

Everyone knows that in 1984 we won our DPA battle. Eleven years later, in 1995, we secured TPA and twelve years later we passed Orals. BUT...

What have we done for you lately?

IOA Legislation

Licensing Categories and Fees

Licensing renewal fees were reduced from over \$600 to \$400 per two year renewal and ancillary fees from \$120 to \$50. Through the IOA's efforts, the number of licensing categories was reduced to one, and more recently ancillary licenses and fees were eliminated.

Good Samaritan Act

The IOA passed legislation to have optometrists exempted from liability when assisting individuals as a Good Samaritan.

MD/OD Professional Corporations

This law allowed MDs and ODs to organize a joint practice under the Professional Corporations Act. Joint ownership was not previously permitted.

Illinois Controlled Substance Act

The IOA worked to pass an amendment to include ODs as prescribers, allowing for the issuance of federal DEA numbers to Illinois ODs.

Clinical Laboratory and Blood Bank Act

The IOA passed an act that allowed Optometrists to write orders for laboratory and hospital tests.

ODs on Boards and Commissions

ODs were added to certain Health Care Advisory Boards and we eliminated the oversight of Medicaid Optometric issues by a statewide medical advisory committee.

Nursing Orders

The IOA passed a law that allowed nurses to accept orders from ODs to provide patient care.

Public Aid Full OD Utilization

The IOA worked with Public Aid to allow ODs to bill on an equal basis with Ophthalmology for Medical Eye Health Care under Medicaid.

Definition of Surgery

A bill sponsored by the Medical Society would have eliminated the practice of Optometry in Illinois or at best would have eliminated many of the procedures for which Optometry could bill.

1999 Terminated in Committee

2000 Terminated prior to Committee

2001 Terminated prior to Introduction

TPA Certification by 2006

This bill eliminated multiple licensing levels and standardized patient care in Illinois. It made Optometry more saleable for inclusion in managed care and less confusing to patients.

Mail Order Contact Lens Act

This act requires out of state mail order vendors to register with the state and agree to follow Illinois Law in the distribution of contact lenses.

Occupational Therapist Orders

This law allows ODs to write program plans and orders to occupational therapists for the treatment of our patients.

Occupational Therapist Restriction

This law prohibits OTs from performing any diagnosis or treatment that is defined in our act as the practice of optometry i.e. vision therapy.

Nursing Restriction

This law prohibits Nurses from performing any diagnosis or treatment that is defined as the practice of Optometry unless under the direct supervision of an MD or OD.

Low Vision Night Driving

This law allowed our low vision patients to drive at night if they can meet stringent requirements which were developed in conjunction with ICO.

1-800 Contacts Prescription Release

This bill would have allowed patient self-prescription and automatic release without a doctor's approval. The bill was stripped of all content and died after IOA intervention.

Optician Licensing Act

This act would have required all Opticians to be licensed by the state. Would have included all Optometric staff who fit glasses or in any way advised patients and would have driven up the cost of eyecare. The bill was not introduced after a meeting with the legislative sponsor.

Discount Card Programs

A bill the IOA supported requires companies offering discount cards to have a signed contract of agreement with providers including Optometrists. Prohibits advertising or listing a provider without their specific consent.

Scholarships for ICO Students

This IOA-sponsored program utilizes funds from excess licensing fees deposited in the Illinois Optometric Licensing and Disciplinary Fund to fund scholarships. It prevents the build up of excess funds that are a target for diversion into general state funds.

School Vision Screening Amendment

This law provides, in part, that the Dept. of Public Health shall require that individuals conducting vision screening tests give the child's parent/guardian written notification prior to the screening, explaining that the screening is not a substitute for a complete eye/vision examination by an optometrist.

Employed OD Undue Influence

This bill made it a violation of the Optometric Practice act for any entity or person not an OD to take actions or attempt to take actions which would cause an OD to violate any law. This bill applies to those who employ, have contracts with or have supervisory control over an OD except MDs or other ODs.

Managed Care Purchase of Goods Prohibition

This law prohibited a managed care plan from requiring the purchase by an OD of eyewear or services in order to participate in their plan.

Optometric Co-Management Bill

This bill would have severely restricted an ODs ability to co-manage cases with an ophthalmologist and was degrading to all optometrists. Due to IOA efforts, the bill died in committee.

Medicare and Medicaid Reimbursements

While not in legislation or rule, the IOA worked with the Medicare Intermediary and the Illinois Department of Public Aid and obtained payment for ODs for all CPT codes that are within the scope of practice of an Illinois Optometrist. Discrimination that had taken place for years was eliminated. In recent years a 300% increase in fees was implemented as a direct result of IOA's activities.

Orals Pharmaceuticals

This bill allowed optometrists to use and prescribe drugs in oral form.

Mandatory Eye Exams for School Children

This bill requires all children entering school for the first time to have a complete eye exam by an Optometrist or an Ophthalmologist. The impact on the lives of our youngest patients has been tremendous. The association has successfully defended efforts to repeal this bill twice since it was first passed.

Optometric Practice Act Sunset

Every ten years the Optometric Practice Act ceases to exist in law and must be renewed. In 2006, changes to our statute were attempted by the Medical Society, Ophthalmology, the Illinois Retail Merchants Association and the Department of Financial and Professional Regulation. The IOA was successful in working with all of these groups to make the changes positive for the profession of Optometry.

Sale of Ophthalmic Devices with Drugs

Under legislation authored by the IOA Optometrists are permitted to sell devices such as contact lenses that contain drug delivery systems. Previously, such sales and dispensing would have been restricted to pharmacies.

Handicapped ID Cards, Placards, and License Plates

This law permits ODs to certify to the Secretary of State the visual impairment of patients in need of Handicapped IDs or Handicapped Placards/License Plates to aid family members in transporting them.

