



TOA NEWSLETTER

Texas Ophthalmological Association

Fall 2024

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By *Steven McKinley, MD*, president@TexasEyes.org



Greetings to my fellow TOA members and colleagues! I am honored to have been elected as your 2024-2025 President and am excited to serve. I look forward to continuing the line of dedication and service established by my predecessors in promoting the interests of our membership, our profession, and our patients.

Please allow me to take this opportunity to offer special thanks to our past president, **Dr. H. Miller Richert**, for his leadership, exemplary commitment to our organization, and fine example for me to follow. Over the course of my medical education and professional development, I feel fortunate to have had many role models to emulate. From my time growing up in East Lansing, Michigan, to studying at the University of Michigan Medical School, through graduate medical training at the Cullen Eye Institute at Baylor College of Medicine, and now practicing in Austin with active membership in the Travis County Medical Society, I can think of many important people who helped me along my journey of growth to become a physician and glaucoma subspecialist in private practice and an advocate in organized medicine. I am also immensely grateful to TOA leaders who have guided me in recent years.

Each of us should keep in mind that we can positively influence those around us. Never underestimate the impression we can make on an observer, a medical student or resident, a young associate, or a seasoned partner who can be inspired by our words and deeds to go on to become a leader in ophthalmology, build on our reputation as a respected medical profession, advance our specialty, or improve the systems which deliver healthcare.

Recruiting those around us to join the TOA and engage in advocacy remains a priority for me and your Executive Council – please help us with our calls to action! In

addition to annually renewing your membership, another way to do so is to regularly contribute to [EYE-PAC](#). Maintaining lines of communication with and informing our elected policymakers in state government are essential ways to ensure our patients continue to receive high-quality and timely care while maintaining practice viability. Thank you to those who give time and effort to the EYE-PAC Committee to ensure its success and to all who contribute the necessary funding.

The 89th Regular Session of the Texas Legislature commences on January 14, 2025. The TOA will continue working to defend the doctor-patient relationship and ease onerous regulations and requirements which create inefficiency and add cost and burden to medical practices. We will remain vigilant and ready to respond to any legislative or administrative efforts that may compromise Texans' access to appropriate ophthalmological care. Our association has certain legislative goals for the upcoming session, and these details will be shared with you in the coming months. The other Executive Council members and I continue to be well-served by our legal counsel and lobbying team.

The Texas Medical Association (TMA) will conduct its highly successful "First Tuesdays" program from February through May during the regular session, specifically Feb. 4, March 4, April 1, and May 6, 2025. I encourage TOA members to come to Austin with your white coat on the first Tuesday of these months to meet with state representatives and senators. Tell them about the difficult issues we face in practice caring for our patients and argue in favor of constructive policy change. The TMA and TOA will provide materials and talking points. You can find information on attending at www.texmed.org/firsttuesdays. I hope to see many residents participate in "First Tuesdays" since legislators and their staff are always quite receptive to your input. I have advocated alongside our American Academy of Ophthalmology (AAO) Advocacy Ambassadors and found them to be an impressive group of residents-in-training.



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President's Message *continued*

The TOA sponsored 15 Advocacy Ambassadors from Texas to attend the AAO Mid-Year Forum this past April in Washington, D.C.

We had a terrific annual meeting last May in Dallas and have begun the planning process for the next one. In response to member feedback, the format will be adjusted so that all CME activities will take place on one Saturday, with a reception on the Friday evening beforehand. We gauged members' interest and will set out to showcase our ophthalmology residency programs around Texas. The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston will serve as the venue for our next annual meeting on March 21-22, 2025, and other residency programs around the state will be invited to periodically host TOA annual meetings in future years. I know **Dr. Zev Shulkin** and his program committee will prepare a great meeting for us, and I look forward to pitching in. Be on the lookout for registration instructions and plan to attend!

Other important dates to mark on your calendar are the hugely popular Codequest events – January 25, 2025 (Austin), February 22, 2025 (Houston), and March 29, 2025 (Dallas). We are extremely fortunate to have **Dr. John M. Haley** continue leading this informative program so you and your office staff can stay up to date on all billing and coding best practices.

