



AOA Commission on Optometric Specialties 1986 Memo of Transmittal

By 1984, VA optometry residencies had existed for nine years and, while still small in numbers, were expanding from the VA to residency programs at schools and colleges of optometry. Some group practices of MDs and MD-ODs were beginning to specify residency training when recruiting ODs as were some schools of optometry recruiting clinical faculty.

The Association of Schools and Colleges (ASCO) had earlier recognized the value of residency training in specialties and had approved areas appropriate for post-graduate residency training.

A residency matching program existed for applicants to VA residency programs that was later expanded, with the approval of ASCO, to include all ACOE accredited optometry residency programs (Optometric Residency Matching System, ORMS).

The VA had requested the American Council on Optometric Education accredit its optometry residency programs which led ACOE to expand its charter into the accreditation of post-graduate, residency training programs.

Efforts began to interest the National Board of Examiners in Optometry into creating a written examination for residents in medical optometry but this was impractical due to the small number of residents in 1984. [In 1999, the National Association of VA Optometrists would meet with NBEO to request a specialty examination for medical optometry and, in 2005, the ACMO examination was offered by NBEO. In 2009 ABCMO formed and issued the first certification in medical optometry in 2010.]

In 1984, as a result of this growing awareness of specialty training via residency programs, the AOA formed a Commission on Optometric Specialties and instructed it to establish guidelines and policy for designating specialty areas suitable for advanced training, recommend the form of this advanced training and of the credentialing-certification appropriate for those completing specialty training.

This AOA Commission on Specialties issued its Report in 1986 and conveyed its findings via the attached Memo to the AOA House of Delegates for its approval. The Report recommended recognition of optometry specialties, offered guidelines for how specialties should be selected and specified post-graduate training for specialists.

Due to the size of the document it has been split into five parts for easier downloading over slower internet connections.

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