

SECRETARIAT FOR STATE AFFAIRS

STATE AFFAIRS PROGRAMS & RESOURCES

Indian Health Services Initiative

The Secretariat for State Affairs is working in concert with the Academy's Federal Affairs division in establishing this pilot program in partnership with the Indian Health Service (IHS) and the Minnesota and North Dakota state ophthalmology societies. The pilot effort is geared towards providing evaluation and surgical treatment for diabetic retinopathy within high-risk American Indian and Alaska native populations that have limited access to such services. *Direct your questions to Bob Palmer, AAO Policy Director, State Governmental Affairs, e-mail: bpalmer@aaodc.org.*

Leadership Development Program

The Secretariat for State Affairs established this program to develop future leaders in organized ophthalmology. In the spring state, subspecialty, and specialized interest societies may nominate one of their members to participate in the program. The Secretariat then selects participants on the basis of applications submitted by the nominees. Those admitted to the program attend four training sessions over the course of a year: (1) at the Academy's Annual Meeting; (2) in San Francisco in January for an intensive 2 1/2-day meeting; (3) at the Mid-Year Forum; (4) at the following Annual Meeting. *Direct your questions to: Gail Schmidt, AAO Director of Ophthalmic Society Relations, e-mail: gschmidt@aao.org.*

One Vision, One Voice Program

This program defines political action and political partnering goals for every state society. The goal is to support state decision-makers with political contributions and eye health care policy information. Many states have already increased their PAC funds significantly, and thereby enhanced their ability to deal with eye health care policy issues as they arise. *Direct your questions to Bob Palmer, AAO Policy Director, State Governmental Affairs, e-mail: bpalmer@aaodc.org.*

Advocacy Ambassador Program

The Secretariat for State Affairs established this pilot program in 2004 to engage residents early in their careers regarding the importance of political action and being involved in organized ophthalmology at both the state and national levels. The Secretariat collaborates with state ophthalmology societies and ophthalmology training programs to support residents' attendance at the Academy's annual Mid-Year Forum (MYF) and Congressional Advocacy Day (CAD) held in Washington, D.C. In 2006, the program was expanded to also encourage subspecialty and specialized interest societies to support the MYF and CAD attendance by those in fellowship training programs. At CAD, residents and fellows are paired with seasoned ophthalmologists for visits with legislators and key legislative health care staff on Capitol Hill to discuss key issues affecting ophthalmology and medicine. Residents and fellows also attend the Academy's MYF sessions to learn about hot topics and issues facing the profession. *Direct your questions to: Gail Schmidt, AAO Director of Ophthalmic Society Relations, e-mail: gschmidt@aao.org.*

Pilot Resident Mentor Program

In early 2000 the Secretariat for State Affairs was asked to provide input on establishing a mentor program that would ensure active participation by residents in organized medicine at the state and national levels. The Secretariat developed a draft plan that would involve efforts of several Academy secretariats and committees, along with AUPO, state societies, and medical school ophthalmology departments. To date the mentor program concept has been presented to and endorsed by AUPO, and the Tennessee, Arkansas, Alabama and Mississippi state societies have implemented pilot mentor programs with training programs in their states, and the Massachusetts and Washington state societies have begun efforts to implement this program. Additional targeted states are being contacted to gauge their interest in participating in an expanded pilot program. *Direct your questions to Lisa Pinkston, AAO Manager, Ophthalmic Society Relations, e-mail: lpinkston@aao.org.*

Residents' Advocacy Program

The Residents' Advocacy Program, or "RAP," is an informational session for ophthalmologists-in-training developed by the Secretariat for State affairs and implemented by state societies at ophthalmology departments across the country. It provides residents in ophthalmology training programs with practical insights on the value and importance of getting involved and staying involved in advocacy for their patients and their profession. The program had been successfully presented at over 100 training programs, and continues to grow. *Direct your questions to Michael Levitt, AAO State Governmental Affairs Manager, e-mail: mlevitt@aao.org.*

