

Assessing Low Vision

L'Évaluation de la basse vision

The new CAO Strategic Plan includes a goal to expand Optometry's role in providing low vision services in Canada. To achieve this, CAO formed a new Low Vision Committee and established terms of reference and goals. Dr Allan Jones, our Low Vision Committee Chair, comments further about his views in this issue.

There is no doubt that there is a growing need for low vision services and that Optometry is positioned to play an important role. The reality, however, is that too few of us offer low vision and this area of special interest is often overshadowed by the profession's advancements in diagnostic, therapeutic and clinical treatment services. In a recent CAO survey of provincial associations, Schools of Optometry and the Vision Institute of Canada, we saw regions where few optometrists are utilized for low vision, plus we learned more about gaps in provincial health coverage and other 'system' issues that influence where and how low vision is practiced.

The good news is that there are excellent models for low vision. Some of these are based in institutions including Schools of Optometry, the Vision Institute and in public hospitals. There are also successful models in private practice where local optometrists are the key providers of low vision assessments and therapies.

The Canadian Ophthalmological Society recently dedicated an issue of *Canadian Journal of Ophthalmology* to low vision. It is clear that ophthalmology shares our concern about public need, gaps in low

vision services and government support (see www.pubs.nrc-cnrc.gc.ca/cjo, issue Volume 41, Number 3). One article of interest is titled "*Low Vision Service Models in Alberta: innovation, collaboration, and future opportunities.*" The article's abstract concludes "To prevent a crisis in low vision service provision, we need to build upon, and extend, existing partnerships between the CNIB and ophthalmologists, optometrists, government policy makers, and other service providers."

Clearly, an important challenge for our profession is to nurture these relationships and to be flexible in providing low vision care in a variety of models. We must also be patient advocates for system changes and government support. CAO will do its part, but we will need individual members to respond as well.

Consider your role in achieving these goals for enhancing low vision services in Canada. Our patients deserve comprehensive optometric care.

Le nouveau plan stratégique de l'ACO vise notamment à étendre le rôle de l'optométrie dans la prestation de services de basse vision au Canada. À cette fin, l'ACO a créé un nouveau comité de la basse vision et en a établi le mandat et les objectifs. Le Dr Allan Jones, notre président du Comité de la basse vision, nous présente ses commentaires dans ce numéro de la RCO.

Il ne fait aucun doute que le besoin de services de basse vision s'accroît et que l'optométrie est bien placée pour jouer un



Dorrie Morrow, OD
President / présidente

POUR OBTENIR DES RENSEIGNEMENTS ET SAVOIR QUELLES SONT LES RESSOURCES
DISPONIBLES, VEUILLEZ CONSULTER LE SITE WEB DES MEMBRES À OPTO.CA!