



AAO Private Insurance Task Force

Terms of Reference

Dated: September 21, 2025



1. Purpose

The Alberta Association of Optometrists (AAO) Private Insurance Task Force has been established by the AAO to support members in responding to the growing trend of optometry clinics being delisted by insurers. This development raises important questions around billing practices, provider relationships, and patient access to care. The Task Force will lead the development of educational tools, policy strategies, and stakeholder engagement efforts that protect the integrity of optometric practice and ensure members are informed and supported.

2. Context

The AAO has observed an increasing number of optometry clinics in Alberta being delisted from insurer networks, often without clear or consistent explanations. In some cases, these actions have been linked to billing practices or internal insurer policies, creating uncertainty and concern among providers and patients alike.

These developments pose risks to the sustainability of optometric practices and could impact Albertans' access to vision care. The AAO is committed to working collaboratively with stakeholders to better understand these issues, support members in navigating them, and promote transparent, fair processes that protect both professional standards and patient choice.

This Task Force will work in coordination with related initiatives at the national level, including the CAO's Working Group on Billing Practices and Fraud Prevention, to ensure consistent messaging, share insights, and complement efforts aimed at supporting optometrists across Canada.





3. Mandate

The AAO Private Insurance Task Force is a collaborative initiative established to:

- **Monitor and Analyze:** Track instances and patterns of optometry clinic delisting across Alberta, and review the underlying reasons and impacts.
- **Support Members:** Develop practical tools, communications, and educational resources to help members understand risk factors and respond to delisting actions.
- **Engage Stakeholders:** Initiate dialogue with insurers and other relevant parties to clarify delisting criteria and advocate for fair, evidence-based processes.
- **Develop Multi-Faceted Strategies:** Recommend approaches that may include policy input, education, legal review, public communications, and media relations.
- **Report and Recommend:** Provide regular updates and strategic recommendations to the AAO Council and members on risks, trends, and opportunities for member advocacy and support.
- **Coordinate:** Work with the CAO's Working Group on Billing Practices and Fraud Prevention where applicable, in order to share insights and avoid duplication of efforts.
- **Collaborate Across Professions:** Engage with other allied health associations to identify shared concerns, align advocacy where appropriate, and strengthen the voice of regulated health providers in system-wide insurance matters.
- **Collaborate Across Professions:** Engage with other allied health associations to identify shared concerns, align advocacy where appropriate, and strengthen the voice of regulated health providers in system-wide insurance matters.

4. Deliverables

- **Short-Term:** Tools, checklists, and communication materials for members on risk management and responses to delisting.
- **Long-Term:** Development of a comprehensive educational and stakeholder engagement strategy related to delisting, billing compliance, and broader system changes - such as increased oversight of insurance providers at both the provincial and national levels. This includes advocating for a more open, transparent, and fair process surrounding billing issues and delisting decisions, grounded in best practices and consistent standards.



5. Membership

The Task Force will consist of no more than 7 members, including:

- A Chair, appointed from the AAO Council
- Five representatives from Alberta's optometric community or industry
- The Alberta College of Optometrists (ACO) representative
- The AAO CEO

Membership will reflect diversity in clinical experience, organizational affiliation, and professional insight.

6. Term of Membership

Members will serve for the duration of the Task Force's mandate, through June 30, 2026, unless otherwise specified by the AAO Council. Replacements may be appointed by the AAO Council in the event of vacancies.

7. Governance and Authority

The AAO Private Insurance Task Force operates under the authority of the AAO Council. The Task Force is advisory in nature and will submit recommendations to the Council. It does not have independent decision-making authority nor ability to directly report to the membership.

8. Roles and Responsibilities

Members are expected to:

- Attend and actively participate in all meetings;
- Contribute relevant expertise and perspectives;
- Review materials and provide feedback;
- Respect confidentiality of sensitive discussions; and
- Disclose any potential conflicts of interest.
- Maintain professionalism and demonstrate respect for due process in all Task Force activities, including deliberations, decision-making, and communications.

The Chair will lead the meetings and ensure alignment with the Task Force's mandate and deliverables.



9. Decision-Making Process

The Task Force will seek to operate by consensus. If consensus cannot be reached, decisions will be made by a majority vote of members present at the meeting.

10. Frequency of Meetings

Given the urgency of the issues, meetings will be held virtually twice a month, at the call of the Chair, with advance notice and agendas circulated by AAO staff. Meeting frequency will be decreased at the call of the Chair if/when reasonable, with a commitment to meeting and reporting to Council at least quarterly (with interim reports as appropriate).

11. Confidentiality and Conflict of Interest

Task Force members may be exposed to confidential or sensitive information. All members agree to:

- All members must sign a non-disclosure agreement to participate on the task force
- Disclose any actual or perceived conflicts of interest that may affect their participation

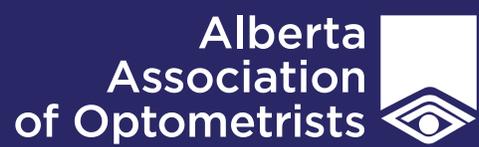
12. Resources

The Task Force will be supported primarily by the AAO CEO, who will facilitate coordination, provide staff and consultant resources as needed, and manage any allocated budget to support Task Force activities such as research, stakeholder engagement, communications, and educational resource development.

13. Review of Terms

These Terms of Reference will be reviewed by the Task Force if requested by the Chair or the AAO Council.

Dated: September 21, 2025



ALBERTA ASSOCIATION OF OPTOMETRISTS

#100, 8407 Argyll Road, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada T6C 4B2

T: 780.451.6824 F: 780.452.9918 TF: 1.800.272.8843

www.optometrists.ab.ca