

EyeLights eNews



August 2025

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"To promote global eye health and prevent blindness through training program accreditation, education, and the certification of Allied Ophthalmic Personnel."

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President's Message

IJCAHPO Certificants, Greetings!

2025 is going by quickly, and unfortunately, July is my last month serving as IJCAHPO's President. It has been an honor and a pleasure serving as President during the last two years. I have seen the enthusiasm that you bring to our profession and the expertise and compassion you bring to the care of our patients. Your efforts make a difference in the lives of our patients and the success of the eye care team!

To ensure continued quality and success, we all need to keep our training and skills current. This means staying up to date on diseases, treatments, and technologies to assist with our clinic's daily patient load. We hope that you will join us this October in Orlando for IJCAHPO's in-



Michael Stewart, MD

IJCAHPO President;
Professor and Chairman Emeritus
of Ophthalmology,
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Knights Templar Eye Foundation, Inc.

person educational event, where you can engage with instructors for the best available educational experience. This face-to-face learning allows instructors to observe nonverbal feedback from the audience to optimize learning. In-person events such as the annual ACE meeting help us explore how and what we learn, and they allow us to meet other similar-minded professionals from across the country. In between sessions, you will have plenty of opportunities to talk with other technicians, doctors, and industry representatives, providing you with opportunities to form ongoing connections and build your network. We hope you will join us at ACE in Orlando this October.

I would like to thank you, our certificants, and our dedicated volunteers who donate time and talent to support IJCAHPO's mission.

Sincerely,

Michael Stewart, MD, IJCAHPO President
Professor and Chairman Emeritus of Ophthalmology
Mayo Clinic Florida
Knights Templar Eye Foundation, Inc. Professor of
Ophthalmology Research



The Premier Event in Eye Care Education—Join Us in Orlando

Join us at the largest and best Ophthalmic Technician program of the year! Designed with you in mind, there are more than 60 new courses at four different levels, along with more than 25 hands-on Learning Labs. Mark your calendar for you and your technicians to attend ACE in Orlando from Friday through Sunday, October 17-19, 2025, held at the

Renaissance SeaWorld.

This year's Annual Continuing Education (ACE) event has something for every tech! Whether you're interested in better understanding retinal infections, challenging neuro-ophthalmology cases, ultrasonography, slit lamps, dry eye, or risk management, our new courses cover every hot topic in ophthalmology and are taught by internationally recognized leading experts. Earn up to 18 IJCAHPO CE Credits, gain hands-on experience, and network with AOP in Orlando this October!

Don't miss out on the fun! IJCAHPO has planned a Jeopardy game course, "Mystery Cases," with interactive discussions, an open mic to ask tech experts questions, and AAO will host a night at Universal Island of Adventures! Check our IJCAHPO ACE website for more information. See you in October!

Certification



- **COA Exam Update**
- **Retina Certification**

Updated COA Examination Launches August 1

IJCAHPO is excited to announce the launch of the updated Certified Ophthalmic Assistant (COA) examination on August 1, 2025. The changes made by the IJCAHPO Certification Committee have produced an examination that will not be substantially different for test-takers but will better represent Allied Ophthalmic Personnel (AOP) practice at the Assistant level. Those who are currently preparing to take the test will not need to change their approach. The main changes to the examination are as follows:

- **Domain content area realignment:** Ophthalmic Photography questions have been combined with Ophthalmic Imaging questions under the Ophthalmic Imaging content area, and the Diagnostic Ultrasound content area has been split off from the Biometry content area. These changes will likely not be noticeable to test-takers, but they offer realignment to reflect current practice.
- **Question structure:** Each multiple-choice question will offer three possible answers instead of four.
- **Access options:** Pearson VUE will now offer an online test-proctoring option, allowing test-takers to choose between taking the exam at a Pearson VUE test center or at their own home location. Those choosing the at-home option will be required to have sufficient internet access, a working camera, and the ability to meet all requirements of the Pearson VUE proctor.

The overall structure and purpose of the exam will not change. There will still be 200 total multiple-choice questions focused on the same overall content areas. (The current examination content areas that will be receiving the minor adjustments are viewable in the Core Criteria Book [online](#).) IJCAHPO is proud to continue offering the highest quality certification for the Certified Ophthalmic Assistant!