TOA Name Change

At the March 22 Business Meeting, we will vote on rebranding our association to better reflect that, through our medical training and certification, we are the ones caring for patients as physicians and surgeons. It is a matter of high importance that when we advocate for our profession, the public and all political and administrative officials we communicate with can distinguish this level of skill and training from our eye care partners. I thank those who have completed our survey on how to address changing the name of the Texas Ophthalmological Association. You can still complete the survey [here](#).

In closing, I would like to thank my wife, Dr. Pooja Varshney, for her support as I take on the added responsibility and tasks of leading our wonderful and respected association. As a practicing pediatric allergist/immunologist and strong advocate for the medical profession herself, she understands the role our voices can play in moving the needle toward enhanced

patient care, safety, and improvement in challenging environments. I must also thank our dedicated executive director, Rachael Reed, CAE, for her extensive knowledge and abilities that help our association thrive and serve as a model for others around the country. It is a joy and honor to serve alongside her and the other Executive Council members. Best wishes to all for continuing success and thank you for all that you do to benefit our patients.

2025 Annual Meeting in HOUSTON!

Mark your 2025 calendar now so that you can attend the TOA Annual Meeting. It will start with a reception on Friday, March 21 followed by all-day CME on Saturday, March 22.

We are pleased to announce that the meeting will be held on the Texas Medical Center campus thanks to the **UT Health Houston Department of Ophthalmology**. We listened to you, our members, about minimizing time away from clinic and family. The TOA Planning Committee is hard at work already. President-Elect **Zev Shulkin, MD** of Dallas is the chair of the Planning Committee.

Housing: Go to www.TexasEyes.org



2025 TOA Annual Meeting

Look for registration information in December.



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Coding & Reimbursement Update



*By John Haley, MD, OCS, AAO Health Policy Committee, Novitas Medicare CAC,
Chair, TOA Liaison Committee to Third Party Payors and Peer Review Agencies*

coding@texaseyes.org

Here we are in late 2024 and the usual threat of yet another major cut of 2.8% in the [Medicare Fee Schedule](#) has been proposed by CMS for 2025. This proposed cut will go into effect unless Congress intervenes. Our organizations, as always, are working to reverse these cuts. I currently have no idea how successful we will be. Unfortunately, Congressman Michael Burgess has decided not to run again and will greatly weaken our cause - but keep the faith.

There are several other bothersome proposals that do not seem to have a real useful purpose.

- ★ Use of transfer of care modifiers for any 90-day global packages where the surgeon does not perform pre or post op care (54, 55, 56). This would apply to all cases including doctors in your group or external doctors with formal transfer of care agreements.
- ★ New add on code for post care – GPOC1. This appears to pay a co-managing doctor more than the surgeon for providing pre or postop care. I really don't get the purpose of this one. Where does this stuff come from? CMS still will not pay us the usual EM value for post op visit codes. And then primary care will again be more highly reimbursed

when the complexity code G2211 can be reported with wellness visits as well as other EM codes and it was announced that ophthalmology will finally have its first MIPS value pathway (MVP) – complete ophthalmologic care MVP. I really know very little about it except it is not ready for prime time yet.

You recall CMS has been trying to push all doctors away from traditional MIPS and into value pathways by 2027 and this is the first attempt for ophthalmology. That's all I know. Change continues to come so we must remain flexible and adapt to what comes. More to come after the final rule is released.

We have published coverage updates on Ryzumvi as they have become available. Recently, Novitas issued a coverage opinion that bundles the pupil dilation reversal drug Ryzumvi with office visits, so one cannot bill it to the Medicare patient in any way. This same bundling policy for Rev-Eyes a number of years ago was the death of that drug. You would think the manufacturers would get this policy straight before committing to developing, releasing and marketing the drug. In my personal opinion, its future does not look bright. I am not aware of commercial plans that have taken a position on the drug coverage as yet. Commercial carriers usually follow Medicare's lead on policies.



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Questions from the Herd

John Haley, MD and William Plauche, MD answer coding and reimbursement questions from TOA members at coding@TexasEyes.org. They volunteer their time to provide this valuable service.

