House of Representatives will be on the ballot. These elections will play a key role in shaping the future of our profession.

Your support is essential. Contributions to the NMO PAC ensure that we maintain a seat at the table and continue educating policymakers about the importance of expanding access to optometric care.

Thank you to everyone who has already contributed—your support truly makes a difference and has not gone unnoticed,

We encourage you to stop by the PAC booth to learn more about our efforts and consider making a contribution to support the future of your profession.



AI and the Future of Healthcare: What Doctors Should Know



Artificial intelligence continues to make its way into healthcare, raising important questions about patient safety, physician oversight, and the future role of healthcare professionals.

A recent article by Cory J. Lappin, OD, MS, FAAO, examines **Doctronic**, an AI platform being piloted in Utah with the goal of eventually providing prescription medications without direct physician oversight. The program could include medication renewals for chronic conditions such as diabetes, hypertension, and glaucoma.

The author raises concerns about the regulatory framework surrounding the program, including questions about appropriate oversight, FDA involvement, medical-board authority, and—perhaps most importantly—**who is responsible when an AI system makes a mistake that harms a patient.**

While Doctronic maintains that its goal is to improve access to care rather than replace physicians, the company's use of the term “AI Doctor” and plans to expand beyond underserved areas raise questions about where this technology could ultimately lead.

For optometrists, the issue is particularly relevant. As AI becomes increasingly involved in patient care, it will be important to ensure that technology is held to appropriate standards for **training, clinical oversight, patient safety, and accountability**. Innovation should complement the expertise of licensed healthcare professionals—not create a system in which AI operates under a lower standard of responsibility.

The article serves as an important reminder that doctors should remain engaged in the conversation as policymakers determine how AI will be regulated and incorporated into healthcare. AI may offer significant opportunities to improve access and efficiency, but patient safety and professional accountability must remain at the center of that discussion.

Read Dr. Cory J. Lappin's “Off the Cuff” articles in the [Review of Optometry's June 15th Optometric Physician E-Journal](#) and [Review of Optometry's June 22 Optometric Physician E-Journal](#) for a more in depth look at this issue.



News from members

Congratulations to Vision Source Rio as they were presented with a 30 Year Anniversary Recognition from the Rio Rancho Regional Chamber



Dr. Philip Treu submitted the following articles:

Vitamin B3 supplementation linked to 66% lower glaucoma risk

https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/vitamin-b3-supplementation-linked-to-66-lower-glaucoma-risk?utm_source=flipboard&utm_content=MedNewsToday/magazine/Medical+News+Today

GLP-1 Drugs May Have a Hidden Effect on Your Eyes, Study Finds

https://www.sciencealert.com/glp-1-drugs-may-have-a-hidden-effect-on-your-eyes-study-finds?utm_source=flipboard&utm_content=user/ScienceAlert

News from members

Below is an update on the NMSU Dr. Terry Marquardt NMSU Alamogordo Health Sciences Center dedication

NMSU-A dedicates Health Sciences Center to Marquardt



WILL OCHOA | ALAMOGORDO NEWS
At the dedication for the New Mexico State University-Alamogordo Health Sciences Center, Dr. Terry Marquardt visits with NMSU president Valerio Ferme.

Richard Coltharp
For the Alamogordo News

New Mexico State University-Alamogordo's Health Sciences Center is now called the Dr. Terry Marquardt Health Sciences Center.

The building's namesake — and lots of family, friends and other guests — was on hand Monday, April 20, for a ceremony on campus celebrating the naming.

"Because of your support," Marquardt told the audience, "this health sciences center exists."

Of course, Marquardt played an important role in the center's existence; you don't get buildings named in your honor by accident.

Among those commending Marquardt Monday were NMSU-A chief executive and academic officer Mark Cal, chancellor of NMSU system community colleges Monica Torres, and NMSU president Valerio Ferme. Marquardt was an optometrist

in Alamogordo for nearly 40 years, so he was always in tune with healthcare. But his dozen years in the New Mexico legislature put him in position to do something about it.