New Retina Certification Opening

Coming soon—IJCAHPO has a new certification specifically for retina technicians. The Certified Retina Technician (CRT) credential was developed in response to a need for retina technicians to have a credential specific to the subspecialty. This credential covers

17 content domains, including History and Documentation, Visual Assessment, Surgical Assisting, and Ophthalmic Imaging. The examination will be available online and in Pearson VUE test centers in September 2025.

Tech Corner



- **Affordable CEC**

Did you know that IJCAHPO Provides Easy Access and Affordable CECs?

Do you or your technician colleagues wonder how to renew certification at a low cost? IJCAHPO can help you and your colleagues keep your Continuing Education knowledge growing and current with affordable CECs. Please share this with your eye care team:

1. One of the best and lowest-priced CEC offerings is available through IJCAHPO's EyeCareCE website. With a [Clinic CE Subscription](#), the entire eye care team of technicians can access more than 200 courses at no additional cost—your practice only pays one low annual fee for the entire eye care team to access! Let your Sponsoring Ophthalmologist and Practice Manager know about IJCAHPO's [Clinic CE Subscriptions](#) for **ONLY \$525** during the month of August!
2. IJCAHPO often offers 4-6 FREE CECs annually. We announce them when we have the offer open, so keep your eyes on our iFocus e-mail announcements.
3. Every year, we promote 4 Webinars for less than \$35 (\$8.75 each) – and we offer these opportunities a couple of times per year. This means that you can earn 18 COA credits over three years for only \$157!
4. Are you familiar with [iMiles](#)? IJCAHPO's individual online subscription includes 6 CECs for \$49 annually. In 3 years, this is \$147 for 18 credits, which meets the COA credits required for renewal.
5. We offer 1-day Virtual Online programs for 6-8 credits for about \$95. Combined with other resources mentioned, you can achieve significant cost savings. Check the online Schedule of Events page on our EyeCareMarketplace.
6. IJCAHPO's Foundation offers many grants and scholarships that often pay full meeting registration or certification fees. However, you must apply for the scholarship, and it must be earned or met by writing an essay or other criteria. Here is a link to access the site: <https://www.jcahpo.org/foundation/grants/>
7. Exam study materials - IJCAHPO print and online prices range from \$15 - \$25; courses start at \$55. IJCAHPO's competitors' charges range from \$90, \$120, \$175, to \$195—all far more expensive than IJCAHPO's courses.
8. Your practice may apply to provide its staff with IJCAHPO CE credits, which costs \$45 for 1 CEC hour. ALL Techs in the clinic are able to obtain the credit if they attend the course. For example, if you have five techs in the classroom, the cost is \$8.00 per tech. Here is the link, if you'd like to encourage your practice to make application: [CEC Handbook](#)

Stay Certified! Plan ahead and take advantage of the many opportunities IJCAHPO provides to earn CE credits for a low, low price!

Education



- **Coding EYEXchange**
- **Patient Advocacy Webinar**
- **Fall AOP Symposium**
- **EYEXchange Updates and Schedule**

Coding EYEXchange—August 19-September 16, 2025

IJCAHPO's first-ever coding webinar series launches this August with four brand new courses, a Q&A session, and 6 CE Credits! Learn from a professional coder and auditor, Jacqueline Thelian, CPC, CPC-I, CHCA, and CPMA, of MedCo Inc., about the role techs play in the coding process as well as how to avoid common coding errors that result in claim denials and overpayments. Superstars in the coding and risk management field will cover courses addressing the internal auditing process, the importance of safety protocols, and retina coding. This webinar series will be essential education for AOP. [Register online today!](#)

James C. Tsai Presenting a Webinar on Patient Advocacy in September

A major responsibility of AOP is to assist and educate patients regarding their care and support in their daily lives. To prepare for the responsibilities of patient advocacy and caregiving, techs must be able to answer patient questions, especially questions about low vision, vision impairment, and blindness. James C. Tsai, MD, MBA, will present a special webinar addressing these needs on Tuesday, September 9, 2025, titled "Health Coaching: A New Paradigm Applicable for Assisting the Low Vision Patient." With generous support from the Delta Gamma Foundation Service for Sight, this webinar will prepare techs to engage patients in shared decision-making to improve clinical outcomes. At the low price of only \$8, this webinar allows the opportunity to earn 1 IJCAHPO credit and improve patient advocacy skills. [Register online today!](#)