Question: I recently started a solo practice in a new area. It may be a number of years before I get to the level of having partners, and I was wondering the acceptable practice patterns for taking a vacation, or not being available for patients while away at a meeting. Of course, I always have a phone to answer calls, and I am available for patients 24/7 to speak to them regarding any concern, but what is an acceptable coverage strategy if someone needs to be seen? Am I obligated to pay a colleague to cover for me, or ask for a favor? Or, is it acceptable to speak with a patient on the phone and inform them that they may need to go to an emergency room if something is urgent?

Answer: In my opinion the best way to handle coverage is to make friends with your community colleagues and have a call sharing arrangement. That has worked for many years for those of us that practiced solo for years but then moved to a partnership. Even small group practices need coverage when all their members want to go to the same meeting, so get to know your colleagues.

Question: We are receiving loads of medical record requests from BCBS on Lucentis and Eylea patients and now we are receiving denials after we have submitted those medical records. These patients have been being treated with Lucentis or Eylea now for months to years. The manufacturers have encouraged us to reach out for assistance. What should we do here?

Answer: I feel your pain. Many retina practices in Texas and surrounding states are having the same problem and so far, there is no one in BCBS who will talk to us about this problem. We are working with AAO and TMA to try and bring them to the table. For now, all you can do is appeal the claim and have your doc defend the claims. Be sure to read the Oct 1 new policy on AntiVegF drugs put out by BCBS. Read requirements for continued therapy.

Question: One of our younger surgeons attempted to remove a cataract but there wasn't any capsular stability, and he was concerned that the cataract would fall into the vitreous so he stopped the procedure and closed up and referred the patient to retina. He did do some phacoemulsification of the nucleus. Can he bill for the procedure? What code would that be?

Answer: Yes, you can bill it & no difference in code.

Question: How soon before leaving a practice is it recommended to stop performing surgery such as cataract surgery?

Answer: No best practice. If you have good partners, they will carry on when one leaves.

Question: I have a billing question. I am leaving a large practice and likely going to start my own very small practice elsewhere over the next few months. If I were to stay off of insurance plans and just be a cash pay ophthalmologist, would I be able to bring a patient to the ASC and charge them the fee for the cataract surgery as cash pay, and with regard to facility fee, have the ASC bill their insurance for the facility fee only (assuming ASC took their insurance). So, a given insurer would just see a facility fee but no surgeon's fee.

Continued on next page



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Questions from the Herd *(continued)*

Answer: You can try that, but I doubt the insurance company will pay the facility claim without a corresponding surgical claim. It is very difficult to make a living in ophthalmology without accepting the insurance system. You can go the office based surgery route but then you also get no facility fees. Only a very few are successful with going the Premium route on cash pay only patients.

Follow up Question:

Thank you! I wonder what would happen if I filed an insurance claim and then had them deny it for me not being a provider in network. Would they still pay the facility fee if they are in network? Do you think it is worth calling a couple of insurance providers to find out?

Answer: I think you can just bill out of network and the insurance company will pay you the out of network fee which is less than in network and same goes with ASC if they are not in network for that particular company.

Question: We are getting ready to have a new lens calculation machine delivered to our office. We have some billing questions. For our Ascan IOL calculations, we are currently billing the ICD-10 Codes as follows:

76519 Modifier 26

76519 Modifier TC

Both of these are paid for by Medicare and some insurances bundle their payments for the two codes into just one payment. We have always billed this specific code this way and have been paid. With this new machine we are not actually going to do an ultrasound but are still going to be able to perform the intraocular IOL calculations.

We will be using an ALGOS IOL MASTER by ALCON. We have been billing the 76519 for years and this is a recognized code for all of our insurance plans, although reading on the 92136 there are some plans that do not recognize this cpt as an active code.

Researching the CMS website I do see the 92136 IOL Master code which is also a bilateral code. However, I do know that some insurances do NOT recognize this ICD-10 coding and will NOT pay for the measurement services performed. Are we still able to bill the Ascan codes the same way we have always billed?? We will not be doing an ultrasound to obtain the calculations, but considering the many insurances that do not cover the 92136 is it still appropriate to continue billing the 76519 codes?

Answer: 76519 is still used for IOL power calculation using ultrasound and 92136 is used for IOL MASTER AND LENSTAR type machines. You should be using 92136 PC ABD TC depending on carrier preference. You should not be using the Ultrasound codes.

