From guarding patient safety to guaranteeing access to comprehensive eye care all across America, 2016 was a banner year for optometry—all thanks to AOA members' involvement and commitment to the profession.
Dear Colleagues,

The foundations for our democracy and profession are each built upon unbreakable tenets that are important to remember as we close 2016 and look forward to a prosperous 2017 and beyond.

As we make way for a new administration and uncharted pathways in health care, your AOA—in concert with affiliated associations and you—has been working diligently to ensure that we have the right structure in place to succeed and excel.

In 2016, we not only accomplished the extraordinary redesign of the St. Louis home office, we also developed a new road map for the profession, a blueprint established on four key pillars that will propel and protect our profession and our patients’ eye and vision health care. These pillars—advocacy, public awareness of optometry, tools to provide the best possible patient care, and continuing education—are the mainstays that we are laser-focused on to ensure that optometry is poised for growth and success.

Advocacy: Together with the AOA, state-affiliated associations and invested partners, doctors of optometry never stopped working and ensured that everyone from elected officials to regulatory agencies understood and took action on the important issues facing doctors of optometry and our patients. From supporting legislation to cracking down on unscrupulous contact lens sellers to shining a spotlight on purported online “eye exams” and going toe-to-toe with vision plans to protect the doctor-patient relationship, AOA never stopped advancing optometry’s agenda.

Public Awareness of Optometry: As America’s family eye doctors, we have a unique message that we are broadcasting to patients across the country through the national education campaign, Think About Your Eyes. In partnership with AOA, the communications juggernaut drove 828,463 incremental comprehensive eye examinations in 2016 and is ready to deliver incredible optometric awareness and patient education results in 2017 and beyond.

Tools to Provide Best Possible Patient Care: In 2016, the AOA has made a second-to-none effort to ensure that doctors of optometry can advance practices, cement the profession’s position in the health care market and deliver informational resources. From the model registry AOA MORE (Measures and Outcomes Registry for Eyecare) to the Paraoptometric Resource Center to Optometry’s Meeting® and more, we established the tools you need to succeed.

Continuing Education: Learning is at the heart of maintaining the prestige of the optometric profession and continuing its future. The premier networking event for the profession, Optometry’s Meeting, was the place to be for doctors, paraoptometric staff and students and 2016’s meeting offered more than 30 hours of education. This year, we convened a one-of-a-kind agenda-setting discussion among all leaders of optometry on the future of CE accreditation, enhanced AOA’s members-only learning platform, EyeLearn, with unique offerings and advocated for student protection, driving change in the collection of personal information (social security numbers) for future students.

As you start off 2017, I invite you to read further about the success we have had to date and, more importantly, the incredible momentum we have to build on tomorrow.

Andrea P. Thau, O.D., AOA president

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The AOA mobilized an all-star alliance—the Coalition for Patient Vision Care Safety, which included contact lens makers and others—to convince members of Congress to initiate a bill that would crack down on unscrupulous internet lens retailers. Introduced by Sens. Bill Cassidy, M.D., (R-La.) and John Boozman, O.D., (R-Ark.) in April, the bill—the Contact Lens Consumer Health Protection Act, S. 2777—would strengthen existing patient health safeguards contained in the Fairness to Contact Lens Consumers Act (FCLCA). In September, Reps. Pete Olson (R-Texas) and Kathy Castor (D-Fla.) introduced H.R. 6157, which complements S. 2777.

The existing FCLCA has been undermined by deceitful internet contact lens sellers by:

- Selling contact lenses without proper prescription verification.
- Overfilling orders.
- Filling orders with expired prescriptions.
- Substituting with nonprescribed lenses.

The AOA-backed H.R. 6157 and S. 2777 focus on strengthening the patient health safeguards of the FCLCA that have been undermined, and in certain cases even ignored, by unscrupulous internet contact lens sellers.

These bills offer commonsense, pro-patient approaches based on the importance of contact lenses as medical devices, including:

- Hold sellers accountable for illegal sales tactics and false claims and make contact lens safety a higher priority for the Federal Trade Commission (FTC).
- Establish a patient-safety hotline allowing doctors to provide information to sellers.
- Ban internet sellers from making disruptive, automated “robocalls” into doctors’ offices as the mechanism for verifying prescriptions.

Diminishing deceptive internet contact lens sellers

The AOA and state associations stepped into action in 2016 to protect patients from threats to their health and safety.

