

DOCTORS OF OPTOMETRY ARE A CRITICAL KEY TO PRIMARY EYE HEALTH IN THE U.S.

Up to 16 million Americans struggle with undiagnosed or untreated vision impairments.¹ Combined with the fact that eye diseases, vision loss, and eye disorders create an estimated \$139 billion economic burden. Doctors of optometry are geographically accessible and uniquely available to furnish Americans' primary eye care services.

Doctors of optometry, also recognized as physicians, deliver an essential component of patients' overall primary health that goes well beyond examining vision acuity to prescribe glasses or contact lenses. An in-person, comprehensive eye exam includes diagnosis and management of eye diseases and treatment of systemic diseases, including diabetes, high blood pressure and even cancer. They prescribe medication to treat eye diseases, treat glaucoma, perform pre- and post-operative evaluations and perform follow-up care.



Doctors of optometry provide more than **two-thirds of primary eye health care in America**



More than **99 percent of the U.S. population** lives in counties with a doctor of optometry



5,800 communities nationwide, doctors of optometry are the only primary eye and vision care providers

DOCTORS OF OPTOMETRY CAN ALSO:

- Prescribe medication to treat eye diseases in drop, ointment or pill form.
- Evaluate visual acuity for corrective prescriptions (refraction).
- Determine the patient's ability to focus and coordinate the eyes and to judge depth and see colors accurately.
- Prescribe eyeglasses, contact lenses, low vision aids, and deliver rehabilitation and vision therapy.
- Perform minor surgical procedures such as removing foreign objects from the eye and cornea.
- Evaluate and follow patients with diseases such as cataract, macular degeneration, glaucoma, and diabetes. They will co-manage these diseases when further care is necessary by referring patients to the appropriate surgical eye specialty and routinely provide post-op care when their patients are returned to them.
- Treat eye trauma and acute eye infections: corneal abrasions, chemical burns, foreign bodies on the surface of the eye or eyelids, thermal burns, conjunctivitis, and inflammation of the iris.

DOCTORS OF OPTOMETRY HAVE EXTENSIVE EDUCATION AND TRAINING TO DELIVER THE MEDICALLY RECOGNIZED STANDARD OF CARE

The doctor of optometry program is comprised of additional years of extensive classroom study and clinical training, through intensive, hands-on clinical experience and concentrated disease exposure. Professional education of doctors of optometry includes general medicine with a concentration on the study of eye health and vision care.

Doctors of optometry are licensed by each state, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico. While requirements may differ from state to state, optometry school graduates must pass a comprehensive examination to prove competence and skill before a license to practice is granted.

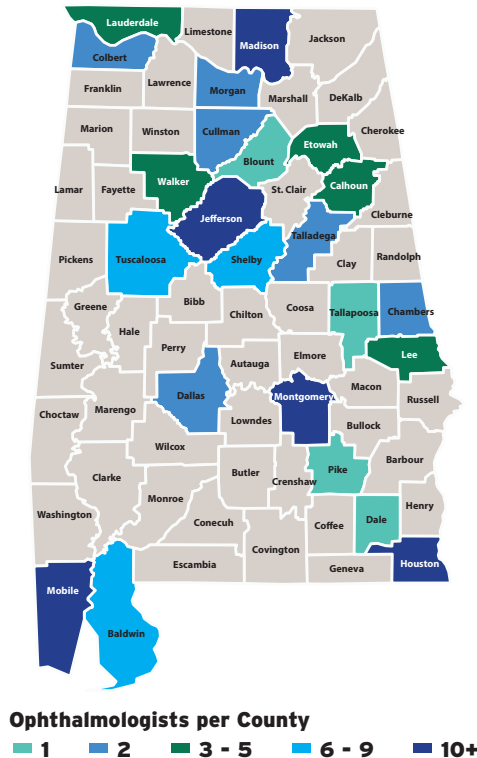
These licenses must be renewed annually or biannually. In all states, renewal requires a specified number of hours of continuing education. Throughout their careers, doctors of optometry complete ongoing professional training and education.

EXPANDED OPTOMETRIC SCOPE IMPROVES ACCESS TO CRITICAL EYE HEALTH SERVICES AND REDUCES HEALTHCARE COSTS

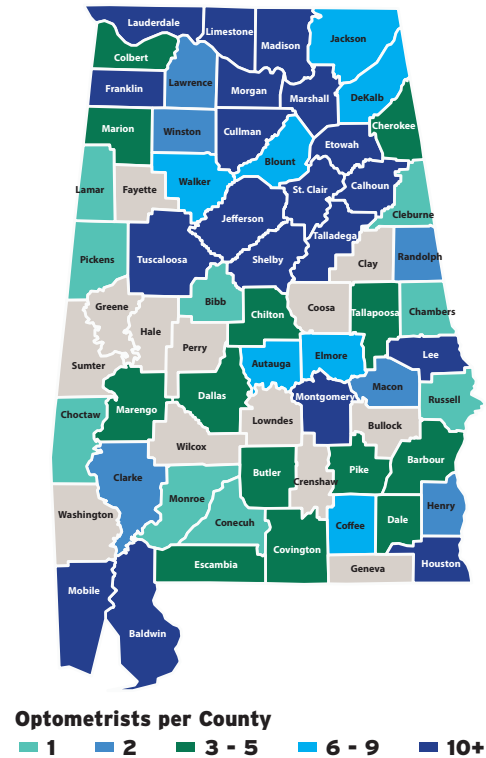
Optometry is a regulated profession and scope of practice varies between states. Practice rights should not be a political issue that is inconsistent across states but an issue of patient access to quality eye health and vision care. By allowing all doctors of optometry to practice to the full extent of their training, patients enjoy greater access to the latest procedures and better preventive care as many medical conditions will be caught earlier. If appropriate preventive steps are not taken, costs will burgeon as the population ages and life expectancy increases.

ALABAMA ACCESS TO EYE CARE

ALABAMA OPHTHALMOLOGY PRACTICE LOCATIONS



ALABAMA OPTOMETRY PRACTICE LOCATIONS



Locations include general and specialty ophthalmology practices

Doctors of optometry are geographically accessible and uniquely available to furnish Alabama's primary eye care services. Doctors of Optometry are currently practicing in 54 of the 67 Alabama counties, providing eye care access to 96.1% of the state's total population^{1,2}. Optometrists are the only eye care provider within 31 Alabama counties, providing access to eye care for 361,619 urban residents and 805,182 rural residents. All 13 counties with no optometrist are also without a local ophthalmologist³, and account for 13,197 urban residents and 170,834 rural residents.

Currently, the United States has 14.3 practicing optometrists per 100,000 population. Alabama is slightly below the national average with 13.8 optometrists per 100,000 population, and when practice locations are evaluated, there are 15.3 optometric practice locations per 100,000 population within the state.

1 American Optometric Association (AOA) Doctor of Optometry Master Data File. St. Louis, Missouri. July 25, 2018.

2 U.S. Census Bureau. 2010 ZCTA to County Relationship File. https://www2.census.gov/geo/docs/mapsdata/data/rel/zcta_county_rel_10.txt. Accessed March 1, 2018.

3 American Medical Association (AMA) Masterfile Physician Professional Data 2016. Chicago, Illinois. Available from: Medical Marketing Services, Inc. October 2017.