Question: I would like to clarify a billing question specifically regarding refractions and/or exams in a global fee period for cataract surgery. Are we allowed to bill an exam code with modifier 24 as well as the refraction when a patient is in their global fee period following cataract surgery? Or should the exam be considered postop and we bill the refraction only?

Answer: No, all office visit codes are included in the 90 day GF period but you can and should bill for the refraction which is a non-covered service.



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TOA Annual Meeting Recap and Change of Officers

TOA held a very successful annual meeting in Dallas this past May. We had excellent participation and the return of the ophthalmology-specific exhibit hall. Thank you to the Program Committee members: **Steven McKinley, MD**, chair, **Drs. Timothy McCulley, H. Miller Richert, Misha Syed and Eric Packwood**.

During the business meeting on Saturday, May 4, 2024, **Steven McKinley, MD** of Austin was installed as the 68th president of the TOA. Dr. McKinley joined the Executive Council in 2020 and was quickly recognized as a future leader. A strong patient advocate, Dr. McKinley has attended almost every First Tuesday lobby day since the program's inception. This experience will serve him well as he prepares to lead TOA through the 2025 Texas Legislative Session.

Our new TOA president congratulated outgoing president, **H. Miller Richert, MD**, of Abilene on his successful year. Dr. Richert guided TOA through a bylaws change, the Texas primary elections, regulatory meetings and more. During his presidency, we had a record 15 residents attend the AAO's Congressional Advocacy Day in Washington DC. Dr. Richert is a fearless patient advocate and a dedicated supporter of EYE-PAC. We thank him for his tremendous work this year.

The voting membership present at the TOA annual business meeting voted in new members of the Executive Council:

New & Reelected Executive Council Members

- President-Elect: **Zev Shulkin, MD**, Dallas
- Secretary: **Kevin Kerr, MD**, Stephenville
- Treasurer: **Susan Fish, MD**, The Woodlands
- Councilor: **Timothy J. McCulley, MD**, Houston
- Councilor: **Charlotte Akor, MD**, Corpus Christi
- Councilor: **Rocky McAdams, MD**, Abilene
- Councilor: **Matt Hammons, MD**, Fort Worth
- AAO Alt Councilor: **Jacob Moore, MD**, Corpus Christi
- AAO Alt Councilor: **Mark L. Mazow, MD**, Dallas
- AAO Alt Councilor: **Lindsey Harris, MD**, Houston

Automatic

- President: **Steven McKinley, MD**, Austin
- Past President: **H. Miller Richert, MD**, Abilene



Outgoing TOA President, **H. Miller Richert, MD** along with current TOA President, **Steven McKinley, MD**.

Continuing Councilors

- Eric Packwood, MD**, Fort Worth
- Justus Thomas, MD**, Kingwood
- Sherif Khalil, MD**, Houston
- Kenneth Maverick, MD**, San Antonio
- Becky Fredrickson MD**, Pearland

Continuing AAO Councilors

- Robert D. Gross, MBA, MD**, Dallas
- Sidney Gicheru, MD**, Dallas
- Sanjiv Kumar, MD**, Uvalde

Thank you to these members who completed their terms on the Executive Council:

- Ryan Rush, MD**, Amarillo
- Marie Bui, MD**, Austin
- Davinder Grover, MD**, Dallas
- Mark Gallardo, MD**, El Paso
- Jack Pierce, MD**, Austin
- Rajiv Rugwani, MD**, Waxahachie
- Sashi Alloju, MD**, Dallas



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TOA Awards

The Distinguished Service Award is TOA's highest honor. The award celebrates and honors those who have gone above and beyond to care for and advocate for ophthalmology patients. The sitting president selects the awardee each year and presents it during the annual business meeting. View past winners at TexasEyes.org/distinguished-service.

2024 Distinguished Service Award: Robert D. Gross, MBA, MD

Robert D. Gross, MBA, MD is a pediatric ophthalmologist who has been practicing in Dallas for over 30 years. He earned his Master of Business Administration at University of North Texas while simultaneously attending medical school at UT Southwestern. A devoted educator, Dr. Gross continues to serve as an Adjunct Professor of Ophthalmology at UT Southwestern Medical Center and a Clinical Professor of Ophthalmology at Texas Tech University HSC in Lubbock.