AOA urges action in data breach

In late summer of 2016, reports of malicious credit-line openings impacted students and doctors of optometry. Affected parties reported receiving unsolicited, fraudulent applications for Chase Amazon.com Visa cards submitted in their name. In some cases, the cards were approved.

Out of an abundance of concern for members, AOA contacted the FBI and Federal Trade Commission amid initial reports circulating Aug. 2 to apprise investigators of the situation. In turn, AOA conducted its own immediate, internal investigation of its databases and confirmed that it was not the source of this potential breach. Barbara L. Horn, O.D., AOA secretary-treasurer, says members should feel assured that AOA employs stringent cybersecurity measures to protect personal information, and additionally, AOA neither gathers nor stores Social Security numbers.

In a letter, AOA President Andrea P. Thau, O.D., petitioned National Board of Examiners in Optometry (NBEO) President William B. Rafferty, O.D., to reassure students and recent graduates that their personal data would be safeguarded.

The AOA Board of Trustees passed a motion Oct. 8 encouraging optometric organizations to take immediate steps to meet recognized standards for data security.

Then, in an online statement posted in October, NBEO noted its decision to discontinue use of registrants’ nine-digit SSNs in favor of a new “OE Tracker number system.” This number—combined with registrants’ last four SSN digits—now serves as the primary identifier for doctors and optometry students. Additionally, the full SSNs of existing registrants were truncated to the last four digits.

“Data breach has impacted doctors and students of optometry across the country, and the AOA is pleased that NBEO has agreed to take this action to alleviate concerns and prevent future identity thefts,” says AOA President Andrea P. Thau, O.D. “We will continue to press for action, including federal investigation into the breach, to provide peace of mind for our members and colleagues.”
there has been an explosion of online technology and apps available to the consumer that promote themselves as convenient online eye examinations,” says Deanna Alexander, O.D., chair of the AOA’s State Government Relations Committee. “Patients are not aware of the inferior care that they are being provided and the danger they could be putting themselves in by utilizing this technology.”

As of November 2016, 13 states have put in place pro-patient safeguards, including Alabama, Colorado, Georgia, Indiana, Maine, Michigan, Mississippi, Nebraska, Ohio, Oklahoma, Rhode Island, South Carolina and West Virginia. AOA and its affiliates took on online “vision tests,” too. “Striking swiftness” was how a reporter for BuzzFeed, a popular news and entertainment website, described AOA’s denouncement of Chicago-based Opternative’s new vision test app. On April 4, within a year of Opternative’s launch, the AOA filed an expansive and formal complaint to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) against the startup. The complaint argued that Opternative posed a significant health risk to the public. The AOA challenged Opternative on the grounds that its marketing to consumers, without federal approval, was in violation of the Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act.

“Instead of apps or devices of the moment that promise everything but deliver inadequate or incomplete information, Americans want new health care technologies, like those incorporated into my practice and optometry practices across the country, that strengthen the doctor-patient relationship and help make people healthier,” Dr. Loomis said at the time.

Reflecting on the complaint a few months later, Dr. Loomis says, “That was huge for us.”

THE AOA MOBILIZED AN ALL-STAR ALLIANCE TO CONVINCE CONGRESS TO INITIATE A BILL THAT WOULD CRACK DOWN ON UNSCRUPULOUS INTERNET LENS RETAILERS.

The AOA commended the FTC for taking action against 1-800 Contacts alleging the company unlawfully used its market power to orchestrate and maintain anti-consumer agreements with rival online contact lens resellers. According to the suit, 1-800 Contacts signed agreements with 14 other online contact lens retailers to manipulate its way into prominent search engine advertising. The retailers allegedly agreed not to advertise against each other in search engines such as Google and Bing.

The AOA’s urged Sen. David Perdue (R-Ga.) and Rep. Derek Kilmer (D-Wash.), along with nearly 40 of his U.S. House colleagues, wrote letters to the FTC urging greater enforcement of existing law aimed at deceptive internet contact lens resellers.

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Further, the U.S. Senate and House appropriations committees approved Fiscal Year Financial Services and General Government spending bills that included language that the FTC “consider modifications that prioritize patient safety and strengthen enforcement mechanisms aimed at combating illegal sales of contact lenses based on expired or non-existent prescriptions, while coordinating with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to disseminate contact lens safety information to consumers.”

