



## **Facts About Optometric Nursing Facility Care (Public)**

Doctors of Optometry (optometrist, optometric physician, O.D.) are educated and trained in regionally and nationally accredited schools and colleges and are licensed by state boards to provide vision and eye health care.

Doctors of Optometry examine, diagnose, treat and manage disorders of the visual system, the eye, and associated structures as well as diagnose related systemic conditions. They provide services to residents of nursing facilities to improve their quality of eye and vision care, to increase their quality of life, and to assist them in attaining, maintaining, and enhancing their functional capacity.

Eye disease and vision disorders increase with age. One-fourth to one-half of nursing home residents has vision impairment. Primary causes of vision loss include cataracts, age-related macular degeneration, glaucoma, and diabetic retinopathy.

Doctors of Optometry provide treatment for residents with glaucoma, cataract, diabetic complications, stroke sequella, and other conditions that may affect the eye and vision system. They also co-manage resident care with attending physicians and other specialists.

Doctors of Optometry provide vision services to residents with healthy eyes as well as to residents who have eye disease that result in low vision.

Doctors of Optometry are vital members of the rehabilitation team. When vision conditions are properly diagnosed and managed, the resident's rehabilitation program will be more effective.

Nursing facilities are regulated by the federal government and must comply with Medicare Requirements for Long Term Care Facilities. Under these regulations, the facilities must provide the necessary care for residents to maintain their highest practical level of function and independence.

Nursing facilities are required to assist residents in obtaining eye care as needed. Doctors of Optometry provide the expertise to assist nursing homes in maintaining compliance with these regulations.

Nursing facilities must meet and comply with both federal and state regulations to receive payment from both Medicare and Medicaid.

## **Facts About Optometric Nursing Facility Care (Nursing Facility Administrators)**

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Doctors of Optometry provide treatment for residents with glaucoma, cataract, diabetic complications, stroke sequella, and other conditions that may affect the eye and vision system. They also co-manage resident care with attending physicians and other specialists.

Doctors of Optometry can assist health care planning teams in determining the visual needs and abilities of residents. When vision conditions are properly diagnosed and managed, the resident's rehabilitation program may be more effective. Impaired vision has been shown to be associated with decreased transfer ability, decreased self care, and falls.

Doctors of Optometry provide vision services to residents with healthy eyes as well as to residents who have eye disease that result in low vision. Services may include provision of spectacles, medication management, specialized optical devices, and training for visual impairment.

Optometric care can be delivered within the facility through a large array of portable and hand-held equipment removing the burden of transportation of the resident to a doctor's office. The use of portable equipment allows flexibility in space requirements within the facility.

Doctors of Optometry are independent health care providers whose services are covered under Medicare Part B, Medicaid, and many other forms of insurance. Optometric services are not bundled with payments to the nursing facility.

11/98

## **Facts About Optometric Nursing Facility Care (Optometrists)**

Currently about 5% of the older population reside in nursing homes. The average age of the resident is 85 years. The total number of persons living in nursing facilities will significantly increase over the next thirty years.

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Nursing facilities are regulated by the federal government and must comply with Medicare Requirements for Long Term Care Facilities. Under these regulations, the facilities must provide the necessary care for residents to maintain their highest practical level of function and independence. Doctors of Optometry provide the expertise to assist nursing homes in maintaining compliance with these regulations.

Eye examinations are not required by federal regulations. However, nursing facilities are required to assist residents in obtaining eye care if needed. Most nursing facility residents will never have an examination after their admission.

Care of nursing facility resident's centers around the development of specific plans of care. Optometrists can help nursing facilities develop care plans for patients with visual impairment, eye disease, and other disorders of the visual system.

A wide variety of hand-held equipment is available which allows the optometrist to deliver care directly within the nursing facility. This eliminates the need for transportation to offices which is a major source of expense.

Optometric services within nursing facilities are often covered by Medicare B, Medicaid, and many third party providers. Billing is typically done through the optometrist's own office.

Regulatory issues regarding the delivery of eye care in nursing facilities can be complex. Optometrists must be familiar with all regulations concerning access to patients and third party payor requirements. The American Optometric Association and state nursing home committees can be helpful with these issues.

Vision care to nursing facility residents can be an extremely satisfying adjunct to primary care practice. Optometric care within nursing facilities offers a nontraditional source of practice revenue while providing care to a population in need of optometry's unique services.