



REFERRAL PROTOCOL FOR SPECIALIZED OPTOMETRIC CARE

You or a member of your family has been referred to a developmental optometrist who is a member of the College of Optometrists in Vision Development (COVD) for a specialized vision evaluation and/or vision therapy. Your primary care eye doctor has taken an important step to assure your specific vision care needs will be met. Working together as a team, your doctors will provide the best care available. Professional ethics are carefully adhered to in these referrals, and this document explains this protocol.

The referral protocol and ethics for the provision of optometric services are much the same as in any specialized area of health care. When a primary care provider identifies a problem or condition that he or she feels requires additional evaluation or does not treat, the patient will be referred to a specialist who can provide additional testing or treatment services for these conditions. In these cases, all other non-specialized care continues to be provided by the primary care provider.

Similarly, the developmental optometrist who is a member of COVD will provide examination and treatment services for your vision development needs, and your primary care eye doctor (an optometrist or ophthalmologist) will remain the principal provider for your routine eye care. The COVD member optometrist is, in fact, ethically bound to return you and your family to the referring doctor for all vision care except the special care for which you were referred.

Any prescription eyewear required during the vision care provided by the developmental optometrist should be obtained through the primary care provider's office, even if the prescription was written by the developmental optometrist. The COVD member optometrist will refer you back to the competent care of your primary care optometrist or ophthalmologist when these special services are no longer necessary.

As a matter of protocol and ethics, you should therefore expect that the developmental optometrist will refrain from offering primary care optometric services to you and your family. Just as the primary care doctor clearly respects the developmental optometrist's expertise, the same level of respect, confidence and high-regard are extended to your regular eye doctor for primary vision care.

This code of ethics will ensure a highly cooperative relationship between the professional eye care doctors working mutually for your benefit.

This informational paper was produced by the College of Optometrists in Vision Development, which board certifies qualified optometric physicians in vision therapy. For further information, see our website, www.covd.org.

WP11 Rev 1/2/08 ©2008