

July 27th, 2021

Eye Care Provided by Optometrists is About to Change in Ontario

Most RWC members' eye examinations are currently covered by OHIP.

Ontario Optometrists have announced that they will stop providing eye care to all patients covered by Ontario Health Insurance Plan (OHIP) on **September 1st, 2021**, if they are unable to reach an agreement with the Ontario Government.

If this happens, all Ontarians who were covered by OHIP for eye examinations (seniors (65 and over), children under the age of 20, and those aged 20 to 64 with specified medical conditions affecting the eye) **may not be able to access eye care from an Optometrist.** Optometrists intend to start referring patients to alternate providers, such as family doctors and hospitals. This situation risks putting a strain on the health system at the worst possible time.

We are told that this situation has developed due to the Ontario Government's refusal to negotiate with the Ontario Association of Optometrists (OAO) to increase the fees that the Optometrists are paid for eye examinations.

We are also told that Optometrists have been trying for years to get further support from the government and that they have exhausted all options to get the Ontario government to adequately support eye care.

The OAO is calling on the province's health minister to address gaps in OHIP payment schedules. Members of the OAO have voted to **withdraw services** they provide under OHIP starting September 1st unless the province steps up with funding.

For more information contact the Canadian Association of Retired Persons (CARP) at www.carp.ca/seechange or the Ontario Association of Optometrists at <https://optom.on.ca>.

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