

**MOA MEMBERS
FROM SUE A. WEINGARTNER, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
JUNE 29, 2009**

**BOARD CERTIFICATION PASSED AOA HOUSE OF
DELEGATES: 1126 TO 887**

AMERICAN OPTOMETRIC ASSOCIATION APPROVES OPTOMETRIC BOARD CERTIFICATION AT ANNUAL MEETING

WASHINGTON, D.C., June 27, 2009 – At the annual meeting of the American Optometric Association (AOA), members voted Friday 1,126 to 887 in favor of establishing the American Board of Optometry (ABO) as the entity to develop and implement the framework for board certification and maintenance of certification.

The AOA is one of six optometric organizations that formed the Joint Board Certification Project Team (JBCPT) in 2007 to examine the issue of optometric board certification and propose a model for certification and maintenance of certification that is attainable, credible and defensible.

“Our members’ actions Friday suggest that optometrists see the need for a mechanism to clearly demonstrate continued competency to patients, legislators and payers,” said Randy Brooks, O.D., president of the AOA. “The creation of the American Board of Optometry will provide a unified national platform to establish and demonstrate competency and value and will position our profession solidly for the future.”

The approval process of certification includes board certification and maintenance of certification for optometry and authorizes the AOA to participate in the development, formation, implementation and governance of the American Board of Optometry (ABO) and gives the ABO the ability to officially develop the model for board certification.

“The AOA wishes to thank every delegate for their involvement in and support of the discussions surrounding board certification,” said Dr. Brooks. “We are pleased with the adoption of the resolution and we will continue to monitor changes and developments in health care reform. Our association is committed to remaining at the forefront of health care and looks forward to continuing to provide high quality, accessible eye care for all Americans.”

Formal adoption of this resolution is subject to final action by the AOA’s Judicial Council.

About the American Optometric Association (AOA):

The American Optometric Association represents approximately 36,000 doctors of optometry, optometry students and paraoptometric assistants and technicians. Optometrists serve patients in nearly 6,500 communities across the country, and in 3,500 of those communities are the only eye doctors. Doctors of optometry provide two-thirds of all primary eye care in the United States.

American Optometric Association doctors of optometry are highly qualified, trained doctors on the frontline of eye and vision care who examine, diagnose, treat and manage diseases and disorders of the eye. In addition to providing eye and vision care, optometrists play a major role in a patient's overall health and well-being by detecting systemic diseases such as diabetes and hypertension.

Prior to optometry school, optometrists typically complete four years of undergraduate study, culminating in a bachelor's degree. Required undergraduate coursework for pre-optometry students is extensive and covers a wide variety of advanced health, science and mathematics. Optometry school consists of four years of post-graduate, doctoral study concentrating on both the eye and systemic health. In addition to their formal training, doctors of optometry must undergo annual continuing education to stay current on the latest standards of care. For more information, visit www.aoa.org.

Optometry's Joint Board Certification Project Team *consists of representatives from the American Academy of Optometry (AAO), the American Optometric Association (AOA), the American Optometric Student Association (AOSA), the Association of Regulatory Boards in Optometry (ARBO), the Association of Schools and Colleges of Optometry (ASCO) and the National Board of Examiners in Optometry (*