Secretariat Award

The Secretariat Award annually recognizes ophthalmologists for special contributions to the Academy and ophthalmology. Recipients are selected by the Senior Secretaries and Secretaries in their respective areas and approved by the Academy's Board of Trustees. The Secretary for State Affairs selects its Secretariat Award recipients based on their significant contributions in advancing the cause of state ophthalmology societies whether it be in the area of political advocacy, membership recruitment and retention, public service or other society programs. *Direct your questions to Gail Schmidt, AAO Director of Ophthalmic Society Relations, e-mail: gschmidt@aao.org*

Secretariat for State Affairs

The Academy's Secretariat for State Affairs is made up of two physician committees: the Committee for State Governmental Affairs and the Committee for State Organizational Development. Each ophthalmologist serving on the Secretariat serves as an Academy liaison to the leadership of 3-4 state ophthalmology societies on state organizational and state governmental affairs issues. Secretariat members also function as an "early warning system" bringing problems in state ophthalmology societies to the Academy's attention and assist in providing funding to state societies via the Surgical Scope Fund and other resources. *Direct your questions to Gail Schmidt, AAO Director of Ophthalmic Society Relations, e-mail: gschmidt@aao.org*

State Affairs Star Award

This successor to the Model State Society Program provides special recognition to state ophthalmology societies for their outstanding efforts in activities such as membership development, public information/public service, member communications, etc. As part of the Secretariat's annual organizational survey of state societies, the societies may apply for the award. The Secretariat reviews all applications and gives the award based thereon, and the award may be given to more than one society. *Direct your questions to Lisa Pinkston, AAO Manager, Ophthalmic Society Relations, e-mail: lpinkston@aao.org.*

Surgical Scope Fund (*formerly* State Legislative Fund)

This political advocacy fund was established by the Secretariat for State Affairs to assist efforts to oppose/limit expansion of optometric surgical scope of practice. Contributions to the fund are solicited from ophthalmologists and Eye M.D. associations nationwide, and include a matching contribution from the Academy. This national effort will provide support for individual states as the need for assistance arises. This is not a political action committee. The proceeds from the Fund may not be used to support political candidates, nor are they tax-deductible. *Direct your questions to Michael Levitt, AAO State Governmental Affairs Manager, e-mail: mlevitt@aao.org.*

Pre-Kindergarten Eye Screening Initiative

In 2001, the optometric lobby launched its nationwide Pre-K eye exam legislation project. This initiative was heavily funded by the Vision Council of America to require a "visual evaluation" by either an ophthalmologist or an optometrist for every child entering kindergarten. While the legislation proposed would ostensibly increase the number of children screened, ophthalmology has taken the position that this legislation, as written, would constitute an unfunded state mandate, and in requiring a *full* visual

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evaluation for every child would have a very expensive financial impact on states' Medicare programs, could raise private insurance rates, and put an undue financial burden on parents. The Academy is working with state societies to oppose this legislation in every state where it is introduced and instead advocate for a Pre-K screening with follow-up exams for those identified as needing them. To assist in this effort, the Academy worked to develop a joint policy on pre-kindergarten eye screening with the American Association for Pediatric Ophthalmology and Strabismus (AAPOS). This policy was published in January 2002, and is supported by the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and the American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP). *Direct your questions to Anne Mehochko, AAO Manager of State Governmental Affairs, e-mail: amehochko@aaodc.org.*

Quality Eye Care Project for the States (QECPS)

In recent years the Academy and state societies working together have increased ophthalmology's opportunities to successfully advocate for patient quality of care issues before state legislators/regulators. Eye M.D.s are rapidly gaining political stature at state capitols across the nation, and some societies are now positioned not only to be successful from a defensive posture, but may also be positioned to take the offensive. The Quality Eye Care Project for the States (QECPS) is a pilot state advocacy program, wherein the Academy will partner with state societies to enact state legislation/regulations that assure patient quality of eye care. State societies may apply for funding under QECPS. *Direct your questions to Michael Levitt, AAO State Governmental Affairs Manager, e-mail: mlevitt@aao.org.*

Membership Development/Recognition

In order to assist state societies with membership development and database maintenance, on a bi-monthly basis the Ophthalmic Society Relations (OSR) department sends each state society a list of ophthalmologists who have moved into or out of their state. In order to evaluate trends in state society membership and to recognize state society members at the Academy's Annual Meeting (via a state society ribbon), OSR annually asks each state society to review and update a list of state society members as currently recorded in the Academy's database. This update of state society members in the Academy's database is also used to highlight state society members in the Academy's Member AAO Directory. Each society executive AAO Director receives a complimentary copy of this AAO Directory. *Direct your questions to Lisa Pinkston, AAO Manager, Ophthalmic Society Relations, e-mail: lpinkston@aao.org*