At the AOA’s urging, Sen. David Perdue (R-Ga.) and Rep. Derek Kilmer (D-Wash.), along with nearly 40 of his U.S. House colleagues, wrote letters to the FTC urging greater enforcement of existing law aimed at deceptive internet contact lens resellers.

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Taking on vision plans

Teaming up with the 158,000-member American Dental Association, AOA threw its support behind the Dental and Optometric Care Access Act (DOC Access Act) to thwart anti-competitive business practices by vision plans. Originally introduced by Reps. Buddy Carter (R-Ga.) and Dave Loebsack (D-Iowa) in 2015, the bill had 62 co-sponsors by mid-September. That’s 52 more than last year.

The pro-access and pro-competition legislation calls for prohibiting vision and health plans from:

• Forcing discounts on noncovered services.
• Forcing doctors to participate in vision plans as a condition for taking part in a health plan.
• Restricting doctors’ choice of lab.

Those practices put doctors and patients on the defensive by disrupting patient access to needed care.

Roger Jordan, O.D., vice chairman for policy on the AOA Advocacy Executive Committee, says, “H.R. 3323 will prohibit insurance companies and vision plans from interfering with the doctor-patient relationship. Many states already have this in effect with the help of the AOA SGRC, but we need to cover those plans not covered by states under the ERISA umbrella. This will make patient care better and give the doctor more leverage in how the office will interact with third-party vendors.”

In a national Day of Action in March, doctors and students petitioned members of the U.S. House of Representatives to boost support for the DOC Access Act. They called on lawmakers to help level the playing field for patients and their doctors against vision and health plan abuses. A month later, 600 doctors and optometry students traveled to Washington, D.C., to visit Capitol Hill and federal agencies for the 2016 AOA Congressional Advocacy Conference.

And in June, the AOA delivered a message to VSP Global board chairman Daniel Mannen, O.D.

Drs. Loomis and Thau wrote in a letter: “Especially troubling of late are the misguided policies and priorities of VSP, a company that seems to be arrogantly committing itself to placing its bottom line ahead of doctors’ ability to provide full-spectrum, quality care and doctor-patient decision-making.”

They also called VSP’s Premier Provider program “fundamentally misleading to patients, unfair to doctors, and at odds with the delivery of quality care” and expressed opposition to VSP’s frame policy that required eye doctors to carry VSP-owned frame lines or face a cut in reimbursements.

On July 1, VSP announced that it was postponing implementation of the frame policy.

H.R. 3323 also backs up affiliates’ efforts to halt health and vision plans’ abuses at the state level. Forty states already have laws prohibiting some vision and dental plan abuses.

Even then, some vision plans try to make a fast break around the law by exploiting loopholes and failing to deliver on savings to patients.

Presented at the AOA’s Congressional Advocacy Conference, a study by Avalon Health Economics showed the impact on patients’ true costs of vision and dental plans’ noncovered services provisions (or the lack of provisions). Plans say they save patients money. But according to the study, under the concentrated vision plan market, consumers were paying higher overall costs rather than seeing savings.
Since 2014, the multimillion-dollar nationwide campaign Think About Your Eyes (TAYE), brought to you by the AOA, has been broadcasting optometry’s singular message about the importance of annual comprehensive eye exams, healthy vision and early diagnosis. The campaign has reached millions of patients across the country and, more importantly, has increased the number of incremental eye exams.

• TAYE is delivering optometry’s message directly to tens of millions of families, which has resulted in a 7.2% year over year increase in eye exams.

• As of December 2016, 37 state optometric associations and more than 18,000 providers are participating in the campaign.
MEASURABLE RESULTS

The Think About Your Eyes (TAYE) campaign, endorsed by the AOA, has driven 828,463 incremental eye exams.

Of the 828,463 incremental exams:
- Average of 23 exams per practice across the U.S.
- Purchased 21% more contact lenses
- Have a shorter exam cycle—from 29 months to 16 months

The 828,463 incremental exams drove:
- $43 million in exam fees
- $277 million in follow-on purchases (frames, lenses, contacts, etc.)
- $320 million total additional industry revenue

150,000,000+ people have seen or heard TAYE’s message. Since the campaign’s inception, more than 1,500,000 people with one of the following major eye diseases have been diagnosed earlier than they otherwise would have been:
- Cataracts
- Glaucoma
- AMD
- Diabetes

The national campaign, presented by AOA and The Vision Council, circulates on:
- more than 20 prime-time cable networks
- 10,000 radio stations during commute hours
- Pandora and Spotify online channels
- and digital banner ads on more than 2,000 websites.

