



# #2020 #EyeExam

Written by Geoff Knapp, OOPA Executive Director

Only half of Oregonians surveyed visit an eye health professional at least once a year. Out of those who were surveyed, one-third lacked an understanding of how to take care of their eyes and vision. Jason Myers, Executive Director of the Oregon State Sheriffs' Association, is aiming to change those statistics.

"Sheriffs rely on vision acuity for everything from split second decision-making to prolonged computer work," said Jason. "But receiving regular comprehensive eye exams, regardless of vision acuity, can also help detect other potentially serious health problems at the earliest stage - when they are most treatable."

With health being a prominent topic in 2020, OSSA is partnering with the Oregon Optometric Physicians Association (OOPA) to encourage Oregonians to make 2020 the year to make an

in-person, comprehensive eye exam.

Eye health and vision problems may develop without any obvious signs or symptoms. In-person, annual eye exams with doctors of optometry can 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.

The coronavirus pandemic has forced Oregon schoolchildren to spend much longer hours in front of their computer screens. This, added to extended phone use, is placing tremendous amounts of strain on students' eyes, and that exposure can impact vision acuity.

In a study conducted by the Columbus (Ohio) Police Department, it was recommended that 20/20 to 20/30 vision in both eyes be required for adequate performance of all tasks and that those with poorer vision should be referred to an optometrist. Visual skills identified as essential for responding to impaired drivers, domestic disturbances, and breaking and entering (Shaw & Gledhill, 1995) include:

**COLOR VISION** - Scanning for evidence of personal offense such as blood and bruises, recognizing changes in complexion, noting details (vehicles, clothes, and general description) for evidence, and reporting descriptions.

**VISUAL ACUITY** - Seeing where people go, using computers for prolonged times in front of a screen, acquiring descriptions and details for reporting/evidence, noticing possible hazards to avoid tripping or stumbling, reading license plates, and seeing with cruiser lights flashing.

**VISUAL ACUITY: NIGHT & POOR VISIBILITY** - Seeing in poor light (night vision, artificial light, or shadows), seeing in poor visibility (bad weather conditions, poorly-lit environments, or smoked windows on vehicles).

**VISUAL ACUITY & PERIPHERAL VISION** - Having good general observation skills, being aware of surroundings, and description of persons.



OSSA is encouraging all its members to schedule an eye exam by year's end as part of the initiative's "2020" theme. "From Astoria to Brookings and all points east, OSSA and OOPA serve the entire state," said Nicole Rush, President, OOPA Board of Directors. "We're very excited to join OSSA in this important health public awareness campaign and feel

that the partnership is a win/win effort!" More information may be found at: <https://oregonsheriffs.org/2020eyeexam/>

We would like to thank Dr. Jim Hale of Valley Eye Care in Corvallis for allowing OSSA to use their location for filming the #2020EyeExam campaign video. In addition, we would like to thank

Linn County Sheriff Jim Yon for connecting us with Linn County Deputy Rachael Poore who will be featured in the final video.

We appreciate the welcoming Valley Eye Care staff for their generosity with their time along with Deputy Poore for participating before being needed to assist with combating the Oregon wildfires.

## KEEP YOUR HEALTH IN SIGHT!

