

## ***Professional Development Guidelines Explained***

The Nova Scotia College of Dispensing Opticians (NSCDO) revised its professional development guidelines last fall. The guidelines came into effect on April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2009. A copy of the guidance document was circulated with the annual Newsletter in February 2010. There still seems to be some confusion over these new guidelines and I will try to clarify some of the new rules in this article.

It's important to remember three criteria about each continuing education activity you complete - (a) the Topic, (b) the Credit Values and (c) the Source of the material.

### **The Topics**

The categories required by the NSCDO are topics related to eyeglasses only (EG), to contact lenses only (CL), those that you may apply to either eyeglasses or contact lenses (EC), professional service (PS) and related fields (RF). Only EG and CL are mandatory topic requirements. You are not required to do PS or RF credits however these categories do allow you to supplement your credit portfolio after the minimum credits required have been reached. You can view more detailed descriptions at the NSCDO website at [www.nscdo.ca](http://www.nscdo.ca).

### **The Credit Values for Dispensing Opticians (DO's)**

Dispensing Opticians (DO's) are required to submit eight (8) professional development/continuing education credits upon registration renewal each year.

A minimum of four credits must come from the EG or EC category.

- All eight (8) credits may relate to eyeglass dispensing (EG), the choice of topic is totally up to the individual as Opticians are free to decide which lectures or other forms of continuing education they want to undertake.
- A maximum of four (4) topics may come from CL, PS other areas known as related fields (RF). DO's do not have to do related field topics if they so choose but may do all of their credits in the EG category.
- A DO is permitted to attend and receive recognition for a contact lens lecture however a contact lens topic is considered a RF for DOs since

contact lenses are not the principle focus of a DO's practice.

### **The Credit Values for Certified Contact Lens Fitters (CCLF's)**

Certified Contact Lens Fitters (CCLF's) are required to submit ten (10) professional development/continuing education credits upon registration each year.

- A minimum of three (3) must relate to contact lens fitting.
- A minimum of three (3) must relate to eyeglass dispensing.
- Of the remaining four (4) credits required the CCLF may choose to submit EG, CL, EC, PS or RF credits.

### **The Source of the Material**

#### *Categories*

1. Canadian Educational Institutions with Accredited Opticians Programs
2. Canadian Provincial, National or International Opticians Associations
3. Canadian Provincial, National or International Organizations
4. Related Organizations or Corporations.

The Professional Providers (categories 1 through 3) are recognized groups that advance the profession provincially, nationally or internationally through their combined activities in continuing education, primary education, innovation in education, legislation, and consumer education. Professional Providers are expected to offer Nova Scotia Opticians enriched education and professional inspiration through continuing education opportunities. This may include modules or presentations on product or state of the art technology new to the industry but the College would also expect that this would be balanced with topics that are not brand-specific.

Seventy percent (70%), that is 7 credits for CCLF's and 5 credits for DO's, must come from professional providers recognized by the College.

The remaining thirty percent (30%) that is, 3 credits for CCLF and 3 credits

for DO's, may come from other sources. To be clear, attendance at "in house" office seminars by professional suppliers, lens manufactures or laboratories representatives as well as at lectures hosted by individual members of the College are limited to three (3) credits per year.

A credit is awarded for attending the NSCDO as well and the NSSDO AGM's.

The College has also introduced professional service credits. Credit can be awarded for serving as educators or as committee members of the Collage and Society. Please review the PD Guidelines as found on the NSCDO home page @ [www.nscdo.ca](http://www.nscdo.ca). Any further questions can be directed to the College Office for clarification.