Source: The Vision Council Research
This important public awareness campaign is brought to you by the generous support of these organizations and over 18,000 eye care professionals:

This success would not be possible without the commitment of our leadership states and the Armed Forces Optometric Society. Thank you!

Alabama
Alaska
Arizona
Arkansas
Armored Forces Optometric Society
Colorado
Connecticut
Hawaii
Idaho
Iowa
Kansas
Kentucky
Louisiana
Maine
Michigan
Minnesota
Mississippi
Missouri
Montana
Nebraska
Nevada
New Hampshire
New Jersey
North Carolina
North Dakota
Ohio
Oklahoma
Oregon
Pennsylvania
Rhode Island
South Carolina
South Dakota
Texas
Utah
Washington
West Virginia
Wisconsin
Wyoming

In 2016, AOA doctors influenced millions with optometry’s quality care message and empowered Americans with the access to comprehensive eye care that they need and deserve. When it came to driving public awareness about optometry and the profession’s priorities, 2016 broke the mold. Through its media and communications initiatives, AOA is driving public awareness about the importance of in-person, comprehensive eye examinations with a doctor of optometry, and fighting unscrupulous contact lens retailers, cracking down on vision plan abuses and dispelling the false claims of online vision apps. In 2016, AOA’s optometry awareness initiatives generated more media coverage than ever. The number of opportunities for AOA messages to be seen or heard were the highest the AOA has reached since the public awareness campaign’s inception in 2005. Most importantly, media coverage highlighted key messages and facts that support optometry and the health of patients.

THE PUBLIC IS LISTENING TO OPTOMETRY’S MESSAGE

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NOTICE: This is a 6th grade level summary of the contents of this page. The original content is available at the AOA website: thinkaboutyoureyes.com.
More than 110 doctors of optometry and state and national optometry association staffers participated in Optometry's CE Summit 2016, held late in the summer of 2016 in Dallas, Texas. Organized by the AOA, the gathering succeeded in creating a renewed commitment to cooperation and resulted in strong support for each of eight core principles that were thoroughly discussed and shaped following presentations and panel discussions by various experts in the delivery of continuing optometric education.

Attendees included leaders from the Association of Regulatory Boards of Optometry (ARBO), the Association of Schools and Colleges of Optometry, the American Academy of Optometry, the Accreditation Council on Optometric Education, the American Optometric Student Association, the Armed Forces Optometric Association, the AOA and nearly every state association. All of the organizations had a stake in the continuing education of doctors, yet there had been more attention recently on organizational differences than on points of agreement.

AOA President-elect Christopher J. Quinn, O.D., who led the summit’s discussion, said, “Continuing education for optometry should accomplish education, professional advancement and ultimately the development and advancement of the profession of optometry. As we
strive for parity (with our physician colleagues), there is a responsibility that accompanies that equity—a responsibility to hold ourselves to the highest standards.”

After frank and rich discussions, the groups agreed to the following principles:

• A defining feature of a profession is establishing its own educational standards.
• Ongoing post-graduate education is an essential component of the development of the individual professional and of the profession.
• Professional development is necessary to provide the highest quality care for patients. Accredited continuing education activities should include diverse content and innovative learning techniques and experiences.
• Commercial influences and bias should not be part of any educational program, and, likewise, oversight of continuing education activities by the profession should be revenue neutral for the accreditors.
• Post-graduate continuing educational standards should be developed by stakeholders with broad representation within the profession.
• Continuing education activities should qualify for Maintenance of Licensure requirements.
• Oversight and accreditation of continuing education should have educational standards and a governance structure equivalent with other independent doctoral level health care professions.
• A profession’s regulatory body should evaluate educational standards established by the profession for compliance with federal and state law.

"We are glad to be here and glad we are having this conversation," Gregory S. Moore, O.D., president of ARBO, said at the summit. "ARBO, through our proposed task force, wishes to find common ground through COPE that will allow meaningful input by all stakeholders and meet the statutory requirements of our member boards who use CE almost exclusively for maintenance of licensure."

