OAO Member Code of Ethics

General Responsibilities

- Treat all patients with respect. Consider first their visual well-being and provide appropriate care for all of your patients. Do not exploit for personal advantage, nor discriminate against any patient.
- Practice optometry, with competence, while recognizing your limitations. When indicated, recommend that additional opinions and services be sought and be prepared to collaborate with colleagues in the care of patients.
- Engage in lifelong learning to maintain and improve your professional knowledge, skills, and judgment.

Communication, decision-making, and consent

- Make reasonable efforts to inform your patients in an understandable manner about the diagnosis, prognosis, and care choices.
- Respect the right of a patient or a patient's guardian to accept or reject any care recommended.
- Recommend only those diagnostic and therapeutic procedures that you consider to be beneficial to your patient.

Confidentiality

- Respect the patient's right to confidentiality except when this right conflicts with your responsibility to the law, or when the maintenance of confidentiality would result in a significant risk of substantial harm to others or to the patient if incompetent. In such cases, take all reasonable steps to inform the patient that confidentiality will be breached.
- When acting on behalf of a third party, take reasonable steps to ensure that the patient understands the nature and extent of your responsibility to the third party and to the patient.

Clinical research

- Ensure that any research in which you participate is evaluated scientifically and ethically, is approved by a responsible committee, and is sufficiently planned and supervised so that research subjects are unlikely to suffer disproportionate harm.
- Inform the potential research subject, or proxy, about the purpose of the study, its source of funding, the nature and relative probability of harms and benefits, and the nature of your participation.

- Before proceeding with the study, obtain the informed consent of the subject, or proxy, and advise prospective subjects that they have the right to decline or withdraw from the study at any time, without prejudice to their ongoing care.

Responsibilities to society

- Endeavor to assist, such that no person in need should lack optometric care.
- Accept a share of the profession's responsibility to society in matters relating to public health, health education, environmental protection, and legislation affecting the health or well-being of the community.
- Use health care resources prudently.
- When providing information to the public, recognize the scientifically based opinions of the profession.

Responsibilities to the profession

- Avoid impugning the reputation of colleagues for personal motives.
- Attempt to resolve issues of dispute with colleagues in a manner that maintains mutual respect and trust.

Responsibilities to oneself

- Seek help from colleagues and appropriately qualified professionals for personal problems that may adversely affect your service to patients, society or the profession.