First elected to the New Mexico House of Representatives in 1995, Marquardt continued through 2007. During that time, he served as Minority Whip and Minority Caucus Chair.

While representing District 53, Marquardt was involved in more than 150 bills and helped get multiple Otero County projects funded. Those projects include widening U.S. Hwy. 54 from two lanes to four from Alamogordo to El Paso, construction of the Charlie T. Lee Memorial Relief Route and expanding the Oregon Street tennis courts.

NMSU,
Continued on A2



INDEX WEATHER A6 SPORTS B1 COMICS B4 CROSSWORD B5 CLASSIFIEDS B6

Office: 575-437-7120 Circulation: 575-437-7120 | PO Box 754, Alamogordo, NM 88311

Copyright 2026, Alamogordo News

A2 | SATURDAY, APRIL 25, 2026 | ALAMOGORDO DAILY NEWS

NMSU,
Continued from A1

Another project was this campus building.

"The Health Sciences Center project was a promise," said Theresa Ross, NMSU-A director of nursing. "Especially for people in rural areas, this building creates a pathway to a medical career. Students not only gain skills ... but a sense of purpose."

The center's building is not new; it's been on campus for a number of years, but it came into being out of Marquardt's work in Santa Fe, going back to the 1990s.

"At that time, the college had a small med-tech program, providing technologists for hospitals," Marquardt said. "The program was small, had no classroom space, sharing rooms with other disciplines. They just had to get by."

"About that same time, the college was trying to get a nursing

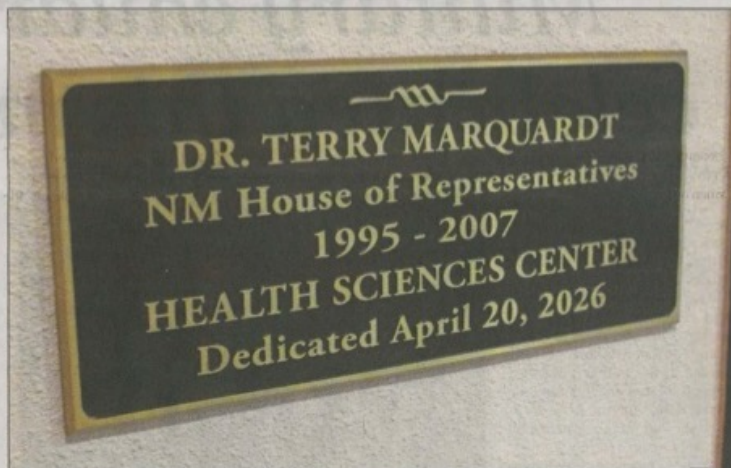
program started at the branch. When they said they needed more classroom space, I thought, if we could combine those two programs, (med-tech and nursing) we could have medical equipment and highly technical equipment, as well as overlap in class content and teachers. So, it made sense to have a joint science and health building for those two neophyte programs."

Now that the programs are no longer neophyte, hundreds of people have made the most of them.

Former Las Cruces mayor and state senator Ron Griggs addressed the crowd Monday and praised Marquardt's work.

"You stood up at a time Alamogordo really needed you," Griggs said.

Cal reminded the crowd not only of Marquardt's work on the health sciences center, but his long support of the college's Adult Basic Education program.



WILL OCHOA | ALAMOGORDO NEWS
A plaque inside the New Mexico State University-Alamogordo Health Sciences Center recognizes the building's namesake, Dr. Terry Marquardt.

Dr.

NM Optometrist selected Alumnus of the Year from UC Berkeley School of Optometry

Dr. Sui Wong was selected as the Herbert Wertheim School of Optometry and Vision Science 2026 Alumnus of the Year. Congratulations Dr. Wong!



Sharon A. Bentley, OD, PhD, MPH, FAAO, Dipl AAO
Dean and Professor



May 26, 2026

Dr. Siu Wong
1828 Conestoga Dr SE
Albuquerque, New Mexico 97123

Dear Dr. Siu,

It is my distinct honor to inform you that you have been selected as the Herbert Wertheim School of Optometry and Vision Science 2026 Alumnus of the Year.