Dr. Gross' memberships in organized medicine are too numerous to list, but as a pediatric ophthalmologist, he has been able to volunteer and hold leadership positions within the American Academy of Pediatrics and its various levels of membership as well as within ophthalmology and its many subspecialties. He has also served within the Texas Medical Association and his Tarrant County Medical Society for many years.

Dr. Gross joined TOA in 1990 and has been an active member the entire time. He has represented our state as a councilor at the AAO for three terms and he rose to the level of officer within the TOA. Dr. Gross takes his leadership responsibilities seriously and rarely misses a meeting. He regularly attends advocacy events in Austin and Washington DC.

Members of the Executive Council greatly appreciate and rely upon Dr. Gross' thoughtful approach towards issues large and small. Dr. Gross has an excellent way with words; lawmakers and staffers respond to his easy explanations of complicated issues. He is positively fearless when it comes to defending quality eyecare and patients.

For these many qualities, the TOA proudly named Robert D. Gross, MBA, MD the 2024 Distinguished Service Award recipient.

Congratulations to the winners of the 2024 Barry Uhr, MD, Memorial Prize in Comprehensive Ophthalmology.

The memorial prize was established by the TOA Foundation and David Shulman, MD, in 2011 to honor former TOA President, Barry Uhr, MD, of Dallas.

First Place

A Gutsy Case of Geographic Atrophy

Debora Lee, MD

University of Texas Health Science Center Houston,
Houston, TX

Second Place

Implications of Perioperative Opioid
Use & Retina Surgery

Asad Loya, MD

Baylor College of Medicine
Houston, TX



Special guest **William E. Flanary, MD**, presented the awards along with **Dr. McKinley**.



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TOA Members as Leaders

We are very fortunate to have ophthalmologists active in all levels of organized medicine. TOA works closely with Texas Medical Association (TMA) on many regulatory and legislative issues that impact your practice. TMA recently held its annual meeting in Dallas.

TOA Past President **Keith Bourgeois, MD** of Houston completed his ninth and final year on the TMA Board of Trustees. He served as Vice Chair of the Board of Trustees 2022 - 2023 and then as Chair 2023 - 2024. Before this board term, Dr. Bourgeois served on the TMA Council on Legislation and as Chair of the TMA Council on Socioeconomics. We thank him for his tremendous service to TMA.

American Medical Association (AMA) delegates present elected TOA Past President **Michelle Berger, MD**, of Austin as Chair of the delegation to the AMA from Texas. In addition, Dr. Berger was appointed as one of the inaugural co-chairs of the TMA Committee on Independent Practice. This is a new standing committee that will report to the TMA Board of Trustees.

Thank you to the following TOA members currently serving in the Texas Medical Association:

Council on Health Care Quality:
Marie B. Somogyi, MD
Rudolf Churner, III, MD

Council on Socioeconomics:
Audrey E. Ahuero, MD

TMA Past President:
Alan C. Baum, MD (2000)

TMA House of Delegates:
Audrey E. Ahuero, MD
Karl C. Bentley, MD
Michelle Berger, MD
Shashi K. Dharma, MD
Robert Evans Gerald, MD
M. Kelly Green, MD
Robert D. Gross, MBA, MD
Jerry D. Hunsaker, MD
Steven H. McKinley, MD
Jacob J. Moore, MD
Nan Wang, MD

TMA House of Delegates (ex-officio):
Alan C. Baum, MD

TMA House of Delegates
(Alternate Delegates):
Lindsey D. Harris, MD
Kristen Hawthorne, MD
Craig King, MD
Ann E. Ranelle, DO
H. Miller Richert, MD
Namrata M Sayani MD
Marie B. Somogyi, MD
Johnathan D. Warminski, MD



TOA Member Benefit: Legal Hotline

As an association, TOA cannot provide specific legal advice but can provide members with general legal information. For specific legal advice, physicians should seek advice from their own retained counsel. Send your question regarding Texas practice acts or regulatory acts to exec@texaseyes.org.

No malpractice, reimbursement, or practice management questions please.



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January 1, 2024, marked the start of **Jane C. Edmond, MD's** term as president of the American Academy of Ophthalmology (AAO). Dr. Edmond is the 128th president of the AAO. She specializes in both pediatric and neuro-ophthalmology, and currently serves as the inaugural chair of the Department of Ophthalmology, the University of Texas at Austin, Dell Medical School, director of the Mitchel and Shannon Wong Eye Institute, and vice dean of professional practice.