As the meeting closed, AOA leaders expressed their eagerness to work with ARBO on a special task force to focus on assuring inclusiveness, transparency and independence.

AOA’s members-only learning platform, EyeLearn, offers more than 500 courses—including continuing education (CE) resources, accredited education and board-certification preparatory courses—with new CE discussing the latest technology in optometric practices. Visit eyelearn.aoa.org.
their PQRS measures," says Jeffrey Michaels, O.D., immediate past chair of AOA's Quality Improvement & Registries Committee.

"QCDR covers quality measures across multiple payers and is not limited to Medicare. We are seeing commercial medical insurance strive for quality-driven payments, and this registry will seat our members at the center of that paradigm change," Dr. Michaels adds.

The QCDR designation means AOA MORE will seamlessly integrate data from users' EHR and sub-

AOA MORE now Qualified Clinical Data Registry

AOA MORE (Measures and Outcomes Registry for Eyecare), by Prometheus Research—AOA’s newest member benefit—received CMS approval as a Qualified Clinical Data Registry (QCDR) for the 2016 Physician Quality Reporting System (PQRS) reporting year. This important recognition places AOA MORE in the same category as other medical professions' clinical data registries.

"Doctors of optometry—who have EHR systems integrated into AOA MORE—can simplify their lives by registering for our QCDR and allowing it to process their PQRS measures," says Jeffrey Michaels, O.D., immediate past chair of AOA's Quality Improvement & Registries Committee.

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IMPACT OF AOA MEMBER BENEFITS ON PRACTICE

AOA membership enables doctors, staff and students to grow in their careers. Here’s a look at some of these great benefits:

AOAExcel®
AOAExcel® is a member benefit that helps doctors successfully manage the business side of optometry with confidence. AOAExcel offers products and services through its partnerships with endorsed business partners who specialize in solutions ranging from HIPAA compliance and liability insurance to retirement planning and more. All products are fully vetted by AOAExcel and chosen for doctors, by doctors, including:

- Business and liability insurance
- Retirement planning resources
- Practice financing solutions
- HIPAA compliance tools
- Merchant processing technology
- Optometry’s Career Center, where members can post resumes, open positions or apply for positions
- Assistance for recent graduates, including discounts on private student loans, business and liability insurance and more

> Visit excelod.com to learn more.

Paraoptometric Resource Center
Through the Paraoptometric Resource Center, doctors can:

- Enroll staff as associate members, at no cost to the doctor. Associate member benefits include access to online training, continuing education and members-only Web pages, discounted fees for paraoptometric education materials and Optometry’s Meeting® registration, plus more.
- Use the Paraoptometric Career Ladder to aid in the hiring and training of staff. The new member benefit impacts the entire practice, improving productivity and efficiency of training, ensuring consistency in the training of all staff, and allowing for setting future goals.
- Certify staff members. The AOA offers four certified programs for optometric staff. Each program requires successful completion of an examination prepared and administered by the Commission on Paraoptometric Certification with the assistance of Professional Testing Corporation.

> Visit aoa.org/paraoptometrics to learn more.

Optometry’s Meeting®
The premier networking event for the profession, Optometry’s Meeting® offers an opportunity for doctors, paraoptometric staff and students to make a positive impact on their careers and the profession. At the 2016 meeting, more than 30 hours of accredited education was available. Members also had the chance to participate in the House of Delegates, AOA’s main governing body, which leads the advancement of the profession. The cutting-edge OD Talks presentations—inspired by the ever-popular TED Talks—returned for a second year, featuring the patient side of the examination chair.

Registration is open for the 2017 Optometry’s Meeting in Washington, D.C., June 21-25.

> Visit optometrysmeeting.org to learn more and register.

mit PQRS data to CMS on doctors’ behalf. By doing so, doctors will no longer have to report additional "claims-based" codes or be forced to report measures that may not be applicable to their practice based on EHR limitations. As long as doctors properly document in their EHR, AOA MORE is programmed to appropriately report PQRS measures. Users will be required to formally "agree to submit" this data to PQRS when it's time to do so, and AOA MORE will notify doctors of this deadline. It should be noted that if the EHR system a doctor uses is not yet integrated with AOA MORE, other methods of reporting should
be used to avoid any future payment penalties. Doctors can use EHR-based reporting, claims-based reporting, qualified registry reporting or one of the Group Practice Reporting Options to meet the CMS PQRS reporting requirements. AOA MORE will eventually have most EHR systems integrated so doctors of optometry will be able to easily use the registry for reporting in future years.

