

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

IJCAHPO Scope of Practice Sets Guidelines for Allied Ophthalmic Personnel

ST. PAUL, Minn.—June 4, 2018—The International Joint Commission on Allied Health Personnel in Ophthalmology (IJCAHPO®) new Scope of Practice for Allied Ophthalmic Personnel (Scope) specifies roles for those who comprise the ophthalmic health care team. The Scope helps practices best utilize Allied Ophthalmic Personnel (AOP) capabilities by setting guidelines about specific tasks eye care team members are allowed to perform in accordance with laws and regulations that permit physicians to delegate work.

AOP are highly skilled professionals qualified by academic and clinical ophthalmic training to provide patient care and assistance to ophthalmologists. They are permitted to work under the direction of a licensed ophthalmologist and are not independent practitioners. AOP include Ophthalmic Assistants, Technicians, and Technologists (with sub-specialties in surgical assisting, imaging, biometry, and ultrasound) and other mid-level eye care team members. They assist in the evaluation, management, treatment, education, and care of patients with medical and surgical conditions affecting the visual system. They perform a patient's initial exam and gather information about a patient's health history.

There is an ever-increasing need for AOP to help ophthalmologists see more patients. In the United States, 4.2 million Americans ages 40 and older are visually impaired. Regular eye exams are vital to prevent visual impairment and blindness.

"Certified AOP increase productivity by improving patient flow and the triage of patients," said William F. Astle, MD, FRCSC, Dipl. ABO, President of IJCAHPO's Board of Directors. "AOP play a vital role worldwide in the prevention, screening, and treatment of eye diseases," Astle continued.

While they can provide diagnostic information and clinical data in the ophthalmic exam to the physician, and may assist in surgery, patient education, and compliance with prescribed treatment, AOP do not diagnose or treat eye disorders and may not prescribe medications. To view the complete Scope of Practice visit www.jcahpo.org.

About IJCAHPO

The International Joint Commission on Allied Health Personnel in Ophthalmology (IJCAHPO), formally the Joint Commission on Allied Health Personnel in Ophthalmology (JCAHPO), was established as a not-for-profit organization in 1969 to offer certification and continuing education opportunities to ophthalmic allied health personnel. Since then more than 29,000 people in the U.S., Canada, and around the world have earned IJCAHPO® certification.

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