Mitchel Wong, MD received a 2023 Texas Exes Distinguished Alumnus Award to honor alumni who have distinguished themselves in their profession, community, and through service to the university.

Congratulations to **Marie Somogyi, MD** who begins her term as president of the Austin Ophthalmological Society.

Recent AAO Leadership Development Program graduate **Ore-ofe Adesina, MD** has launched two podcasts as part of his LDP project. They are "Sight for Sore Eyes" which addresses issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion in the field of ophthalmology and is published every two weeks; and "Out of the Blindspot" which discusses all things neuro-ophthalmology and is published monthly. Both podcasts are available on Apple Podcasts, Spotify, Amazon Music and iHeart Radio.

The AAO Board of Trustees has nominated **J. Timothy Stout, MD, PhD, MBA** to serve as Senior Secretary for Clinical Education. If elected at the AAO Annual Meeting in October in Chicago, his term will begin in January.

Marie B. Somogyi, MD is TOA's new representative to the TMA's Interspecialty Society Committee. As the ISC representative, she will also hold a seat in the TMA House of Delegates. Dr. Somogyi also now sits on the TOA Executive Council as a voting member.

During the AMA's annual meeting in June, **Michelle Berger, MD** was named chair of its Council on Long Range Planning & Development.

Claudia Maria Prospero Ponce, MD, of El Paso, is in the AAO's Leadership Development Program Class of 2024. She was sponsored by the American Association of Ophthalmic Oncologists and Pathologists.

The American Glaucoma Society presented its 2024 Innovator Award to **Ronald L. Fellman, MD**, of Dallas.

Texas Governor Greg Abbott has appointed **M. Kelly Green, MD** of Mable Falls to the Texas Medical Board District Four Review Committee for a term to expire January 15, 2030.

Send your accomplishments in organized medicine to Rachael Reed at exec@texaseyes.org.

2024 AAO Awards

The American Academy of Ophthalmology and Academy President **Jane C. Edmond, MD**, are pleased to recognize **Mitchel Wong, MD**, and **Shannon M. Wong, MD**, as guests of honor at AAO 2024 in Chicago. Each year, the Academy president has the privilege of selecting individuals to be guests of honor at the Academy's annual meeting, in recognition of their significant contributions to ophthalmology and the Academy. Recipients attend the meeting as guests of the Academy.

AAO Secretariat Awards

From the Secretary for Lifelong Learning and Assessment: **J. Timothy Stout, MD, PhD, MBA**, Houston.

From the Secretary for Online Education and the Chief Medical Editor of *EyeNet Magazine*: **Daniel A. Johnson, MD, MBA**, San Antonio.

From the Secretary for Annual Meeting: **Martha P. Schatz, MD**, San Antonio.

From the Secretary for Communications: **Robert D. Gross, MD, MBA**, Dallas.

Achievement Awards

Senior Achievement Award:
Steven J. Dell, MD, Austin.

Achievement Award:
Ore-ofe O. Adesina, MD, Houston;
Mark J. Gallardo, MD, El Paso; and
Claudia Maria Prospero Ponce, MD, El Paso.



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CODEQUEST 2025

Find Out What is Coming to Texas Before it Gets Here!

TOA will again bring Codequest to you, so that you can be prepared. Registration will open this fall:

AUSTIN – Saturday, January 25, 2025
Fundamentals Course Plus Intermediate Codequest
(8 am – 3:30 pm) pick one or stay all day

HOUSTON – Saturday, February 22, 2025
Intermediate Codequest
(8 am – Noon)

DALLAS – Saturday, March 29, 2025
Intermediate Codequest (8 am – Noon) OR
Retina Specific Codequest (1 – 5 pm) pick one

This Retina Codequest will be offered in only two locations in the country next year.



Vision Support Organizations - Registration Required

You will recall HB 2081 by Rep. Stephanie Klick / SB 820 by Sen. Lois Kolkhorst from the 2023 Legislative Session which requires the registration of vision support organizations (VSOs); imposing a fee; requiring an occupational registration; and providing a civil penalty.