This award, our school's highest alumni honor, recognizes graduates who have demonstrated distinguished service to the profession and the public. The nomination committee, comprised of past award winners, unanimously chose you as deserving of this honor. Your career as a trailblazer within the U.S. Public Health Service—serving as the first woman Chief Optometric Consultant to the IHS—embodies, through your induction into the National Optometry Hall of Fame, you embody the very best of our mission.

Beyond your professional milestones, your decision to establish a bequest for the school ensures that your legacy will support future generations of Berkeley Optometrists. We are deeply grateful for your lifelong dedication to our community.

We look forward to celebrating this achievement with you during our Reunion Weekend. We will formally announce the award on Saturday, September 19, and are planning a special gathering on Sunday, September 20. Taylor Reifert in Development & Alumni Relations will follow up with you directly. I personally hope you will join us for the 2026 Berkeley Optometry celebrations as your schedule permits.

On behalf of the faculty, students, and the selection committee, please accept my warmest congratulations on this prestigious honor.

Warm regards,

Sharon A. Bentley, OD, PhD, MPH, FAAO, Dipl AAO
Dean and Professor

AOA members gain access to industry experts through AOAExcel



Your member benefits

AOAExcel provides personal and professional resources that allow doctors of optometry to practice and flourish with confidence. Take full advantage of products and services from AOAExcel's endorsed business partners, who have been carefully vetted to meet the unique needs of AOA members nationwide.

These benefits include:

- Malpractice insurance
- Retirement Planning
- Career Resources
- Term Life Insurance
- Long-Term Disability Insurance
- Small Business Credit Card
- In-Office Membership Plans
- EHR & Practice Management Software

Visit AOAExcel to learn more - [AOAExcel](#)

AOAExcel Resource Updates

Gain insight into optometry-related content and resources ranging from topics such as Career Advice, Malpractice Insurance, and Student Loan Refinancing.

Visit the AOAExcel Resource Updates page here - [AOAExcel Resource Updates](#)

Paraoptometric Appreciation Month

September is Paraoptometric Appreciation Month, the only formal observance dedicated to honoring the practice staff that critically support the delivery of optometric patient care.

With Americans' increasing demand for primary eye health and vision care services provided by doctors of optometry, paraoptometric staff play a vital role in the efficient and effective delivery of quality patient care. That's why the AOA is focused on equipping paraoptometric professionals—optometric practice staff ranging from your front desk staff to optical or exam lane technicians—with the education and resources necessary to build skillsets that can help optometrists meet this demand for care.

Who are paraoptometric staff?

All optical staff:

- Optician
- Contact lens technician
- Optometric scribe
- Front office/manager
- and more

Paraoptometric Appreciation Month is an opportunity to recognize these staff contributions by sharing appreciation on social media using **#AOAParaMonth2026**, planning recognition events and giving the gift of AOA associate membership to encourage professional development and staff retention.

PARAOPTOMETRIC STAFF MEMBERSHIP SIGNUP

How do you enroll paraoptometric staff as AOA associate members?

Enrolling staff as AOA associate members is an easy, cost-free way for AOA member-doctors to grant optometric practice staff access to valuable paraoptometric programs and services, plus discounts on educational materials and event registration fees. [**Update your staff roster and enroll new members through MyAOA.**](#)

AOA associate membership gains staff access to:

- ✓ CPC credit and AOA CE Hour approved education, training and certification materials in [**AOA EyeLearn.**](#)
- ✓ Member rates for AOA events, such as Optometry's Meeting.
- ✓ Volunteer and networking opportunities on a national level.
- ✓ All CPC, AOA publications and [**newsletters.**](#)

Have questions about enrolling paraoptometric staff or associate member benefits? Contact Member Services to get started today.

Member Services

Phone: 800.365.2219

SEPTEMBER IS PARAOPTOMETRIC APPRECIATION MONTH



How can you participate in #AOAParaMonth2026?

The AOA offers downloadable resources (at the bottom of this page) for optometric practices to show their support and thanks for the paraoptometric professionals in their offices. Download a branded social media graphic, themed screensaver or 'Thank you' card, or download the printing instructions for easy-to-follow steps on how to print 'We Love Our Paraoptometrics' stickers for your team to wear.

