



The Prince Edward Island Association of Optometrists Report



Our situation in P.E.I. is unique in that we have only six optometrists to form an association and man the relevant committees. Because of this situation our association normally functions in an informal manner. However, we do meet on a regular basis and make a sincere effort to keep well informed as regards optometric matters, in both the political and educational field.

For the past four years we have been endeavoring to have a new optometric act approved. This act would be more relevant to modern day optometry and would allow the use of diagnostic pharmaceuticals for optometrists qualified in this field. Our new act has been drafted for some time but its enactment has been delayed during the past year by a change in government, and prior to that, by several changes in health ministers. However, our association is hopeful that 1980 will see our act brought before the legislature and approved.

As optometrists, we are not part of the government medicare insurance program. For the most part our members have been less than enthu-

siastic about medicare. We have made approaches on occasion to the government, but have never lobbied with the determination necessary to have the government accept us in their program. If more ophthalmologists were to establish in P.E.I. it would become economically necessary for our members to become part of medicare. At present, we are aware that this is a real possibility and so it seems likely that we will start the eighties with a campaign to become part of medicare.

As our province has no large industrial firms we are seldom engaged in bargaining with third parties. Most of our third party contracts are with government agencies, and generally speaking, they accept our schedule of fees without undue objections.

During the past several years our association administration has become more businesslike, and our meetings although informal are guided by parliamentary procedures. Our dues have been gradually adjusted upward from \$100.00 in 1970 to the present \$275.00. The greater part of this assessment is for-

warded to C.A.O. with the remainder left to take care of administration expenses.

Our association has never entered any promotional schemes, and public relations has been on an individual basis with members accepting speaking engagements and being involved with community work.

In 1970 we had six members, and today our membership remains at six. During the decade we lost three members through death and have had three members join our association. Of these, two were trained in Scotland and one in Ontario. In 1970 all our members did their own dispensing and now just three. Two members are associated in practice and the rest operate solo. During the 'seventies, we have watched retail optician outlets multiply from one or two in 1970 to twelve or more today.

It would appear that P.E.I. will remain essentially a rural community in the foreseeable future. For this reason it is unlikely there will be any major change in the number of optometrists in P.E.I. or their mode of practice.

B.F. Hunter O.D.



The Nova Scotia Optometrial Association



The past decade has seen many changes in all aspects of social behavior and with these have come many alterations to previous patterns usual to the conduct of the professions. Optometry has not been immune to these changes and as a result has assumed the position as the primary profession in vision care. This all began prior to the advent of health care insurance when the Canadian Association of Optometrists organized optometrists across Canada into a political lobby

and succeeded in changing the Medical Insurance Act so that the services provided by optometrists could be covered.

Optometry in Nova Scotia began to respond to the winds of change early when it endeavored to have optometric services covered by Medical Services Insurance. It was a unifying experience and was a successful endeavor when visual analysis by optometrists was insured as of December 1, 1973. The payment amounted to \$11.90 but optometrists

have retained the controversial benefit of balance billing their patients. Unfortunately, visual analysis remains the sole benefit paid and the number of patients on the average has not increased substantially (see appendix). In 1978-79 the cost to Medical Services Insurance for optometric (vision) care was less than \$1,000,000 with 41 optometrists participating (not all active for the year and two with recently opened practices). There are now 44 optometrists registered in this province, the

NOVA SCOTIA HEALTH SERVICES AND INSURANCE COMMISSION OPTOMETRIC SERVICES

Payment and Utilization Summary

	1973-74 ⁽¹⁾	1974-75	1975-76	% Change	1976-77	% Change	1977-78	% Change	1978-79	% Change
Payment Summary										
- Payments to Optometrists in Nova Scotia	\$109,615	\$719,661	\$768,872	6.8%	\$761,029	-1.0%	\$881,343	15.8%	\$962,330	9.2%
- Out-of-Province Services	—	1,701	1,896	11.5%	2,852	50.4%	3,110	9.0%	4,358	40.7%
	\$109,615	\$721,362	\$770,768	6.8%	\$763,881	-0.9%	\$884,453	15.8%	\$966,688	9.3%
Utilization Summary										
- Services Rendered	9211	60,622	64,773	6.8%	64,196	-0.9%	66,343	3.3%	71,802	8.2%
- Persons Insured	793,000	802,000	814,000	1.5%	823,000	1.1%	825,000	0.2%	831,000	0.7%
- Persons Receiving Services (Beneficiaries)	—	59,625	63,500	6.5%	63,300	-0.3%	65,600	3.6%	70,800	7.9%
- Percentage of Persons Insured	—	7.4%	7.8%	—	7.7%	—	8.0%	—	8.5%	—
- Services Per 1,000 Insured	12	76	80	5.3%	78	-2.5%	80	2.6%	86	7.5%
- Expenditure Per 1,000 Insured	\$ 138	\$ 899	\$ 947	5.3%	\$ 928	-2.0%	\$ 1,072	15.5%	\$ 1,163	8.5%
- Services Per 1,000 Beneficiaries	—	1,016	1,020	0.4%	1,014	-0.6%	1,011	-0.3%	1,014	0.3%
- Expenditures per 1,000 Beneficiaries	—	\$ 12,098	\$ 12,138	0.3%	\$ 12,068	-0.6%	\$ 13,483	11.7%	\$ 13,654	1.3%
No. of Optometrists (in-province) Paid	34	37	37		38	2.7%	37	-2.6%	41	10.8%

⁽¹⁾Part year only. Optometric benefit became effective December 1, 1973.

highest number in the decade. The increase in the number of optometrists and the enthusiasm of the younger practitioners has had a stimulating effect on the profession.

The past ten years have seen a gradual increase in association activity whereby the profession has assumed a high public profile. With greater involvement in public related projects, the Nova Scotia association hired an executive director for greater efficiency and to improve internal communication.

The Nova Scotia Optometry Act and by-laws have not been revised since 1961 and much effort has been directed toward rewriting the Act and up-dating the by-laws. Hopefully, with the latest proposed changes Optometry may present the Act to the Legislature at its spring sitting in 1981. Legislation is indeed necessary to achieve the goals set out by the CAO for all Canadian Optometry in 1977, in Toronto.

With a more healthy manpower situation Nova Scotia optometrists are

hopeful of expanding their role in low vision and public screenings. Increased manpower will provide Nova Scotians greater access to optometrists as areas not served in the past will now have practitioners at their disposal. In addition the optometric role can be expanded to more fully meet the goals we have set for ourselves.

Garson Lecker O.D.