Thanks to then president **Jacob Moore MD's** testimony and TOA's advocacy, the final bill exempts a physician licensed by the Texas Medical Board who has an ownership interest in three or fewer locations from registering as a VSO. If you have ownership interest in four or more entities that, under one or more agreements, provides two or more business support services to an optometrist, you must register with the Texas Secretary of State and pay a fee annually.

“Business support services” are defined as business, management, consulting, or administrative services, facilities, or staff provided for an optometrist or an entity that employs or contracts with an optometrist to provide services or products, including: office space, furnishings, equipment, supplies, or inventory; staff employed by a vision support organization; regulatory compliance; eye care equipment, supplies, or products; marketing or advertising; or billing and collection for services and products.

Information including FAQs and the online registration portal is found at <https://www.sos.state.tx.us/statdoc/vision-support-organizations-faqs.shtml>.

In Memory

James W. Norbury, Jr., MD
of McKinney
died March 2023.

Lacy A. Koonce, MD
of Sugar Land
died March 2023.

Guy Devine, MD
of Victoria
died December 2023.

David Edwards Shacklett MD
of San Antonio
died January 2024.

Fernando Romero, MD
of Katy
died March 2024.



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(512) 370-1518

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TOA Advocacy

Congratulations to our 2024 Advocacy Ambassadors!

Texas was well represented last month at the AAO's Congressional Advocacy Day and Mid-Year Forum in Washington DC. Congressional Advocacy Day is a unique opportunity for physicians to lobby members of Congress on the issues that affect ophthalmology. The David G. Shulman, MD Legislative Education Fund makes this opportunity for young ophthalmologists possible.

One of this year's participants wrote: *"My co-residents and I had such a fantastic experience learning about advocacy, and it wouldn't have been possible without your help. We are certainly all interested and excited to continue such advocacy efforts at the state and local level."*

We appreciate their program chairs for allowing them to take time off to advocate:

Brandon Bates, MD - Mitchel and Shannon Wong Eye Institute - Dell Medical School

Daniel Berry, MD - Texas Tech University HSC

Darius Bordbar, MD - Baylor College of Medicine

Zachary Dezeeuw, MD - University of Texas Medical Branch

Michael Frankland, MD - Mitchel and Shannon Wong Eye Institute - Dell Medical School

Cynthia Guerin, MD - Texas Tech University HSC

Cina Karimaghaei, MD - University of Texas Medical Branch

Brandon Lam, MD - UT Health San Antonio

Maria Morrow, MD - UT Southwestern Medical Center

Arman Mosenia, MD, MSE - Mitchel and Shannon Wong Eye Institute - Dell Medical School

Michelle Nguyen, MD - UT Health San Antonio

Monia Reding, MD - Baylor College of Medicine

Casey Strauss, MD - UT Southwestern Medical Center

Brandon Winward, MD - UT Southwestern Medical Center

You (Joey) Zhou, MD - University of Texas Medical Branch



Michelle Nguyen and **Brandon Lam**, advocating for patients in Washington.

Thank you to these practicing TOA members for advocating for patients in DC!:

Erica R Alvarez-Gonzalez, MD

Ore-Ofeoluwatomi O Adesina, MD

Jane C Edmond, MD (current AAO President)

Sidney K Gicheru, MD

Robert D Gross, MBA, MD

John M Haley, MD, OCS

Lindsey D Harris, MD, OCS

Sanjiv R Kumar, MD

Mark L Mazow, MD

Steven H McKinley, MD

Aaron M Miller, MD, MBA

Claudia Maria Prospero Ponce, MD

H. Miller Richert, MD, FACS



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TOA At Work

TOA Helps Avert Drastic Proposed Surgical Fee Cuts TOA Averts Drastic Medicaid Cuts

In May, many of you sent comments to the Texas Health and Human Services Commission as it conducted a calendar fee review of Eye and Ocular Adnexa Surgery. The agency had proposed significant fee cuts affecting nearly all adult and pediatric surgical eye procedures. Some of the most frequently billed codes in pediatric ophthalmology (affecting

cataract, vitrectomy, glaucoma, strabismus and lacrimal probing) were slated to be cut, some as high as 50%.