The Medicare Access and CHIP Reauthorization Act (MACRA), which intends to "align and modernize" Medicare payments under a new Quality Payment Program, officially took effect Jan. 1, 2017. This new incentivized reimbursement system offers two payment paths: the default track that the majority of doctors of optometry will participate in is the Merit-Based Incentive Payment System (MIPS), which combines elements of PQRS, the Value-Based Modifier and meaningful use programs. For doctors required to participate in MIPS, AOA MORE will be an important tool for meeting MIPS program requirements. (Learn more about the program on page 6.)

"WE ARE SEEING COMMERCIAL MEDICAL INSURANCE STRIVE FOR QUALITY-DRIVEN PAYMENTS, AND THIS REGISTRY WILL SEAT OUR MEMBERS AT THE CENTER OF THAT PARADIGM CHANGE."

Visit aoa.org/more to learn more and enroll, and visit aoa.org/medicarehelp for guidance on how to navigate the Medicare program.

AOA PROGRAMS AND VOLUNTEERS EXPAND EYE CARE ACCESS

Optometry Cares®—The AOA Foundation, its programs and the members who volunteer for them have made an impact in expanding eye health and vision care access to everyone in the U.S.

InfantSEE®

A public health program, managed by Optometry Cares—The AOA Foundation, InfantSEE® is designed to ensure that eye and vision care becomes an integral part of infant wellness care to improve a child’s quality of life. For more than a decade, AOA doctors of optometry have provided no-cost, comprehensive eye and vision assessments for infants within the first year of life regardless of a family’s income or access to insurance coverage. A total of 129,745 InfantSEE assessments have been reported since the program’s inception in June 2005. In 2016 alone, 205 new volunteers became InfantSEE providers.

VISION USA

This year marked the 25th anniversary of the VISION USA program, which provides free eye examinations to low-income and uninsured individuals. Under VISION USA, doctors of optometry volunteer their services at no charge to qualifying individuals. A celebration was held at Optometry’s Meeting® in Boston, Massachusetts. A total of 431,203 VISION USA patient assignments have been reported since the program’s inception in 1991. In 2016 alone, 127 new volunteer providers joined the VISION USA network. A total of 5,680 doctors of optometry volunteer their time for the InfantSEE and VISION USA programs.
AOA members, yet again, well prepared for ICD-10

On Oct. 1, a backlog of thousands of new ICD-10 codes—including about 750 changes that expand and refine diagnosis codes related to optometry—went into effect.

Altogether, more than 5,500 new codes—3,651 hospital inpatient procedure codes (ICD-10-PCS) and 1,900 diagnosis codes (ICD-10-CM)—were added by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The new release reflects the backlog of codes that were not implemented due to a partial freeze prior to October 2015, when CMS made the initial transition from the outdated ICD-9 to new ICD-10 codes. The ICD-9 codes, more than 30 years old, contained terminology that was neither expandable nor reflected current medical practices. There was apprehension among providers ahead of the new ICD-10 codes.

“There are now laterality and severity codes for diabetic retinopathy, macular degeneration, retinal vascular occlusions and open angle glaucoma,” says Harvey Richman, O.D., a member of the AOA Third Party Center (TPC) Executive Committee and one of AOA’s Coding Experts.

“Further delineation on orbital trauma was included,” Dr. Richman says. “More codes were added on concussion and the visual effects. There are additionally more options for stroke patients relating to cognitive impairments, visual spatial difficulties, and attention and memory problems.”

The AOA stood ready to assist members with coding questions, providing resources and support as the new code changes took place. In addition to complete coding bundles available in AOA Marketplace, AOA produced a webinar focused on what doctors needed to know about the changes and AOA’s Coding Experts featured several columns in AOA Focus dedicated to explaining the changes.

Optometry’s Fund for Disaster Relief

Optometry’s Fund for Disaster Relief has changed the lives of many doctors by providing immediate financial relief for critical and urgent needs, such as food, clothing and shelter. In 2016 alone, the fund provided $50,000 in charitable assistance to doctors in need. In August 2016, many Louisiana practices and homes were devastated by historic flooding. “That was the first financial support that arrived,” says Christopher Wroten, O.D., of the Optometry’s Fund for Disaster Relief grant. “It was really a quick and easy application, and those funds helped us get by for the first couple of weeks. To receive that early support was definitely a psychological boost as well.”

