

Media release

21 March 2013

Revised guidelines for use of scheduled medicines released today

Revised *Guidelines for use of scheduled medicines* (the Guidelines), which increase care choices and improve access for patients with, or who are at high risk of developing, chronic glaucoma, were released today by the Optometry Board of Australia (the Board).

Assessment for glaucoma is a cornerstone of optometry practice. The revisions to the Guidelines enable optometrists whose registration is endorsed for scheduled medicines to prescribe topical anti-glaucoma medicines for patients diagnosed with chronic glaucoma, or who are at high risk of developing the disease.

Optometrists whose registration is endorsed for scheduled medicines have undertaken accredited training in ocular therapeutics in order to meet the Board's *Endorsement for scheduled medicines registration standard*, and are required to meet higher continuing professional development standards than other optometrists.

Optometrists whose registration is endorsed for scheduled medicines still have the options of either referring patients with chronic glaucoma to an ophthalmologist for ongoing management or entering into a shared care arrangement – and many practitioners are likely to continue to do so where access to specialist care is not an issue.

The Chair of the Optometry Board of Australia Mr Colin Waldron said the revised Guidelines were an important step in increasing access to quality eye health care, particularly in areas where access to specialist care is an issue due to geographic location and/or social disadvantage.

'The education and training of optometrists has changed significantly over the past decade to include core prescribing competencies. The competency standards address differential diagnosis and treatment options including when not to prescribe and when to refer. Glaucoma management in collaboration with patients' other health care practitioners is at the centre of this training', said Mr Waldron.

'These revised Guidelines allow optometrists whose registration is endorsed for scheduled medicines to practice to the full scope of their training, which means that more people will be able to access glaucoma treatment and on-going care.'

The revised Guidelines and an accompanying *Fact sheet* are published on the Board's website.

For more information:

- [Guidelines](#)
- [Fact sheet](#)
- www.optometryboard.gov.au
- For media enquiries, please call (03) 8708 9200