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Eyes on the Future: Webinar Fuels Momentum for Eye Care's Next Generation

Leaders in vision care come together to spotlight career pathways, support emerging talent, and explore possibilities for shaping the future of the eye care workforce.

Alexandria, VA & Cincinnati, OH – August 20, 2025 – With a shared commitment to strengthening the future of the profession, leaders in vision care are coming together to highlight career pathways, support emerging talent, and explore the possibilities ahead.

[The Vision Council Foundation](#), in collaboration with [EyeMed Vision Care](#), will present [Fueling the Future: The Next Generation of Eye Care Professionals](#) — a forward-thinking webinar that explores the evolving eye care workforce, from early education decision-making to the realities of practice operations today, and the opportunities to shape its future.

Why this matters:

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the employment of optometrists is projected to grow 9% from 2023 to 2033, significantly faster than the average for all occupations. This growth is a clear indicator of the rising demand for vision care, driven largely by an aging population. Even so, 20% of eye care providers report a [severe or extreme shortage of optometrists](#), with many identifying the expansion of training and education pathways as a key solution. Addressing this talent gap requires intentional spotlighting of career opportunities and proactive pipeline-building efforts, especially in underrepresented or underserved regions.

“Shaping the future of eye care starts with meaningful conversations and intentional collaboration,” said **Ashley Mills, CEO of The Vision Council and The Vision Council Foundation**. This webinar creates space for industry leaders to connect, share perspectives, and spark the conversations that will move us forward.”

Featured speakers from the hosting organizations include:

- Alysse Henkel – Vice President of Research & Insights, The Vision Council
- Pete Kehoe, OD – Vice President of Provider Relations, EyeMed Vision Care
- **Joining them as special guest speakers:**
 - Mick Kling, OD – Senior Director of Professional Development, Vision Source
 - Howard Purcell, OD, FAAO – President, New England College of Optometry

Bringing together leaders in research, education, private practice, and managed vision care, the conversation will explore workforce trends, the rising interest in optical careers, and strategies to attract and support new talent. The discussion also highlights the importance of early education, student engagement, and programs that help strengthen the pipeline from classroom to clinic.

“Whether you’re a provider, educator, or industry partner, we all have a role to play in fueling the next generation,” said **Dr. Pete Kehoe, Vice President of Provider Relations at EyeMed Vision Care**. “This is an opportunity for all of us to reflect on where we are, recognize the strides we’ve made, and engage in what’s possible when we work together to shape the future of eye care.”

The webinar is now available on-demand [here](#) — free and open to anyone interested in advancing the next generation of eye care professionals.

Additional educational resources:

- As part of this timely effort to inspire the next generation, **EyeMed and The Vision Council Foundation have launched their latest grade school curriculum kit, *Eye Exams and Your Eye Doctor***. The kit helps young learners understand what to expect during an eye exam — from what the eye doctor looks for to some of the cool tools they’ll get to see. To make learning even more fun, it includes an activity book with a matching game, helpful tips, and kid-friendly ways to keep eyes healthy — all designed to make the experience both educational and memorable.
- **Explore the curriculum kit: [EyeMed Vision Curriculum Kits](#)**
- **Watch the webinar now: https://youtu.be/3O_kB5vl_mI**

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About The Vision Council Foundation

As the philanthropic foundation of The Vision Council, The Vision Council Foundation empowers people everywhere to see and look their best through public eye health education and optical industry career training support. A 501c3 charitable nonprofit organization, the Foundation is dedicated to ensuring better vision for better lives.

About EyeMed Vision Care

EyeMed Vision Care is America’s fastest-growing managed vision benefits company. Its member population is comprised of individuals and families enrolled through employer-sponsored benefits sold directly by EyeMed or distributed by many of the top healthcare organizations in the U.S. EyeMed boasts America’s largest network of eye care providers as part of its commitment to expand access to care and meet the needs of its diverse member population. As part of EssilorLuxottica, EyeMed’s mission is to help people around the world see more and be more. EyeMed is based in Cincinnati, Ohio. Learn more at eyemed.com or [LinkedIn](#).