Archives & Museum of Optometry

The primary repository of information and resources on the history of the AOA and the profession, the Archives & Museum of Optometry hold approximately 2,500 cubic feet of archival materials, such as historical periodicals and scientific journals that detail the early history of optometry and vision science, and approximately 1,800 cubic feet of museum objects, such as eyewear that represent the evolution of corrective vision devices over four centuries.

In 2016, the Archives & Museum of Optometry completed a preservation assessment of its holdings to identify the state of the collections and needs going forward in the new repository as well as applied for a grant from the National Endowment of the Humanities Preservation Grants for Small Institutions to fund preservation housing for its more than 2,000 pieces of eyewear and 1,000 instruments. Two museum exhibits also were installed, one at the St. Louis Science Center (February 19–June 30) and another at Optometry’s Meeting (June 29–July 3).

To learn more about these programs, and others, or to volunteer your time, visit aoadonation.org.
RENOVATION OF AOA NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS COMPLETE

In November 2016, a major renovation to the AOA's national headquarters facility was completed, on time and under budget. The building renovation began in October 2015 without interruption of service to members. The renovation kicked off with a ceremony that included the AOA Board, AOA staff and federal, state and local government officials.

AOA has occupied the building, which was constructed in 1968, since 1978. The facility has had no major work performed since the AOA took ownership. The renovated AOA headquarters has already significantly reduced annual maintenance costs and improve the facility's infrastructure, which will allow AOA to better serve its members.

“Our renovated building represents a renewal of the AOA's more than 100-year-old founding commitment to our member doctors and a way for us to say thanks to our outstanding neighbors and government officials who have helped make optometry feel at home here,” said Steven A. Loomis, O.D., AOA immediate past president.

“We want to thank the leadership of the American Optometric Association (AOA) and our affiliates for investing in the AOA through our new fundraising campaign. Within the first three months of reaching out to enlist support, the AOA has received more than $300,000,” says Andrea P. Thau, O.D., AOA president. "These investments will help offset construction costs and, more importantly, ensure that we will continue to advance quality, accessible eye care for America from AOA headquarters for decades to come.”

There are still available areas within the newly renovated AOA headquarters that offer opportunities for individual and group recognition. Investing in the AOA ensures that AOA's service to members and its advocacy outreach continue to protect our profession. For more information about making your personal investment in the AOA please visit aoa.org/invest.

Dr. Thau and other AOA Board of Trustees members will be joined by federal, state and local government officials for the official ribbon cutting on February 1. AOA leadership, members and local dignitaries will tour the newly renovated AOA headquarters at several events in early 2017, including President's Council on January 13 and the AOA volunteer meeting on February 4.

THANK YOU, INVESTORS

AOA expresses its sincere thanks to those who have made a commitment to the Invest in AOA Campaign. We appreciate your dedication to AOA and your willingness to help us create the best possible offices for the association.

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This report includes all investments pledged through December 5, 2016.
WE ARE GRATEFUL FOR OUR AOA-PAC INVESTORS

Our AOA-PAC is the only political action committee working to elect and re-elect pro-optometry candidates to Congress. Every doctor and student who contributes to AOA-PAC is making an important investment in optometry’s future and deserves our thanks. To join with investors or increase your level of support so that AOA-PAC continues to fight and win for optometry, visit aoapac.org today.

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• If every AOA member gave $50, AOA-PAC would be the largest health care PAC nationwide.
• Optometry is a legislated profession and AOA-PAC is the only pro-optometry PAC.
• AOA-PAC fights and wins for your right to practice and your access to patients.

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### Contributions or gifts to AOA-PAC are not deductible as charitable contributions for Federal income tax purposes. Contributions will be screened and those from persons who are not solicitable will be returned. Federal law requires us to use our best efforts to collect and report the name, mailing address, occupation and name of employer of individuals whose contributions exceed $200 in a calendar year. Contributions to AOA-PAC are used for political purposes. The amount above is a suggestion only; you are free to contribute more or less, and AOA will not favor or disadvantage anyone by reason of the amount of their contribution or their decision not to contribute. You may refuse to contribute without any reprisal.