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GREAT WESTERN COUNCIL OF OPTOMETRY
WWW.GWCO.ORG

COUNCIL news

Spring Newsletter 2015

GWCO Gives Back!

\$1.6 Million Dollars in Non-Dues Revenue to the Optometry Family

The Great Western Council of Optometry (GWCO) is a non-profit association formed in 1991 as a vehicle to provide a common voice for members within organized optometry, facilitate communication, enhance professional development and provide financial support to affiliated state optometric associations.

Today, GWCO is comprised of thirteen member states including; Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Wyoming, and Washington. A Representative from each state makes up the GWCO Board of Directors.

In order to provide financial support to GWCO member states, all after-expense revenue, raised through support of GWCO, is given back to member states each year. Since 1997, that has meant more than \$1.6 million dollars in non-dues revenue to member state optometric associations.

Great Western Council of Optometry PO Box 2 Marylhurst, Oregon 97036		5719
DATE: <u>February 1, 2015</u>		
PAY TO THE ORDER OF:	<u>GWCO Member State Associations</u>	\$ <u>1,631,582.52</u>
<u>One million six hundred thirty one thousand five hundred eighty two dollars and $\frac{52}{100}$ DOLLARS</u> Security Features Detailed on Back.		
MEMO: <u>State Distributions</u>		Great Western Council of Optometry
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HERE'S LOOKING AT YOU... MARK LEE, OD

Mark Lee, OD grew up on a cattle ranch in south eastern Washington.

He received his Doctor of Optometry degree from Pacific University in 2000. He

received hands on clinical training at Golden Vision Center, Nellis Air Force base, and Pacific University extern clinics.

Dr. Lee has practiced in Las Vegas since 2000, and he opened his private practice in 2004. He is a Diplomate of the American Board of Optometry and he is board certified in the treatment and management of ocular diseases.

Dr. Lee is President-Elect of the Great Western Council of Optometry (GWCO) and actively involved in the American Optometric Association (AOA). He is currently chair of the Nevada third party committee and a member of the AOA eye care benefits committee. Dr. Lee was presented with the 2013 Optometrist of the Year Award from the Nevada Optometric Association.

As an avid rock climber, Dr. Lee spends his days off scaling the cliffs of the Red Rocks and Mt. Charleston. He also enjoys his days outside with his wife Sash and their two children.



A Look at...Hydrocodone

As many of you know, effective 10/6/2014, the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) reclassified all hydrocodone combination products from a Schedule III to a more restrictive Schedule II controlled substance. Since optometrists in many states are restricted from prescribing Schedule II narcotics, this change has essentially limited OD prescribing authority.

Fortunately, the American Optometric Association, through lobbying efforts, were able to delay the effective date of the reclassification from 2012 to 2015. This delay allowed time for a number of states to enact a legislative fix to their optometry law prior to the effective date. In the GWCO region, that included Alaska, Arizona, and Colorado.

States across the country, including a few GWCO states, are currently working on legislation that would "fix" their optometry law to allow optometrists in their state to continue to prescribe hydrocodone drugs to patients in need. For more information on the controlled substance prescribing authority in each state, [click here](#).

The hydrocodone reclassification just goes to show that being involved in the legislative process is essential. Federal, state, and local legislators are making decisions that impact the profession of optometry and it is critical that these decisions are informed by the experience and expertise of optometrists. You are an essential part of the team. From volunteering your time to AOA-PAC and state PAC contributions, make sure your voice is heard!

CHECK OUT WHAT'S NEW AT GWCO CONGRESS 2015

- Registration Fees Lowered!
- Discount if you attend Optometry's Meeting!
- Automatic discount if you attended the last five GWCO Meetings!
- \$50 Coupon if Registered by June 30, 2015!

GWCO Congress 2015
September 10-13
Portland, Oregon

GWCO CONGRESS 2015

SEPTEMBER 10-13 • PORTLAND, OREGON

Rediscover the Magic of Optometry

GWCO CONGRESS 2015 HIGHLIGHTS!!

