

# I'M JUST SAYING...

By Robert Dalton, Executive Director - Opticians Association of Canada

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Opticians who attended the Ontario Opticians Association online event on October 18<sup>th</sup>, this will not be news to you. I have to say though, I was quite astounded by the announcement that Ontario Opticians would no longer have their professional learning accredited if the learning made any mention of a specific product. How is it that one regulator in Canada can be so different from another? Even from ALL others? It is a bit unbelievable to think that every other Regulatory College in Canada recognizes the value of an Optician being educated in every product available on the market.

Consider an Optician who works for a company which has exclusive products. How is this Optician expected to benchmark? Obviously, my company will mandate that I am competent to dispense the products which we carry, but is it not important for me to be educated in other possible solutions for customers? How would it look if a patient came into the dispensary and asked me about the glasses they are wearing? I should be a product knowledge expert; I think it is vital to instill confidence in our vision care consumers. Please do not send me to work with only a few tools in my 'solutions' toolbox. I want access to all education, and I want it valued.

[www.LicensedOptician.ca](http://www.LicensedOptician.ca) defines an Optician as – *“A licensed optician is a specialist trained specifically to plan, prepare, and distribute optical products such as glasses and contact lenses... A licensed optician also helps in selecting the right frame and makes the necessary adjustments to ensure that they fit perfectly.”* How am I to do this if I do not know all the products available? It seems to this Optician, that product knowledge is an extremely high priority.

The above said, I do understand that perhaps the intent here is to avoid referring to 'commercials' as education – I get that. For this reason, education should, and is, vetted by qualified individuals and learning outcomes are established. Easy peasy! Opticians in each province of Canada must be equally educated, regardless of what jurisdiction in which they practice. It is insufficient to say product knowledge is optional – it is not - it is mandatory, and speaks directly to what an Optician does... I'm just saying.