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To: Board Members **Date:** April 20, 2018
From: Public Relations and Outreach Committee **Telephone:** (916) 575-7170
Subject: **Agenda Item 8 – Update, Discussion and Possible Action Regarding Board Committee Reports**

B. Public Relations and Outreach Committee (PROC)

Audio: [March 23, 2018](#)

Requested Action:

1. Approve Proposed Amendments to Online Refractions Brochure

The PROC met on March 23, 2018 to continue implementing the following 2018 deliverables:

- Implement newsletter at least twice a year;
- Participate in outreach events to promote BreEZe, educate licensees about the Board and laws/regulations;
- Update website to mirror MBC's; and,
- Strategic Plan Outreach Objectives

As described in more detail [here](#), the PROC reviewed and provided feedback on the Spring 2018 Newsletter. Shortly after the meeting, content was sent to DCA's Design and Editing Team. The Spring 2018 Newsletter is scheduled for release in the end of April. In addition, the Design and Editing Team will meet with staff to completely redesign the newsletter template for the Summer 2018 Newsletter. This will include improved design tailored for electronic distribution.

In early April, Board staff participated in an outreach event at UC Berkeley to educate students about the Board and the statutes/regulations governing the practice. Similar outreach events are scheduled with Marshall B. Ketchum and Western University in May. If a Board Member is interested in presenting with staff, please let the Board President know as soon as possible.

In addition, Board staff will attend the California Optometric Association's Legislative Day in April to promote BreEZe and educate licensees on Board functions and statutes/regulations governing their licenses.

The PROC also discussed concerns raised by stakeholders related to the Board's [Online Refractions](#) brochure. As further explained in their letter (Attachment 1), they expressed concerns with the following section:

What is an online refractive test?

An online refractive test is a service provided through a website. It is a vision test used as a tool by some California licensed eye care practitioners only to determine your eyeglass or contact lens prescription.

Consumers take the test for a fee and can then receive a prescription for eyeglasses or contact lenses from a California-licensed eye care practitioner.

After review, the PROC agreed with the request and recommends the Board adopt the amendments to the brochure.

Attachments

1. Stakeholder letter regarding Online Refraction Brochure

March 21, 2018

Jessica Sieferman, Executive Director
California Board of Optometry
2450 Del Paso Road, Suite 105
Sacramento, CA 95834

Dear Ms. Sieferman:

I am writing on behalf of 1-800CONTACTS and our more than 300,000 active customers who reside in the State of California. We discussed 1-800CONTACTS' concerns with the online refractive test language contained in the Board's educational brochure during our meeting on January 24, 2018. Specifically, we are concerned that the language in the brochure implies that every consumer that pays for an online vision test receives a prescription. This language fails to accurately reflect several key facts.

These tools are currently only used to renew existing prescriptions, which are derived from an in-person comprehensive examination. Additionally, online vision tests capture clinical data that is forwarded to a California-licensed ophthalmologist. The physician, using their independent medical judgement, determines if this is an appropriate tool for the consumer and if the data captured can be used to revalidate their existing prescription.

It is also important to note that approximately 30% of consumers that start an online vision test are deemed ineligible because they do not qualify for the service. The reasons for ineligibility can include age, medical history and the length of time since the last comprehensive eye examination. An additional 15% are screened out because the licensed ophthalmologist reviewing their clinical data cannot revalidate their existing prescription, either because the clinical data provided is insufficient or the consumer does not pass the vision tests. In both cases, consumers are provided a list of eye care practitioners in their local area and encouraged to make an appointment for a comprehensive exam.

1-800CONTACTS requests that the brochure be amended to remove misconceptions about online vision tests and offers the following recommended language:

What is an online refractive test?

An online refractive test is a vision screening provided through web-based technology that is used as a tool by some California licensed eye care practitioners to renew your eyeglass or contact lens prescription.

Consumers take the test for a fee. The clinical data captured by the technology is reviewed by a California-licensed eye care practitioner, who uses their independent medical expertise to determine if they can renew your prescription for eyeglasses or contact lenses.

I appreciate the time the Board staff took to discuss our request and look forward to working together in the future to promote eye health and access to safe and effective eye care services. I can be reached at 224-477-6156 or nschilligo@1800contacts.com for any follow up questions.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'NSchilligo', written over a horizontal line.

Nick Schilligo
Director, Government Relations

cc: Members of the California Board of Optometry