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### WOA Joins National 'Start With Eye' Campaign During 'Save Your Vision' Month

*The Wisconsin Optometric Association's awareness campaign is focused on educating the public on the benefits of comprehensive eye exams*

**MADISON, WI** – The Wisconsin Optometric Association (WOA) is partnering with the American Optometric Association's (AOA) new public awareness campaign, 'Start With Eye', to highlight the critical importance of eyecare in overall health. According to AOA's new Eye Q survey, only half of Americans are actually going for annual eye exams.

"Good vision is essential to quality of life and a comprehensive eye exam is an important, preventive way to preserve vision and maintain overall health," says Dr. Amber Dentz, 2020 WOA President and Hartland, WI area optometrist. "We are thrilled to join with the AOA to spread awareness and encourage the citizens of Wisconsin to schedule their in person #2020EyeExam with a local doctor of optometry today."

A multi-phased campaign, 'Start With Eye' serves as a platform to ensure people understand why an annual comprehensive eye exam is necessary. The campaign aims to raise awareness of the benefits of eye exams even to those with 20/20 vision and to remove the barriers stopping patients from turning proper eyecare into an ongoing part of their healthcare routine.

Because eye health and vision problems may develop without any obvious signs or symptoms, in person, annual comprehensive eye exams with doctors of optometry are important to detect early signs of visual system diseases such as glaucoma, a leading cause of blindness. In addition, eye exams safeguard overall health by enabling the doctor of optometry to detect more than 270 serious health conditions including diabetes, high blood pressure, autoimmune diseases and cancers.

For instance, according to the AOA data, 21 percent of participants said they have been diagnosed with a non-eye related health issue such as STIs, high cholesterol, and diabetes, by an eye health professional; while 52 percent said they had not received a comprehensive eye exam in the past two years.

"Doctors of optometry play a pivotal role in identifying various health care needs beyond eye health," said AOA President Barbara L. Horn, O.D. "AOA's new 'Start With Eye' 2020 campaign gives the public the facts tied to the benefits of an annual comprehensive eye exam while also encouraging people to take the time to get their eyes checked."

March's Save Your Vision Month is the perfect time to 'Start With Eye' and schedule an in-person, comprehensive eye exam. Wisconsin residents can find a local doctor at <http://www.woa-eyes.org/members>.

#### **About the Wisconsin Optometric Association**

The Wisconsin Optometric Association (WOA) is a nonprofit affiliation of licensed doctors of optometry and associated businesses dedicated to the preservation and enhancement of the vision welfare of the people of Wisconsin. The WOA accomplishes its goals through: education and dissemination of information, organized governmental activity, legislation and regulation, mediation with consumer and public interest groups, and provision of collective benefits to its members. Approximately 640 doctors of optometry are currently members of the WOA, located in nearly every county in the state. All members must be licensed to practice optometry by the State of Wisconsin. For more information, visit WOA's website at [www.woa-eyes.org](http://www.woa-eyes.org).

#### **About the American Optometric Association (AOA)**

The American Optometric Association (AOA) is the leading authority on and advocate for quality eye health care, representing more than 44,000 doctors of optometry, optometry students and optometric professionals. As the sole primary eye care provider in many communities across America, doctors of optometry are often a patient's first entry point into the health care system, and have extensive, ongoing training to examine, diagnose, treat, and manage disorders, diseases, and injuries that affect the eye and visual system. Through a nationwide public health initiative, AOA's 2020 Campaign is fostering awareness of the importance of eye health and vision care and the overall health benefits of in-person, comprehensive eye examinations with AOA doctors of optometry for all Americans. Find more information about how AOA is shaping the future of health at [AOA.org/2020EyeExam](http://AOA.org/2020EyeExam)

#### **About the American Eye-Q® survey**

The annual American Eye-Q® survey was created and commissioned in conjunction with Penn, Schoen & Berland Associates (PSB) and identifies attitudes and behaviors of Americans regarding eye care.