- **90+ Hours of Cutting Edge CE!**
- **COPE, ABO, NCLE, & CPC Accreditation!**
- **Certified Paraoptometric Review Course!**
- **Magical Exhibit Hall Marketplace!**
- **Evening Events and more!**



2015 Faculty*

We did it again! Some of the biggest names in the industry speaking at GWCO in 2015!!

Mile Brujic, OD, FAAO
Sharon Carter
Douglas Devries, OD
Diane Drake, LDO, ABOM, FCLSA
Stephen Farebrother
Dawne Griffith, OD
Milton Hom, OD, FAAO, FACAAI
Alan Homestead, OD
April Jasper, OD, FAAO
Gordon Johns, MD

Paul Karpecki, OD, FAAO
Kelly Kerksick, OD
John Lahr, OD, FAAO
Lynn Lawrence, CPOT, ABOC, COA
Jill Luebbert, CPOT, ABOC
Ron Melton, OD
Randall Thomas, OD, MPH
William Townsend, OD, FAAO
Phernell Walker, BSB, ABOM

*Preliminary—Subject to Change

GWCO WELCOME RECEPTION

Thursday, September 10
DoubleTree Hilton

All attendees & guests are invited to the GWCO Welcome Reception as we kick off GWCO Congress 2015. Enjoy delicious food and connect with friends & colleagues.

GWCO PRESIDENT'S RECEPTION

Saturday, September 12
Oregon Convention Center

Join us for food and drinks as we welcome Dr. Mark Lee of Las Vegas, Nevada as the incoming GWCO President!

Get the Latest Information at www.gwco.org



**GREAT WESTERN
COUNCIL OF
OPTOMETRY**

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GWCO MISSION

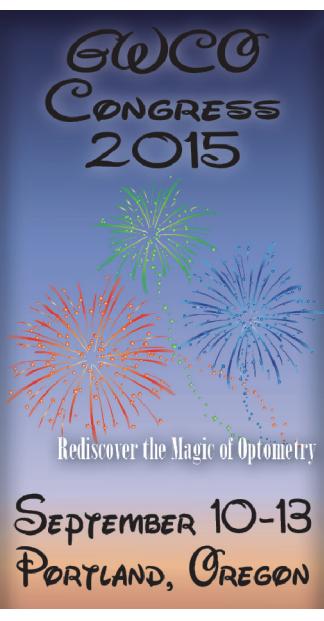
To provide a common voice for our members within organized optometry,

To facilitate communication among member associations,

To enhance the professional development of individual optometrists and allied professionals,

and

To provide financial support to affiliated



GWCO Passes Resolution in Support of Dr. James DeVleming

RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF JAMES P. DEVLEMING, OD AS CANDIDATE FOR THE OFFICE OF TRUSTEE, AMERICAN OPTOMETRIC ASSOCIATION

WHEREAS, the mission of the Great Western Council of Optometry is to provide a common voice for our members within organized optometry.

WHEREAS, James P. DeVleming, OD has continuously served organized optometry as a volunteer, a trustee and president of the Great Western Council of Optometry's affiliate, the Optometric Physicians of Washington.

WHEREAS, Dr. DeVleming has served organized optometry over the years as a tireless volunteer for the American Optometric Association in both the areas of member services and advocacy.

WHEREAS, Dr. DeVleming has been recognized by his community, his state association and even the American Optometric Association for his service to the profession, with the AOA PAC recognizing him as their National Keyperson of the Year.

WHEREAS, in continuation of his service to organized optometry, Dr. DeVleming has served as a Trustee of the American Optometric Association and is seeking re-election in 2015; now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Great Western Council of Optometry officially endorses James P. DeVleming, OD for re-election to the office of Trustee of the American Optometric Association and encourages all Optometric Physicians and state affiliates to join them in helping support the candidacy of Dr. DeVleming.

GWCO Passes Resolution in Support of Dr. Ron Benner

RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF JAMES P. DEVLEMING, OD AS CANDIDATE FOR THE OFFICE OF TRUSTEE, AMERICAN OPTOMETRIC ASSOCIATION

WHEREAS, the mission of the Great Western Council of Optometry is to provide a common voice for our members within organized optometry.

