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WHO'S WHO IN EYE CARE

Who's Who In Eye Care?

You may contact several types of specialists to help with questions and problems about your eyesight. The following lists only some of the eye care specialists available. These are the definitions given by each professional organization. For a complete listing, please call Prevent Blindness America at 1-800-331-2020.

Ophthalmologists

Definition provided by the American Academy of Ophthalmology. For more information, contact the AAO at (415) 561-8540.

An ophthalmologist is a physician (doctor of medicine or doctor of osteopathy) who specializes in the comprehensive care of the eyes and visual system in the prevention of eye disease and injury. The ophthalmologist has completed four or more years of college premedical education, four or more years of medical school, one year of internship and three or more years of specialized medical

and surgical training and experience in eye care. The ophthalmologist is a physician who is qualified by lengthy medical education, training and experience to diagnose, treat and manage all eye and visual system problems, and is licensed by a state regulatory board to practice medicine and surgery. The ophthalmologist is the medically trained specialist who can deliver total eye care: primary, secondary and tertiary care services (i.e., vision services, contact lenses, eye examinations, medical eye care and surgical eye care), and diagnose general diseases of the body.

Optometrists

Definition provided by the American Optometric Association. For more information, contact the AOA at (314) 991-4100.

Doctors of optometry (optometrists) are independent primary health care providers who specialize in the examination, diagnosis, treatment and management of

Founded in 1908, Prevent Blindness America is the nation's leading volunteer eye health and safety organization dedicated to fighting blindness and saving sight. Focused on promoting a continuum of vision care, Prevent Blindness America touches the lives of millions of people each year through public and professional education, certified vision screening training, community and patient service programs and research.

diseases and disorders of the visual system, the eye and associated structures, as well as the diagnosis of related systemic conditions. The optometrist has completed pre-professional education at a college or university, four years at a college of optometry and, in some cases, a residency. Doctors of optometry are specifically trained and state licensed to provide primary eye care services. These services include comprehensive eye health and vision examinations; diagnosis and treatment of eye diseases and vision disorders; the prescribing of glasses, contact lenses, low vision rehabilitation, vision therapy, drugs and medications and the counseling of patients regarding their vision needs as related to their occupation, avocations and lifestyles.

Opticians

Definition provided by the Opticians Association of America. For more information, contact the OAA at (703) 691-8355.

Opticians are professionals in the field of designing, finishing, fitting and dispensing of eyeglasses and contact lenses, based on an eye doctor's prescription. The optician may also dispense colored and specialty lenses for particular needs as well as low-vision aids and artificial eyes.

Certified Ophthalmic Registered Nurses

Definition provided by the American Society of Ophthalmic Registered Nurses. For more information, contact ASORN at (415) 561-8513.

A certified ophthalmic registered nurse is a registered nurse who has a specialized body of knowledge, skills and experience. Ophthalmic nurses perform ophthalmic examinations, patient assessments based on human responses to ophthalmic diseases, triage, teach patients about their ophthalmic conditions and prevention, assist in eye surgeries and provide emotional support to patients and their families. Ophthalmic registered nurses work in operating rooms, ambulatory clinics, private offices and hospitals. The goal of ophthalmic nursing is to assist patients in preserving and maximizing the vision that they have, prevent disabling eye disease through education, promote independence, and enhance the patient's quality of life. Eligibility for certification (CRNO) requires two years of practice in ophthalmology before taking the written examination.

Certified Orthoptists

Definition provided by the American Association of Certified Orthoptists. For more information, contact Jill Clark at (912) 285-2020.

The orthoptist, an allied health professional in ophthalmology, works in an adjunctive capacity with an ophthalmologist in the diagnostic and therapeutic assessment of children and adults with strabismus, amblyopia, diplopia and disturbances of binocular function. Expert in the visual assessment of nonverbal patients and in the performance of diagnostic tests used to evaluate visual function, the orthoptist may also be skilled in refraction, visual field testing, electrophysiologic testing, contact lens evaluation and low vision assessment.

Certified Ophthalmic Personnel

Definition provided by Joint Commission on Allied Health Personnel in Ophthalmology. For more information, call 1-800-284-3937.

These individuals, such as Ophthalmic Assistants, Ophthalmic Technicians and Ophthalmic Medical Technologists, are qualified to assist the ophthalmologist in a variety of procedures, from history taking and basic tonometry to visual field testing and ophthalmic photography, depending on the level of certification. Certification in the subspecialty areas of Ophthalmic Surgical Assisting and Assisting in Low Vision are also available. The Joint Commission on Allied Health Personnel in Ophthalmology is the certifying agency.

Paraoptometric

Definition provided by the American Optometric Association. For more information, contact the AOA at (317) 991-4100.

The paraoptometric may assist the optometrist in providing primary patient care examination and treatment services, including contact lenses, low vision, vision therapy and optical dispensing and office management. State laws may limit, restrict or otherwise affect the duties that may be performed by the paraoptometric.

Optometric Assistant

Definition provided by the American Optometric Association. For more information, contact the AOA at (314) 991-4100.

The optometric assistant may be trained on the job or may have completed a formal education program that is less than one academic year in length and successfully completed the National Optometric Assistant Registry Examination. A registered optometric assistant will be designated by Opt. A., R.

Optometric Technician

Definition provided by the American Optometric Association. For more information, contact the AOA at (314) 991-4100.

Technicians work directly with optometrists in the areas of patient examination and treatment, including contact lenses, low vision, vision therapy, optical dispensing and office management. The optometric technician may have completed a college program in optometric technology that is a minimum of one academic year in length, or career ladder to the position by successfully completing the Optometric Technician Registry Examination. A registered optometric technician will have the Opt. T., R. designation.

**Call the PBA Vision Health Resource Center
at 1-800-331-2020 for more information on eye care**

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