Thanks to your advocacy, HHSC did not implement any of the cuts. An extra thank you goes to these members who took the time to testify: **Drs. Eric Packwood, Megyn Busse, Jane Edmond and Charlotte Akor.**

EYE-PAC Committee At Work

TOA President Steven McKinley, MD appointed new committee members, indicated below.

Mark L. Mazow, MD, chair, Dallas
Steven McKinley, MD, Austin, TOA president-elect
H. Miller Richert, MD, Abilene, TOA past president
Zev Shulkin, MD, Dallas
Susan Fish, MD, The Woodlands
Chevy Lee, MD, McAllen (re-appointed)
Lindsey Harris, MD, Houston
Kevin Kerr, MD, Stephenville
Ore-Ofeoluwatomi O. Adesina, MD, Houston
Cynthia Beauchamp, MD, Dallas
Marie Somogyi, MD, Austin
Mark Gallardo, MD, El Paso
Rocky McAdams, MD, Abilene
Kyle MacLean, MD, Dallas
William Burkes, MD, San Angelo
Keith Bourgeois, MD, Houston (newly appointed)
Cynthia Guerin, MD, PGY-3 Texas Tech Univ. HSC (newly appointed)

Thank you to **Jacob Moore, MD**, of Corpus Christi who completed his term on the EYE-PAC Committee.

EYE-PAC is TOA's political action committee, which is a vital advocacy tool. The contributions you make to EYE-PAC go directly to support Texas state representatives and senators (and candidates) who have proven that they support quality eye care and patient safety. EYE-PAC is bi-partisan and has only 1% overhead costs. Your TOA dues dollars may not be used by EYE-PAC. Contribute at www.eye-pac.org or along with your dues this fall.



TOA President **Steven McKinley, MD** along with ophthalmologists-in-training **Arman Mosenia, MD**; and **Brandon Bates, MD** discussed quality eyecare with Texas Senator **Sarah Eckhardt**.



Only 20% of TOA members give to EYE-PAC

We can do better than that. Give generously with your 2025 dues.



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Welcome New Members

Provisional Members

Waseem H. Ansari, MD, San Antonio
J. Christian Berry, MD, San Antonio
Lauren Blieden, MD, Houston
Ying Chen, MD, Houston
Scott A. Cherne, MD, Hurst
Alex Compton, MD, MBA, Wichita Falls
Jorge Corona, MD, Dallas
Sam S. Dahr, MD, MS, Houston
Naomi Hasegawa, MD, Austin
Chaith Indukuri, MD, Cedar Park
Sumitra Khandelwal, MD, Houston
Ryan Kim, MD, Duncanville
John W. Klein, MD, Amarillo
Andrew Pazandak, MD, Dallas
Claudia Maria Prospero Ponce, MD, El Paso
Ruben Ramirez, MD, El Paso
Min Ren, MD, Beaumont
Aaron B. Roller, MD, Austin
Shlomit Schaal, MD, PhD, MHCM, Houston
Forrest B. Swann MD, Waco
Logan Vincent, MD, Tyler
Edward Wood, MD, Austin

Resident Members

Daniel Berry, MD, Texas Tech University HSC
Darius Bordbar, MD, Baylor College of Medicine
Zachary Dezeuw, MD, University of Texas Medical Branch
Michael Frankland, MD, Mitchel and Shannon Wong Eye Institute - Dell Medical School
Matthew Gillings, MD, UT Southwestern Medical Center
Cina Karimaghaei, MD, University of Texas Medical Branch
Asad Loya, MD, Baylor College of Medicine
Zahra Markatia, MD, Baylor College of Medicine
Jeremy Maylath, MD, Texas Tech University HSC
Michelle Nguyen, MD, UT Health San Antonio
Monia Reding, MD, Baylor College of Medicine
Melanie Scheive, MD, MS.Ed, San Antonio Military Medical Center
Casey Strauss, MD, UT Southwestern Medical Center
Brandon Winward, MD, UT Southwestern Medical Center
You Zhou, MD, University of Texas Medical Branch

Active Duty Military Members

Sien Chen, MD, Fort Sam Houston
Joseph Santamaria, MD, Marble Falls

Fellow Members

Jason Chien, MD, UTSW Medical Center, Dallas
Kendall Goodyear, MD, TOC Eye & Face, Austin
Spencer Moore, MD, PhD, UTSW Medical Center, Dallas



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