Show your support for **#AOAParaMonth2026** throughout September, including using the hashtag on your social media.

PRINTABLE STICKERS & CARDS

[Sticker](#)
['Thank You' Card](#)
[Printing Instructions](#)

DIGITAL DOWNLOADS

[Social Graphic 1:1](#)
[Social Graphic 9:16](#)
[Screensaver](#)

2026 NMOA Meetings

NMOA Mid-Year Meeting - September 11-12, 2026

NMOA Winter CE - February 1, 2027

NMOA OD Day at the Capitol - February 1, 2027

NMOA Annual Convention - April 2-4, 2027

Pacific Cataract and Laser Institute - 2026-2027 NMOA Diamond Sponsor



Having performed over 900,000 micro eye surgeries, PCLI compliments the expertise of community optometric physicians. Your friendship and spirit of cooperation make it a joy to serve. Although we specialize in LASIK vision correction and cataract surgery, other services provided in our Albuquerque facility include:

- Refractive lens exchange
- Secondary lens implant
- Glaucoma stents
- Selective laser trabeculoplasty
- Laser peripheral iridotomy
- Corneal cross-linking
- Phototherapeutic keratectomy
- Conjunctival resection
- Pinguecullectomy
- Pterygiumectomy
- Lid lesion removal

For more information, visit www.pcli.com

Eye Associates of New Mexico - 2026-2027 NMOA Diamond Sponsor



Eye Associates of New Mexico has been providing premier eye care to the region for nearly 50 years! With a team of 30 Ophthalmologists, 28 Optometrists and 1 PA across 12 locations and 4 surgery centers, Eye Associates delivers specialized medical and surgical services to a vast portion of the state. Our mission includes reaching underserved areas, bringing expert specialty care to communities where it might otherwise be unavailable.

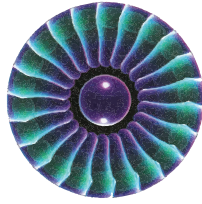
Eye Associates continues to work in close partnership with highly skilled optometrists statewide. Through these collaborations, Phreesia Connect for reliable referral tracking and communication, along with the dedicated staff of our Doctor2Doctor team, we have streamlined referral and co-management services to ensure seamless, high-quality patient outcomes. We remain committed to providing the highest quality care to all New Mexicans for decades to come.

Our Board-Certified physicians and surgeons provide specialized care in the following areas:

- Cataract surgery (**Offer advanced intraocular lens options**)
- Vision correction services (**Lasik, PRK, Evo ICL and RLE**)
- Corneal disease
- Corneal-Cross Linking (**Only practice in the state offering FDA approved**)
- C-TAK (**Only practice offering this in New Mexico**)
- Glaucoma management
- Oculoplastics (**cosmetic and eyelid surgery**)
- [Neuro-Ophthalmology](#)

For more information or to find a provider near you, visit the Eye Associates website: www.eyenm.com.

Engstrom Cataract and Laser Center - 2026-2027 NMOA Gold Sponsor



ENGSTROM CATARACT AND
LASER CENTER

G. Sally Mellgren, M.D.
Paul F. Engstrom, M.D.

Engstrom Cataract and Laser Center has been supporting New Mexico and surrounding optometrists since 2000 our support has included visits to the state legislature to defend the optometric scope of practice. we have also provided surgical care for optometric patients including cataract surgery, eyelid surgery, glaucoma surgery and of course we perform Lasik and Smile procedures. We were the first to introduce Smile technology to the state of New Mexico. We now have six years of experience with this very successful procedure. We plan to continue to co-manage all our different procedures with our optometric friends.

Dr. Paul F. Engstrom and Dr. Sally Mellgren both hold certification with the American Board of Ophthalmology and both have over 35 years of private practice experience. Their number one priority is your complete eye care. For great health care, trust our professional staff to keep you living the best life possible.

