

## **Optometric Prescriptions: Release of Prescriptions**

***Bulletin, Oct 2002***

The Professional Misconduct Regulation [O. Reg. 859/93 Section 1(1) 14] states that a member of the College must make available to a patient who requests one a written, signed and dated prescription for a subnormal vision device, contact lenses or eyeglasses. The *Health Insurance Act* makes the provision of a written refractive prescription one of the non-discretionary components of a periodic oculo-visual assessment. Accordingly, an optometrist in this province cannot deny a patient's request for a prescription.

### **But, it's been 18 months since I examined the patient.**

You will note that the Regulation does not make the length of time from examination a variable in the issuance of a prescription. If it is your professional judgment that the prescription has a low probability of still being valid, you are advised to make this known to the patient at the time of their request. You should record your advice to the patient. However, you cannot make the final decision of whether to have the prescription updated for the patient. If they choose to go against your advice, it is their privilege to do so. Write the prescription and sign it. The date should reflect the day upon which the pertinent examination took place, not the date of release.

### **Can I charge for this service?**

The original prescription is part of the examination fee. Any additional copies can be charged to the patient at a reasonable fee. You should consult the Ontario Association of Optometrists' Suggested Schedule of Professional Fees. If you choose to charge more than the OAO suggested fee, you must inform the patient before the service is performed, of the excess amount that will be charged.

### **Opticians call me all the time asking for a prescription. Can I give it to them without having the patient signing a release form?**

Opticians, like optometrists, are regulated health professionals. Under O. Reg. 119/94 Part IV, Section 11 (5) you may, for the purposes of providing health care, give a health professional any information from your record.

The provision of a prescription is one such transmission of information. You can give the information to the optician over the telephone, by fax or any other medium that is convenient to you and the optician. The patient is not required to sign a release for this sharing of information.