Member Engagement Key Messages

High Level

Investing in optometrists protects access to eye care, keeps patients out of emergency rooms, and saves Ontario money.

Optometrists are Ontario's Eye Health Frontline

- Optometrists are highly trained, trusted professionals available in every Ontario community, including rural and northern areas.
- They provide urgent and preventive eye care and keep pressure off emergency rooms.
- A McMaster University-led study found that the majority of eye-related emergency room visits could have been safely managed by optometrists.
- More than 100,000 patients currently being treated in emergency rooms could be diverted to local optometrists.

The Problem isn't Capacity, It's Policy

- Ontario has the providers and expertise it needs, but outdated and unstainable OHIP funding limits optometrists' ability to deliver urgent care.
- Current funding forces optometrists to hold emergency capacity at a loss, pushing patients into emergency rooms instead.
- Ontario has the lowest per-capita investment in optometric care compared to provinces like Quebec, Alberta, and British Columbia.

The Solution: Fair, Modern Investment

- Modernize OHIP funding so optometrists can deliver more frontline care sustainably.

- A $94 million investment in emergency eye care services would save Ontario more than $130 million over the same period.

- This means the right care, at the right place, and at the right time, reducing ER strain, improving access, and delivering better outcomes for patients.