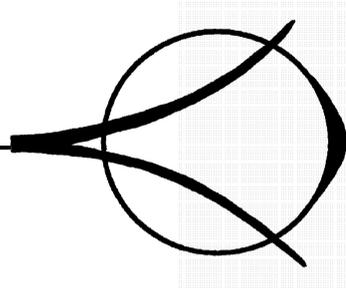


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Capitol Eye Screening a Success



The inaugural IAO Capitol Eye Screening in Springfield was a huge success. On Thursday, April 3rd, members of the IAO and their staff volunteered to provide free eye screenings to nearly fifty legislators, staff members and visitors to the Capitol. IAO Board Members **Pete Lagouros, MD, Gary Rubin, MD, Dianne Ross, MD, and James Kapustiak, MD** provided screenings that assessed risk factors associated with eye diseases, and included tests for visual acuity and signs of glaucoma.

The Capitol Eye Screening also served as an opportunity for IAO members to discuss legislative issues with members of the General Assembly and to maintain our positive visibility in the legislature. In the morning, IAO board members and lobbyist Vince Persico hosted an informal breakfast for lawmakers. Between eye screenings, board members spent the morning introducing themselves to Senators and Representatives and hand-delivering eyeball gumballs to their offices.

Overview of the 2008 Illinois Legislative Session

Medicated Contact Lenses

In early March, Rep. Skip Saviano (R-River Grove) and Rep. Sandra Pihos (R-Glen Ellyn) introduced legislation that would have allowed the dispensing and sale by an optometrist of contact lenses that contain and deliver pharmaceutical agents. **House Bill 5066** passed the House unanimously on April 2nd but never came up for a vote in the Senate. After careful consideration, the IAO did not oppose this legislation, with the conditions that optometrists could dispense *only* contact lenses containing medications that they already had been permitted to prescribe.

Medical Practice Delegation

If it had passed, **House Bill 3679** would have amended the Medical Practice Act to allow physicians to delegate the operation of an “intense pulsed light system” to a physician assistant, advanced practice nurse, or registered nurse for the purpose of “non-medical” cosmetic procedures. This legislation, introduced by Rep. Skip Saviano (R-River Grove), passed the House unanimously in March but never was voted on in the Senate. The IAO submitted recommended changes to the bill that excluded ophthalmic laser procedures from those which could be delegated to a non-physician.

Optometrist Reports of Elder Abuse

Senate Bill 2290, which passed both houses in May, allows for disciplinary action if an optometrist willfully fails to report an instance of suspected elder abuse, neglect, financial exploitation, or self-neglect. Physicians and other health care providers already are covered by similar provisions in the law.

Determination of Eligibility for Disabled Person ID Card

House Bill 5655, which passed both houses unanimously, allows optometrists in Illinois to determine visual disability for the purpose of issuing a Disabled Person Identification Card. It does not, however, authorize optometrists to determine any other category of medical disability. The Disabled Person ID Card is necessary for an individual to receive disability license plates or decals.

Other 2008 Bills That Did Not Pass

Restrictions on Gifts from Drug Manufacturers

HB 4486—Would have prohibited a physician from intentionally accepting a gift with cumulative value over \$50 from a drug manufacturer (drug samples and educational materials excluded).

Plastic Surgeon Regulations

HB 4666—Would have required that any physician performing plastic surgery in Illinois be directly affiliated with an accredited hospital or university.

HB 4667—Would have established that only board-certified plastic surgeons would be permitted to perform laser surgeries, botox injections, or chemical peels on patients.

The IAO regularly monitors matters of legislative and regulatory interest. If you have any questions regarding these issues, please feel free to contact our administrative office.

Congratulations to Our Board Member in the News!



Chris Albanis, MD of Chicago was selected to participate in the 2009 AAO Leadership Development Program after a very competitive selection process. The program is intended to provide both orientation and skill development to future leaders in state ophthalmological societies. Nominated by the IAO to participate in the program, Dr. Albanis is a Clinical Associate of Ophthalmology and Visual Science at the University of Chicago and currently serves as the Public Information Chair on the IAO Board of Directors.

IAO to Unveil New Website

We are pleased to announce that the new IAO website will go “live” later this summer. The new site, www.IEyeMD.org, will have several exciting features:

- A “Find an Eye MD” function for the public to locate nearby ophthalmologists;
- A members-only section that will update IAO members on key legislative developments and other member services;
- Information on upcoming professional education opportunities;
- An interactive calendar of future meetings and conferences;
- And much more!

Illinois Posts Public Physician Profiles

Governor Blagojevich recently introduced a new search tool on the Illinois Department of Financial & Professional Regulation website that allows the public to view information about physicians and surgeons licensed in Illinois. The tool, found at <https://www.idfpr.com/> (and then click on the “Physician Profile” link) allows individuals to find information about the insurance plans a physician accepts, as well as the physician’s educational background, awards and honors, and any disciplinary action that has been filed against the physician. IAO members may want to look-up themselves to check the accuracy and completeness of what the state has posted.

Planning for Project Vietnam Underway



The IAO, in partnership with Alcon Laboratories and the Vietnam National Institute of Ophthalmology (VNIO) in Hanoi, is working to implement an educational project which we anticipate will be of great benefit to Vietnamese ophthalmologists in practice and in training. *PROJECT VIETNAM* will involve a series of courses sponsored by Alcon with the teaching faculty provided through the IAO. Initially, the courses will focus on teaching phacoemulsification cataract surgery. Eventually, retina and glaucoma surgery will be included in the educational program.

Project Director and IAO Board member Dr. Ron May is excited to see this effort coming to fruition. “As an Army doctor during the Vietnam war, I came to have an appreciation for that country,” Dr. May said. “Recently, I had an opportunity to visit there as a tourist and am grateful that the IAO is in a position – in partnership with Alcon – to contribute to the development of ophthalmic services there.”



The dates for the first *PROJECT VIETNAM* are tentatively scheduled for two weeks in October, with a follow-up in late January at provincial hospitals. Additional courses at the VNIO will take place next spring. Several IAO members have signed-up to participate in the first trip. However, we very much want to expand our base of volunteers. Alcon is funding travel and accommodations, and IAO members are asked to volunteer for either a one- or two-week stint teaching at the VNIO in Hanoi. If you are interested or have any questions regarding Project Vietnam, please feel free to contact our administrative office.

Mark Your Calendars for the 5th Annual IAO/COS Joint Conference!

The 2008 IAO/COS Joint Conference was a huge success. More than 230 ophthalmologists and practice administrators heard talks on clinical subjects such as on adult strabismus, refractive surgery, corneal surgery, uveitis, and oculoplastics, as well as important practice management issues. The meeting, held from February 29-March 1, 2008, also featured guest lecturers Geoffrey Tabin, MD, who gave the IAO Kresca lecture about the Himalaya Cataract Project and his experiences climbing Mount Everest. Jacek Szaflik, MD and Jerzy Szaflik, MD, representing the Polish Ophthalmological Society also participated in the program as part of the AAO-initiated “twinning” project which pairs state societies with professional societies in other nations.



Next year’s joint conference will be held on Friday and Saturday morning, February 20-21, 2009, at the Stephens Conference Center in Rosemont, IL. The meeting will once again feature interactive audience participation, as well as an OMIC risk management lecture, and over 35 exhibit hall booths. Registration materials will be distributed later this year, but be sure to block out your calendars now!