



Contact: Susan Thomas
American Optometric Association
(314) 991-4100 x263
SLThomas@aoa.org

Heather Hinckley
MS&L
(212) 468-3725
Heather.Hinckley@mslpr.com

**SURGEON GENERAL MEETS WITH OPTOMETRY ON IMPACT OF INFANTSEE™,
A NEW PUBLIC HEALTH PROGRAM
OFFERING NO-COST INFANT EYE ASSESSMENTS NATIONWIDE**

ROCKVILLE, MD (June 24, 2005) –A delegation from the American Optometric Association met last Friday with U.S. Surgeon General Richard H. Carmona, M.D., M.P.H, America’s chief health educator, to provide a detailed briefing on InfantSEE™, a new public health program aimed at the earliest possible diagnosis of a potential eye and vision problems in children through a no-cost assessment by an optometrist, and an update on the impact of the initiative since its nationwide launch two weeks ago. The InfantSEE™ program involves the voluntary efforts and donated expertise of thousands of participating Doctors of Optometry in all 50 states. President Jimmy Carter is the Honorary Chairman of InfantSEE™ and is serving as the national spokesmen.

“I commend the American Optometric Association for their efforts to improve the health and well being of all Americans, and I look forward to partnering with AOA to advance the 2005 agenda of the Office of the Surgeon General: ‘The Year of the Healthy Child,’” said Dr. Carmona. “I particularly want to thank the nearly 7,000 optometrists nationwide who are participating in InfantSEE™ for all they are doing to provide much-needed eye care services to America’s children.”

“President Bush and Dr. Carmona have demonstrated consistent leadership on children’s health concerns. Optometry is proud to be working closely with this administration, at the highest levels, to ensure that no child will be plagued by a preventable eye or vision problem,” said Peter Kehoe, O.D. “Friday’s meeting in the Surgeon General’s office makes it clear that optometrists, through the InfantSEE™ initiative and the primary eye care we’re delivering in communities across America, are committed to ensuring that 2005 and every year to follow will be the year of the healthy child.”

Although infants cannot respond verbally, the first year of life is an ideal time to conduct an extensive eye assessment. Not only is this a critical time for eye and vision development, but generally children at this age do not yet fear doctor visits and find the assessment painless and often enjoyable.

Typically, infants sit on their parent's lap during the assessment, in which the optometrist uses lights and other hand held objects to check that their eyes are working together and that there are no significant refractive issues that will impede proper vision development. The optometrist may also use drops or a spray to dilate the baby's pupils to ensure the health of the eye.

As part of the national launch, former President Carter, who serves as honorary national chair and spokesman for InfantSEE™, issued a call-to-action through a public service announcement (PSA), which will educate parents about InfantSEE™ and urge them to take advantage of the program. The PSA cites his personal experience regarding his grandchildren's eye problems. His granddaughter was diagnosed and treated as a toddler for amblyopia, often referred to as lazy eye, a leading cause of vision loss in people younger than 45, which will affect one in 30 children. His grandson's amblyopia was not identified until grade school and may never be fully corrected.

To learn more about InfantSEE™, call toll-free (888) 396-EYES (3937) or visit www.infantsee.org.

About the American Optometric Association

American Optometric Association doctors of optometry are highly qualified, trained doctors, on the frontline of eye health and vision care, who examine, diagnose, treat and manage diseases and disorders of the eye. In addition to providing eye and vision care, optometrists play a major role in an individual's overall health and well being by detecting systemic diseases. Doctors of optometry have the skills and training to provide more than two-thirds of all primary eye care in the United States. The American Optometric Association represents more than 34,000 doctors of optometry, optometry students and paraoptometric assistants and technicians in nearly 6,500 communities across the country. For more information, visit www.aoa.org.

###