For more information visit engstromeyecenter.com or call us at (575) 625-0123

EssilorLuxottica Eye Care - 2026-2027 NMOA Gold Sponsor

EssilorLuxottica | Eye Care

EssilorLuxottica Eye Care, as part of a EssilorLuxottica Branded Practice, you can do well and do good—delivering comprehensive eye care in your community and beyond while you enjoy success in your career and personal life.

For more information visit essilorluxotticaeyecare.com

Juliette Eye Institute - 2026-2027 NMOA Gold Sponsor



At Juliette Eye Institute, we provide compassionate eye care with education to all our patients. Dr. Melendez is proud to offer the latest in advanced technology to his patients so they can achieve the best possible outcomes.

Walman Optical - 2026-2027 NMOA Gold Sponsor



Every day, we are driven by the commitment of enriching lives through better vision. With that comes the pledge to the speed, accuracy and service you need and eye care patients deserve.

In support of the optical industry, we are focused on your success for the betterment of the patientcare. And, when you utilize every Walman division, we are able to better serve you and bring you from “alive” to “thrive” in the competitive market today.

For more information , visit www.walmanoptical.com

Coleman Vision - 2026–2027 NMOA Silver Sponsor



Coleman Vision is dedicated exclusively to laser vision correction and does not fit or sell contact lenses or glasses. Progressive, state-of-the-art technology, an emphasis on learning, and a caring, highly experienced staff combine to provide patients and doctors with consistently excellent results. Dr. Coleman performs individualized wavefront-guided LASIK using the iLASIK laser suite. This platform combines the VISX STAR S4 excimer laser using Iris Recognition and 3-dimensional eye-tracking technology with the 150 kHz iFS femtosecond flap maker. Along with such world-renowned eye institutes as Johns Hopkins, the University of Miami, and Baylor University, Dr. Coleman has been part of an on-going FDA evaluation of wavefront-guided laser profiles since May of 2002. He was instrumental in gaining the initial FDA approval for this technology.

LENZ Therapeutics - 2026-2026 NMOA Silver Sponsor



LENZ Therapeutics is pharmaceutical company focused on the commercialization of VIZZ™ (aceclidine ophthalmologic solution) 1.44%, the first and only FDA-approved aceclidine-based eye drop for the treatment of presbyopia.

LENZ is commercializing VIZZ™ in the United States and continues to establish licensing partnerships internationally to provide access to VIZZ™ globally. LENZ is headquartered in San Diego, California.

For more information , visit lenz-tx.com

VersantHealth - 2026-20267 NMOA Silver Sponsor



Versant Health, Inc., a wholly-owned subsidiary of MetLife, Inc., is one of the nation's leading administrators of managed vision care, serving more than 41 million of our clients' members nationwide. Through our Davis Vision and Superior Vision independent provider networks, we help members access the wonders of sight through healthy eyes and vision. Administering vision and eye health solutions that range from access to routine vision benefits to medical management, Versant Health has unique visibility and scale across the total eye health spectrum. As a result, our clients' members enjoy a seamless experience with access to one of the broadest provider networks in the industry and an exclusive frame collection. Commercial groups, employer plans, and health plans that serve government-sponsored programs such as Medicaid and Medicare are among our valued customers.

For more information , visit <https://versanthealth.com/>

VSP Vision - 2026-2027 NMOA Silver Sponsor



At **VSP Vision™**, our purpose is to empower human potential through sight. Unlike competitors, VSP® is a purpose-driven company guided by a board of directors that includes Doctors of Optometry, not shareholders or investors. For more than **65 years**, VSP has been the leader in health-focused vision care. Every day, the people that power our complementary businesses (VSP® Vision Care, Eyefinity®, VSP Optics, Marchon® Eyewear, VSP Retail, and VSP Ventures) work together to create a world where everyone can bring their best vision to life.

VSP Vision provides affordable access to eye care and eyewear for more than **85 million members** through a network of more than **41,000 doctors**. We encourage VSP members to visit a VSP network doctor, supporting access to millions of annual patient visits each year. Additionally, we provide services and programs designed to help private practices differentiate, compete, and increase profitability.