Meeting Promotion

OSR requests information from state societies on their annual meetings and other CME meetings so that this information can be posted on the Academy's Web site. OSR also makes this information available upon request to potential meeting exhibitors and other interested persons or organizations. To assist in promoting their educational meetings, OSR provides complimentary mailing labels to state societies for their state and/or contiguous states up to two times each calendar year. *Direct your questions to Lisa Pinkston, AAO Manager, Ophthalmic Society Relations, e-mail: lpinkston@aao.org*

Twinning Program

A pilot "twinning" program was established in 2005. OSR "twins" state ophthalmology societies with national Latin and European ophthalmological societies to develop symposia at international meetings including the Pan American and European Society Congresses. It provides an opportunity for state societies to participate in global outreach and cultural exchange, to further engage and improve international relations with the respective ophthalmology departments in their state as well as the opportunity to communicate to all state society members an opportunity to participate in a unique society effort. *Direct your questions to: Gail Schmidt, AAO Director of Ophthalmic Society Relations, e-mail: gschmidt@aao.org*

Annual Meeting: Surgery by Surgeons Forum

Each year in conjunction with the Academy's Annual Meeting, the Secretariat for State Affairs sponsors a *Surgery by Surgeons Forum* – an interactive session involving current advocacy. The Forum highlights actions and trends by state legislatures and regulatory bodies as well as cooperative efforts between the

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Academy, State and Subspecialty Societies that have impacted Eye M.D.s in the delivery of eye health care services. *Direct your questions to Bob Palmer, AAO Policy Director, State Governmental Affairs, e-mail: bpalmer@aaodc.org.*

Annual Meeting: Resource Center

State Affairs staff will develop and man an exhibit booth at each Academy Annual Meeting both to highlight the Society Relations and governmental affairs services for state ophthalmology societies and to solicit state society membership. *Direct your questions to Lisa Pinkston, AAO Manager, Ophthalmic Society Relations, e-mail: lpinkston@aao.org.*

Annual Meeting: Executive Director Recognition

In addition to those societies being recognized during the Academy's Annual Meeting with the *State Affairs Star Awards*, the Secretariat for State Affairs and staff recognize outstanding State Society Executive AAO Directors. Two executive AAO Directors are recognized annually before all State Society Presidents and other leaders at a special breakfast in the categories of *Society Relations and Political Advocacy*. *Direct your questions to Gail Schmidt, AAO Director of Ophthalmic Society Relations, e-mail: gschmidt@aao.org*

Annual Meeting: Residents Noontime Session

Each year in conjunction with the Academy's Annual Meeting, the Secretariat for State Affairs sponsors a program that teaches residents about the importance of membership and active involvement in organized medicine – particularly in their state ophthalmology society. The program, entitled *Welcome to the Real World of Ophthalmology: Reality 101 for Residents and Fellows*, showcases young Eye M.D. panelists who have already demonstrated active participation in their respective state ophthalmology societies. Each panelist discusses the benefits of belonging to their state society while also providing tips on networking, referrals, and practice management. *Direct your questions to Gail Schmidt, AAO Director of Ophthalmic Society Relations, e-mail: gschmidt@aao.org*

Annual Meeting: Presidents-Elect Meeting

Each year in conjunction with the Academy's Annual Meeting, the Secretariat for State Affairs sponsors a session for society presidents-elect. The goals of the Presidents-Elect Meeting include: the provide an opportunity for society presidents-elect to meet and hear from leaders from the Academy's Board and Secretariat for State Affairs on issues that they will likely encounter as they take on the role of president of their respective societies; to learn about specific efforts from current and past society leaders; to learn about joint Academy/state society efforts, Academy resources and staff who can to assist them; and, to meet their colleagues from around the country. *Direct your questions to Gail Schmidt, AAO Director of Ophthalmic Society Relations, e-mail: gschmidt@aao.org*