WHEREAS, Ron Benner, OD has continuously served organized optometry as a volunteer, a legislative chair and president of the Great Western Council of Optometry's affiliate, the Montana Optometric Association. Having been given the Optometrist of the Year Award in 1995, 1995, and 2010, as well as Distinguished Service Award in 1999.

WHEREAS, Dr. Benner has served organized optometry as a state affiliate director and president of the Great Western Council of Optometry.

WHEREAS, Dr. Benner has served organized optometry over the years as a tireless volunteer for the American Optometric Association in the areas of professional relations and 10 years as committee member and chairman for AOA-PAC.

WHEREAS, in continuation of his service to organized optometry, Dr. Benner will be seeking election to the office of Trustee of the American Optometric Association in June, 2015; now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Great Western Council of Optometry officially endorses Ron Benner, OD for election to the office of Trustee of the American Optometric Association and encourages all Optometric Physicians and state affiliates to join them in helping support the candidacy of Dr. Benner.

The Top 3 Health Insurance Exchange Trends to Watch in 2015

The Affordable Care Act (ACA) is ushering in its second year of major insurance coverage expansions. The second wave of open enrollment began in November, 2014 for the ACA's health insurance exchanges, amid projections that 9.9 million people will be enrolled in these marketplaces in 2015.

Members of the AOA Third Party Center (TPC) Executive Committee recommend tracking these developments:

1. Pediatric visits will continue to increase.

The AOA's hard-fought pediatric provision in the ACA guarantees comprehensive pediatric eye health and vision care for plans sold on new health insurance exchanges, as well as in most new plans sold outside of them. Federal enrollment data released earlier this year showed that all 8 million individuals who enrolled in a plan sold through the exchanges during the ACA's first enrollment period received coverage under its pediatric vision benefit.

Some ODs have already reported increasing patient numbers. As parental awareness of this benefit increases, ODs should expect to see more pediatric patient visits in 2015, as well. According to Stephen Montaquila, O.D., who chairs the TPC Executive Committee, this presents new opportunities to educate parents on the availability of this benefit and the importance of scheduling regular comprehensive eye health and vision examinations for their children.

2. Competition on exchanges may increase.

This could present more opportunities for optometrists to join new networks, provided that ODs are credentialed with those networks.

"As the insurers build their offerings, they must have providers. This highlights the importance of state associations having a good understanding of what is developing in their local market so that doctors can be informed ahead of any changes and ensure that they join networks that make sense for their businesses," Dr. Montaquila says.

In some states, new insurance entities or even co-ops may develop as well. Such arrangements may offer new opportunities for ODs, says Jason Ortman, O.D., a member of the TPC executive committee.

3. Narrow network trends may continue.

With increased competition, sometimes more restricted networks follow.

One of the ways insurers try to lower premiums is to reduce access points to care. "This is why narrow networks have become more prominent," Dr. Ortman says.

Unfortunately, excluding ODs from narrow networks has been a common practice in exchange plans. "One example of this is CIGNA, with its CIGNA Local Plus network. An optometrist may be a CIGNA provider, but may not be 'in network' for the much narrower CIGNA Local Plus provider panel," Dr. Ortman says.

If additional tiers are eventually offered (there's been talk of a plan that offers low premiums but limited coverage), it could result in very narrow networks, not to mention high deductibles and co-insurance by the patient. "This would make it important for the provider to verify deductibles, co-insurance, and copays at the time of service."

If not, accounts receivable would increase and office cash flow could be affected," Dr. Ortman cautions.

A call to action for ODs

Narrow networks continue to be a top priority issue for TPC, Dr. Montaquila says. "While we understand marketplace pressures that lead to narrowing of networks, we also understand that there are unintended consequences of severely restricted access."

All ODs are encouraged to visit rethinkkeycare.com, which provides an evidence-based argument against severely restricted access and how it could lead to higher costs for both patients and health plans. AOA members can use these tools when confronting such a situation.

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