Learn more about how we're supporting doctors and find valuable resources for your practice at vspproviderhub.com.

EssilorLuxottica - 2026-2027 NMOA Bronze Sponsor



Essilor is the leading manufacturer of optical lenses in the United States and is the market leader in progressive, high-index, photochromic and anti-reflective coated lenses. A pioneer in the development and production of ophthalmic lenses, Essilor employs more than 10,000 people throughout North America. Essilor manufactures optical lenses under the VARILUX®, CRIZAL®, TRANSITIONS®, XPERIO UV™, EYEZEN®, DEFINITY®, THIN & LITE® and other Essilor brand names. Essilor Laboratories of America, Inc. is the largest, and most trusted, optical lab network in the U.S. and offers a wide choice of services and lens brands to eyecare professionals across the nation. Essilor of America, Inc. (Essilor) is a subsidiary of Paris-based EssilorLuxottica, a publicly held company traded on the Euronext Paris stock exchange.

For more information, visit www.essilorpro.com

Carl Zeiss Vision - 2026-2027 NMOA Bronze Sponsor



ZEISS is a global leader in optics, with a history of over 175 years of innovation. ZEISS is committed to partnering with eye care professionals to improve the vision of their patients. ZEISS offers a wide range of products and solutions that are backed by a commitment to quality and are designed to help you provide the best possible care for your patients, while also growing your practice.

For more information, visit www.zeiss.com

The Optometric Oath

With full deliberation, I freely and solemnly pledge that:

I AFFIRM that the health of my patient will be my first consideration.

I WILL practice the art and science of optometry faithfully and conscientiously, and to the fullest scope of my competence.

I WILL uphold and honorably promote by example and action the highest standards, ethics and ideals of my chosen profession and the honor of the degree, Doctor of Optometry, which has been granted me.

I WILL provide professional care for the diverse populations who seek my services, with concern, with compassion and with due regard for their human rights and dignity.

I WILL work to expand access to quality care and improve health equity for all communities.

I WILL place the treatment of those who seek my care above personal gain and strive to see that none shall lack for proper care.

I WILL hold as privileged and inviolable all information entrusted to me in confidence by my patients.

I WILL advise my patients fully and honestly of all which may serve to restore, maintain or enhance their vision and general health.

I WILL strive continuously to broaden my knowledge and skills so that my patients may benefit from all new and efficacious means to enhance the care of human vision.

I WILL share information cordially and unselfishly with my fellow doctors of optometry and other professionals for the benefit of patients and the advancement of human knowledge and welfare.

I WILL do my utmost to serve my community, my country and humankind as a citizen as well as a doctor of optometry.

I HEREBY commit myself to be steadfast in the performance of this my solemn oath and obligation.

Code of Ethics

It shall be the ideal, resolve, and duty of all optometrists:

TO KEEP their patients' eye, vision, and general health paramount at all times;

TO RESPECT the rights and dignity of patients regarding their health care decisions;

TO ADVISE their patients whenever consultation with, or referral to another optometrist or other health professional is appropriate;

TO ENSURE confidentiality and privacy of patients' protected health and other personal information;

TO STRIVE to ensure that all persons have access to eye, vision, and general health care;

TO ADVANCE their professional knowledge and proficiency to maintain and expand competence to benefit their patients;

TO MAINTAIN their practices in accordance with professional health care standards;

TO PROMOTE ethical and cordial relationships with all members of the health care community;

TO RECOGNIZE their obligation to protect the health and welfare of society; and

TO CONDUCT themselves as exemplary citizens and professionals with honesty, integrity, fairness, kindness, and compassion

ALERT: RLD aware of "spoofed" emails impersonating employees

- The message below was sent to all licensees from the NM Regulation & Licensing Department. If you didn't see the message please take note.



Dear Licensee,

We have been made aware that unauthorized individuals are sending fraudulent emails impersonating employees of the New Mexico Regulation and Licensing Department (RLD).

These spoofed messages may appear to come from official email addresses or use official job titles. They may also reference an enforcement matter or code violation.

Please use caution if you receive an unexpected email claiming to be from RLD, especially those sending links or attachments or requesting personal information, payment, or confidential data.

