

# **NEW ZEALAND COLLEGE OF OPTOMETRISTS INC.**

## **MEMBERSHIP AGREEMENT**

Realising that the New Zealand College of Optometrists was founded in order to establish a distinctive nucleus of individuals endeavouring to develop and maintain the highest ideals and practice of the profession and science of optometry I pledge myself as a condition of Membership in the College to support the Code of Ethics and Practice Standards of the College.

### **CODE OF ETHICS**

Members of the College shall accept responsibility for the consequences of their acts, must make every effort to ensure that their services are used appropriately, and when indicated, recommend alternative sources of care, and act always in the best interest of their patients.

Members of the College shall maintain the highest degree of professional competence by rendering services, using techniques and providing opinions that meet the highest standards of practice.

The personal standards of behaviour of a Member shall not compromise the fulfilment of a Member's professional responsibilities.

Members shall participate in the activities of the College and share freely with their colleagues their learning, knowledge, clinical experience and research.

Members shall maintain and promote cordial and courteous relationships with colleagues and members of other professions in order to encourage free exchange of information for the benefit of their patients.

Members of the College shall adhere to the Practice Standards as set out from time to time.

### **PRACTICE STANDARDS**

#### **CONTINUING EDUCATION – PRINCIPLE**

The Code of Ethics requires optometrists to practice conscientiously to the best of their ability and to strive continually to enhance their knowledge and skills.

The knowledge base and technology of all professions changes with time and optometrists have an obligation to their patients, their profession and to the community generally to keep abreast of these changes. Moreover, it is recognised that undergraduate training in any profession cannot lay down all the knowledge and skills of an experienced practitioner so there has to be a process of continuing learning in order to build upon the basic levels of competence achieved on graduation.

#### **STANDARD**

College Members shall attend structured continuing education including lectures, courses, conferences, or study toward additional qualifications, in order to enhance their knowledge and skills.

#### **PROFESSIONAL INDEPENDENCE – PRINCIPLE**

Optometrists have a duty of care to their patients and are morally, legally and professionally obliged to provide optometric service of a high standard that is always directed to their patients' best interests.

It is of the utmost importance that optometrists be professionally independent so they can always place their patients' interests foremost.

#### **STANDARD**

Optometrists should practice in an environment where their professional judgments and behaviour can always be directed to the best interests of their patients.

Policy decisions with respect to the practice should be consistent with high professional standards.

An optometrist must not enter into any agreement or have any understanding with an employer or other party that may compromise their professional judgment or independence, or which may limit the exercise of professional skills within the competence of that optometrist.