



Michael Bryant, M.P.P.  
St. Paul's

January 15, 2008

Hon. Deb Matthews, MPP  
Minister of Children & Youth Services  
Chair, Cabinet Committee on Poverty Reduction  
56 Wellesley St. W. 14<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Toronto, ON M5S 2S3

Dear Minister Matthews:

I am writing on behalf of my constituent, Mr. Ali Badreddine, owner of Kaltenbock Opticians, a business in my riding and President of the Ontario Opticians Association. I recently met with Mr. Badreddine at my community office regarding the Ontario Opticians Association's request to perform refraction sight testing, a procedure that is currently restricted to optometrists and ophthalmologists. Mr. Baddredine drew my attention to the financial accessibility of sight testing for low-income families.

Optometrists and ophthalmologists conduct refraction sight testing as part of a complete eye examination. As you know, optometric services for people between the ages of 19 and 65 are not covered under the Ontario Health Insurance Plan (OHIP). A complete eye examination by an optometrist costs approximately \$60-125. This full examination may not be necessary for patients simply wishing to change their vision correction prescription.

The Canadian Ophthalmological Society has acknowledged that a sight test involves no medical expertise, and can be safely performed by a trained professional such as an optician. There is no risk of harm to patients if opticians perform sight tests. Opticianry students have 302 hours of refracting training and are required to perform 50 refractions before graduation and the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities has accredited the refraction course that is offered by both Georgian College and Seneca College.

Currently, the Ontario Opticians Association and the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care is in discussion regarding the Health Professions Regulatory and Advisory Council (HPRAC) recommendation that sight testing by opticians should be limited to collaboration with an optometrist or a physician in completing a comprehensive eye exam.

On behalf of Mr. Baddredine, please consider the financial accessibility of sight testing for less fortunate Ontarians. If opticians are permitted to perform sight testing, low-income families will have greater access to eye care.

Yours truly,

Michael Bryant, MPP  
St. Paul's

CC: Hon. George Smitherman, Vice-Chair, Cabinet Committee for Poverty Reduction  
CC: Ali Baddredine  
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