Please remember, the email address of a message sent directly from an RLD employee will always end in "@rld.nm.gov."

If you have any concerns, you may reach out to the RLD employee directly using the email address or phone number listed on our online staff directory. View the staff directory by clicking the following link: <https://www.rld.nm.gov/about-us/staff-directory/>.

Thank you for your time and attention to this matter,

New Mexico Regulation and Licensing Department

Board of Optometry Updates

By Lynn Davis, Chair NM Board of Optometry

The Board Exam was given on July 18th and 19th. We had 20 candidates, with 19 passing. Most of them already had an expedited license, and a few were new graduates. This number continues our upward trend over the last few years.

We continue to clean up various rules, and will be making a few changes. A notice will go out to all interested parties regarding a Rule Hearing. There is no firm timeline for the Rule Hearing at this point. Highlights of proposed changes include:

1. **Increasing the number of allowed online CE credits to 8 per renewal period.** Online credits do not have to be live or synchronous. No testing is required unless required by the CE sponsor.
2. **Moving the renewal date up to June 1st of each year.** This change allows us to implement a "temporary license" status such that if you forget to renew your license by the June 1st deadline, you can still practice optometry without breaking the law. Our statute would not allow an extension beyond July 1st, so this was the only path to allowing a "grace period." Yes, we are all adults and should be able to renew by any deadline, but things happen and we are all human.
3. **There is a clarification indicating that candidates who graduated in 1995 or later** do not need a "Pharmaceutical Certificate" as it is understood that they have the requisite classroom hours of education in pharmaceuticals and their use in the treatment of ocular disease.
4. The other changes are just technical corrections to the names of various approved educational congresses and societies, adding a statement that candidates must graduate from an Optometry School accredited by the Accreditation Council on Optometric Education (ACOE), and RLD rules regarding requirements for complying with complaints.

It will take a while for these changes to be implemented, and for website revisions and updates to take place. Once these new rules are finalized and adopted, a notice will go out to the membership.



The primary purpose and obligation of the board is to protect the health, safety, and welfare of the public by providing laws and regulations to govern the practice of optometry, and to safeguard against any unprofessional, improper, incompetent, and unlawful practice of the profession, the most significant of which could result in blindness or loss of life.

Contact Numbers and Email Address

Phone: [\(505\) 476-4622](tel:5054764622)

Email: Optometry.Bd@rld.nm.gov

Help Desk: rld.opthelpdesk@rld.nm.gov

GWCO 2026

October 15-18, 2026 | Portland Marriott Downtown Waterfront

Find Registration, Hotel & Travel information at [GWCO.ORG](https://www.gwco.org)



The 2026 GWCO Conference will feature more than 30 hours of education, the region's largest ophthalmic exhibit hall, and the opportunity to visit the beautiful Pacific Northwest.

The mission of the Great Western Council of Optometry (GWCO) is to provide a unified voice for optometrists within organized optometry, facilitate communication among affiliated state associations, enhance professional development for members, and offer financial support to strengthen our member associations.

GWCO Congress brings together optometric leaders and professionals from across the western U.S. for high-quality continuing education, collaboration, and connection. Attendees gain cutting-edge clinical insight while strengthening the collective voice and future of optometry.

CHECK OUT THIS YEAR'S PARA EDUCATION TRACK

at GWCO Congress 2026

Presented by Tami Arnette

- Eyes, Eyes, Baby
- Every Doll' Makes Me Holla'
- I have a Thing and I need to See the Doctor NOW – or do you?
- Tools of the Trade
- What Your Insurance Biller Wished you Knew

Tami Arnett, CPOA, ABOC, and office sensei, began working in eye care over 10 years ago with minimal knowledge about eyes or glasses. Starting as both a technician and optician, Tami quickly learned testing, scribing and selling glasses, and became certified as both a CPOA and ABOC in 2015. After serving as the technician team lead, Tami cross trained in the billing department — giving her a full perspective of how each area of the office functions and works together. Her ultimate passion is teaching her young padawans and watching their eyes light up, whether it's under the slit lamp or when learning something new. Affectionately referred to as a “spazzy nerd,” Tami is known for her fun facts, geeky toys, and awesome paintings.