Fee Splitting

This joint effort with the Illinois State Medical Society clarified our ability to co-manage patients in both acts. It also prohibits all fee splitting except for the payment of rents, staffing, equipment and other shared costs at market value with non MD or ODs.

Elder Abuse

This legislation changed the failure to report Elder Abuse from a Class A Misdemeanor ruled on by a court of law to an offense that is reported to and acted upon by the Illinois Optometric Licensing and Disciplinary Board.

Delegation of Duties

Quick action by the IOA resulted in the revision of a bill that would have allowed MDs and Chiropractors to delegate health care functions including Optometry to unlicensed staff. The amendment limited the MD/DC delegation authority to functions within their scope of training. With Delegation to individuals who have been trained to perform the function and then only under the supervision of a licensed individual who must be on premise when the test or treatment is provided.

Mandatory Dilation of Kindergarten Eye Exams

A bill by an Ophthalmologist that would have required dilation for all eye exams for children starting school was swiftly withdrawn when the IOA expressed opposition and pointed out while laudable, how impractical this would be.

Non-Disciplinary Fines

The IOA worked with the state board and IDFPD to pass legislation allowing the state board to levy a fine for minor offense without putting a permanent mark on an OD's record. This will eliminate the need for an OD to spend a lifetime explaining a minor offense on credentialing applications.

OD on State Board of Health

A bill adding an optometrist to the state board of health gave the profession a voice for the first time in the expanding area of public health policy. An OD joined 19 other health care professionals on directing the states public health efforts.

Optometry Given Drug Autonomy Drug Categories Expanded

An IOA bill added dry eye agents and Latisse type drugs to those that we can Rx on the process establishing a mechanism that allows the optometric licensing and disciplinary board (state board) the authority to approve all future drugs and drug categories without a change in law.

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Sales Tax Exemption

The IOA's negotiations with the Illinois Department of Revenue to interpret the Service Persons Exemption to include Contact Lenses, Frames and Lenses under the lower tax rate were successful. This rule allows ODs to pay taxes based on 1/2 of cost rather than full retail.

Circuit Breaker Medications

While the law adding Glaucoma to the list of medications that the state pays for the elderly could have been classed as a legislative victory, the rules implementing the law proved to be much more important. Without IOA intervention the rules would have passed without permitting our patients to receive coverage. The rules as originally written did not allow payment for Rx's written by ODs. Our quick intervention with the Illinois Department of Revenue changed the rules and included Optometry as a prescriber.

Mobile Locations

This rule clarified the law on practicing in mobile settings and later successfully removed fees for those doing so for charitable reasons.

Boxing and Mixed Martial Arts

The IOA was successful in removing an ophthalmology only provision and adding optometrists to those who can provide eye examinations for licensing purposes under the boxing MMA rules.

OD's Physicians Under Medicaid

By amending the state medicaid plan the IOA was successful in having OD services included as physician services under medicaid. This qualified OD's to receive additional electronic health record incentives which poured millions of dollars into optometric practices.

S.M.A.R.T. Act Reductions Optometry Not Cut

At a time when adult medicaid services for dental, podiatric, chiropractic and numerous other services were cut from the state budget optometric services survived as the IOA lobbied for our profession and our patients.

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Many of legislative victories cited above required the passage of rules for their implementation. The association was successful 100% of the time in passing rules that reflected the intent of the legislation and that were in the best interest of Optometry.

Monitoring

In addition to all of the legislative and administrative activity listed above, the IOA monitored thousands of bills and rules to assess their impact on Optometry and our patients. Each year over 6000 bills are reviewed to protect and serve the ODs of this state.

Alternative Payees - Medicaid

Through the IOA's efforts large practices and corporations were added to alternate payee status allowing medicaid payments to be processed at a single business office instead of being sent to individual OD's.

HIPAA

Following the passage of the federal HIPAA legislation, the IOA created a powerpoint program, explaining how to achieve compliance, it was presented over a dozen times throughout the state within the first year on a members only basis. A HIPAA handbook is available to all members.

Records Ownership Defined

Working with the Department of Financial and Professional Regulation rules were written that clarified the doctor as being the owner of patient records and defined how records are to be handled in various practice modes.

CONTRIBUTE TO OUR CONTINUED EFFORTS THROUGH PAC

WHAT IS PAC?

The PAC (Political Action Committee) is a group organized to promote its members' views on selected issues, usually through raising money that is contributed to the campaign funds of candidates who support the group's position to keep our friends in office.

WHAT IS PLASMA?

The PLASMA fund is a way of giving to PAC on a continuous basis. PLASMA stands for Political, Legislative and Statutory Maintenance Account. It is the "blood" line of the PAC.

Contributions are made in pre-set amounts and are deducted monthly from a member's checking account (preferred) or charged to their credit card. Once authorized this painless and effortless way to contribute to the IOA PAC continues for as long as the member desires. Payments to PLASMA may also be made by check on a one-time, quarterly or annual basis and PLASMA credit is given. These pledges however are not billed by the IOA PAC and rely on the member's memory. Contributions to the Illinois Optometric Association's PLASMA (PAC) fund are not deductible for federal income tax purposes.

WHAT IS THE LEGISLATIVE EQUITY FUND?

The IOA Legislative Equity Fund is used as needed to educate legislators on our issues and to pay for lobbying and other general legislative expenses.

Contributions to IOA Legislative Equity Fund are not deductible as charitable contributions for federal income tax purposes however they may be deductible as ordinary and necessary business expenses subject to restrictions imposed as a result of association lobbying activities. The IOA estimates the non-deductible portion of a gift to the equity fund is 25%.

Contact the IOA Office today to contribute!

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