Virtual Fall AOP Symposium Registration is Open

Registration is now open for our Virtual Fall AOP Symposium. Sign up before September 4 to join us online from September 5–15. Get ready to learn about some of the most important issues in ophthalmology and earn 7 IJCAHPO credits quiz-free! Our seven Fall Symposium courses cover a wide range of topics, from history taking to echography, thyroid eye disease to neuro-ophthalmologic emergencies, and more. Learn from some of the best instructors, including six ophthalmologists and two COMTs, at your own pace and in your favorite location! [Register online today!](#)

EYEXchange Updates and Schedule—CE Regional Meetings and CE Course Offerings

Add these to your Calendar TODAY so you won't miss these learning opportunities. To access the online links and information, go to <https://www.jcahpo.org/education/>.

2025 Regional Event Schedule

September 6, 2025—[Albuquerque, NM](#)

September 13, 2025—[Myrtle Beach, SC](#)

Can't make it to a national or regional meeting? IJCAHPO hosts online continuing education.

Virtual Symposiums

August 19-September 16, 2026—[Coding EYEXchange](#)

September 5–15, 2025—[Fall AOP Symposium](#)

December 5–15, 2025—[Practice Management AOP Symposium](#)

Webinars

September 9, 2025—[Health Coaching: A New Paradigm Applicable for Assisting the Low Vision Patient](#)— Dr. James C. Tsai, MD, MBA

Visit store.jcahpo.org for details.

JCAHPO Foundation



- **New Scholarships**

Do you want to attend ACE but don't think you can afford it? IJCAHPO is here to help!

IJCAHPO's staff raised money to support scholarships to fully fund 3-5 certificants' registration to the ACE on-site 3-day program. Our staff is proud of those certified technicians who are committed to the profession, and we want to help those of you who do not have the funding support needed to advance your education and training by going to ACE.

To apply, applicants must submit a short paragraph describing how IJCAHPO's staff is important to them and has helped them with their continuing career progress and certification.

The Foundation supports our certificants with ACE and Certification Scholarships in the name of IJCAHPO's Keynote Speakers: Carol L. Shields, MD, Chief of the Ocular Oncology Service, Wills Eye Hospital; and Philip Rosenfeld, MD, PhD, Professor of Ophthalmology, from the Bascom Palmer Eye Institute of the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine. These generous ophthalmologists gave back their honorarium as the Harold A. Stein Speaker to the JCAHPO Education and Research Foundation to support ophthalmic technicians in their careers to attend ACE!

Two other special scholarships are provided by long-time IJCAHPO volunteers. The first is the Jennie B. Busch Memorial Education and Certification Scholarship, supported by Susan Busch, COMT. The second is in honor of Eydie Miller-Ellis, MD, and her late

husband, Robert Ellis. We wish to thank them for their generosity in supporting our technicians' careers! Each of the scholarships will cover the full ACE 2025 \$275 on-site registration.

[APPLY FOR ACE 2025 SCHOLARSHIPS TODAY!](#)

We want to make EyeLights a valuable resource for you. We appreciate your feedback on what you want to know more about and how to make the next one more beneficial to you and the profession. Please email us at jcahpo@jcahpo.org.

Have you been missing important IJCAHPO updates?

You may have accidentally unsubscribed from our mailing list, and we don't want you to miss out on valuable information.

Here's Why This Matters:

When you opt out of one of our emails by clicking the unsubscribe link in the footer, you are removed from receiving **all future communications** from IJCAHPO—not just the specific email you intended to stop. This means you could miss out on critical updates, including:

- **Certification Reminders & More!**
- **CE credits through IMiles courses, webinars, and training.**
- **Professional Development Opportunities**
- **Exclusive Member Offers**
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If you need assistance with the re-subscription process or have any questions, our Help Desk is here for you. Just give us a call at **800-284-3937**, and we'll be happy to assist you.

Thank you for being a valued member of the IJCAHPO community!



International Joint Commission on Allied Health Personnel in Ophthalmology

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