[View the Schedule at a Glance](#)



MAKE YOUR VOICE HEARD ON REGULATORY BURDEN OF CONTACT LENS RULE AND EYEGGLASS RULE

The AOA has been in discussion with the Small Business Administration (SBA) Office of Advocacy regarding the burden of the signed acknowledgment requirements related to the eyeglass rule and contact lens rule. The AOA is asking doctors to weigh in with SBA regarding the burden of these rules.

For more information on the rules please see the information from the FTC here:

[The Contact Lens Rule: A Guide for Prescribers and Sellers](#)

[Complying with the Eyeglass Rule](#)

[Focus on the Eyeglass and Contact Lens Rules: The FTC's message to prescribers](#)

Below are the various options available:

- [Online Reporting Form](#)
- Email: RedTape@sba.gov
- Phone: [800-827-5722](tel:800-827-5722) (leave a message)

When submitting comments, emphasize:

- Specific estimated summary amount of time (total minutes or seconds) you and your staff need to complete the process.
- Total time can include explaining the signature requirement; answering questions or refusals to sign; printing or creating signature pages; scanning and naming signature pages into the patient record; ensuring you have secured the acknowledgment for 3 years; etc.
- Indicate how much time, if any, THE DOCTOR has to spend in the process, whether answer patient questions about the requirement, refusals to sign, etc.

Additional talking points:

- The FTC's existing requirement to provide patients with their prescriptions already protects consumer choice.
- The additional signed acknowledgment requirement simply creates red tape without improving patient outcomes.
- Prescription portability is not the issue—unnecessary paperwork is.



A Friendly Reminder



Doctors, each year we like to take a moment to provide a friendly reminder to make sure you are in compliance with the New Mexico Contact Len Rx Statute

Below are the pertinent contact lens sections of the NM statute with the subsections regarding timing of prescription, length of prescription and prescription release. You may find the entire contact optometry statute and board rules on the NM Optometry Board website: [NM Optometry board](#)

61-2-10.4. Contact lens prescription; required elements; restrictions. (Repealed effective July 1, 2024.)

A. A contact lens prescription shall:

(5) indicate a specific date of expiration, which shall be twenty-four months from the date of the prescription, unless, in the professional opinion of the prescriber, a longer or shorter expiration date is in the best interests of the patient.

61-2-10.5. Replacement contact lens prescriptions. (Repealed effective July 1, 2024.)

E. The replacement contact lens prescription that a licensed optometrist provides a patient:

(2) shall contain, subject to the provisions of Subsection F of this section, an expiration date for the replacement contact lens prescription of not more than twenty-four months from the time the patient was first examined;

F. The licensed optometrist shall enter into the patient's medical record the valid clinical reasons for a shorter expiration date and shall provide the patient with a written and oral explanation of the clinical reasons for a shorter expiration date.

Help the AOA stop abusive contact lens seller practices

- Report a [website illegally selling contact lenses](#).
- Report an [adverse event](#) related to contact lenses.
- Report [problems with decorative contact lenses](#).
- Report [suspected violations to the AOA](#) or direct questions to stopIllegalcls@aoa.org.

**WE WANT
TO HEAR
FROM YOU!**



Send your story to
newmexicoptometry@gmail.com

We would love to hear from you regarding news in your practice, updates, community events you are involved in, or anything you would like to share with the membership. We are also interested in "Case Studies" or "Opto-Geek Trivia" articles!

Please send your submissions for the next newsletter to the NMOA at newmexicoptometry@gmail.com

Save the Dates

2026 NMOA Mid-Year Convention

September 10-11, 2026 Inn of the Mountain Gods

Mescalero, NM

2027 NMOA Winter CE & OD Day at the Capitol

February 1, 2027

Santa Fe Hilton Historic Plaza & NM State Capitol

Santa Fe, NM

2027 NMOA Annual Convention

April 2-4, 2027 Sandia Resort

Albuquerque, NM