



## OREGON OPTOMETRIC PHYSICIANS ASSOCIATION

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### **AOA and OOPA Encourages Patients to Contact Local Doctor of Optometry Before Seeking Emergency Department Treatment for Primary Eye Care Services During COVID-19 Pandemic**

**Milwaukie, OR** -- As the COVID-19 pandemic continues to rapidly evolve and place unprecedented strain on the U.S. healthcare system, the American Optometric Association (AOA) and Oregon Optometric Physicians Association (OOPA) encourages patients with urgent or emergency eye care needs to contact their local doctor of optometry before seeking treatment in emergency rooms.

"Most eye-related conditions reported in local emergency departments may be treatable in an outpatient optometry office or clinic," said AOA President, Barbara L. Horn, O.D. "These actions will help reduce burdens on emergency departments and combat further community spread and a wider outbreak."

Oregon's optometrists have mostly remained open for urgent care only since Governor Brown's "Stay at Home" order went into effect.

"Optometrists represent a first line of defense against hospital overcrowding as eyecare services are provided in hundreds of locations allowing hospitals to serve those requiring coronavirus medical attention," said Nicole Rush, O.D., president of OOPA's board of directors. "Doctors of optometry are fully recognized as physicians in the nation's COVID-19 mobilization ensuring that we stand ready to furnish medically necessary services."

Governor Brown recently announced that she will be lifting her order delaying non-urgent procedures for health care providers if they can demonstrate they have met new requirements for COVID-19 safety and preparedness. Optometrists that meet those requirements will be able to resume non-urgent procedures on May 1.

Individuals seeking urgent eye care may locate an optometrist by visiting <http://www.oregonoptometry.org/> and clicking the "Find a Doctor" tab.

The American Optometric Association is the leading authority on quality care and an advocate for our nation's health, representing more than 44,000 doctors of optometry (O.D.), optometric professionals and optometry students. Doctors of optometry take a leading role in patient care with respect to eye and vision care, as well as general health and well-being. For more information visit: <https://www.aoa.org/>

OOPA is a statewide organization comprised of doctors of optometry, college of optometry faculty, optometric students and industry-related associates. OOPA is an affiliate of the AOA. The mission of the organization is to promote, protect and advance the professional practice of optometry.

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