

2026

Alberta Optometry Key Messages



PURPOSE: These points give Alberta Association of Optometry (AAO) staff and Council a consistent way to talk about priority issues with MLAs and other stakeholders. They are direct, repeatable, and focused on access, fairness, and stability. The goal is to keep messaging aligned and avoid mixed or competing messages.





1 The Optometry Profession

CORE MESSAGE	WHAT TO EMPHASIZE	SHORT TALKING POINTS
Optometrists deliver essential, front-line vision care in communities across Alberta. They play a key role in prevention as well as early detection of over 270 systemic health conditions. Optometrists help keep care local while providing a buffer for Alberta's strained health care system. Access to vision care is a key pillar of public health in Alberta. Rural and Indigenous communities, seniors and children in particular need regular eye exams to prevent vision loss. 65% of Canadians express concern for their eye health. Not without reason. As Alberta's population ages, the number of individuals affected by vision impairment will rise. By 2050 the prevalence of myopia is estimated to rise to half of the population. Fortunately, 75% of vision loss is preventable or treatable with early intervention.	• Optometrists prevent avoidable visits to ERs and family doctors. • They provide the bulk of day-to-day eye care in most communities. • Despite pressures in delivery of vision care, optometrists continue to deliver high-quality care. • Regular eye exams are crucial in preventing vision loss. • More than 1 in 4 children in Canada have problems with their vision before school age and that number is rising.	"Optometrists make early detection possible – long before issues reach emergency rooms or specialists." "Vision loss is the most feared disability, and it has staggering economic costs." "Doctors of Optometry provide the bulk of day to day eye care and operate in over 120 communities helping with keeping care local."



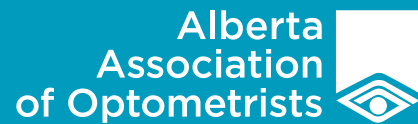
2 Scope-of-Practice Modernization

CORE MESSAGE	WHAT TO EMPHASIZE	SHORT TALKING POINTS
The Alberta College of Optometrists is requesting that the Government of Alberta expand the scope of practice to match training of Doctors of Optometry and patient needs. The aim is to improve access and reduce bottlenecks across the system.	• Modernizing scope means patients get timely care without unnecessary referrals. • It helps reduce pressure on family physicians, specialists, and emergency departments. • Rural communities benefit when optometrists can provide more care locally. • Alberta needs to stay aligned with other provinces already modernizing their scopes. • The AAO and ACO are aligned on moving forward responsibly.	“Scope updates allow optometrists to provide more complete care in-clinic, which speeds up diagnosis and treatment for patients” “For rural communities, scope modernization means more care can be delivered in town instead of sending patients to distant specialists.” “We’re aligned with the College and keeping the focus on patient access.”



3 Insurance Delisting

CORE MESSAGE	WHAT TO EMPHASIZE	SHORT TALKING POINTS
Some private health insurers have delisted optometrists without consultation. This has disrupted patient access and created uncertainty for clinics. The AAO is pushing for transparency, fairness, and predictable treatment for both patients and providers.	• Clinics are being delisted by insurers without due process or clear pathways to resolution, causing serious disruption for both clinics and patients. • Delisting undermines Albertan's access to routine eye care and early disease detection. • The AAO is advocating for the creation of clear and articulate standards to keep processes fair and accountable. • Rural and small clinics are especially vulnerable to sudden policy shifts.	"We're advocating for reforms to make the process clear, standardized, and accountable to prevent disruption for both clinics and patients." "Sudden delisting are disrupting patient access and undermining clinic stability."



**Thank you for being a member
of the Alberta Association of
Optometrists**



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