

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Ontario Opticians' Regulatory Body Applauds Decision To Send "Controlling Mind" Behind Great Glasses To Jail

(Toronto, Ontario; October 1, 2010): The College of Opticians of Ontario (COO) is pleased with today's decision by Justice James Turnbull to sentence Mr. Bruce Bergez to one year in jail without parole. The sentence is for Mr. Bergez' civil contempt of court. Justice Turnbull has yet to sentence Mr. Bergez on criminal contempt of court charges and Mrs. Joanne Bergez' sentencing hearing will occur on October 7th.

"We are getting closer to resolution of the Great Glasses case," said Fazal Khan, the President of the COO and a practising Optician. "The College of Opticians has done everything in its power for the last seven years to stop Mr. Bergez and the Great Glasses outlets from illegally dispensing eyewear, including revoking his registration". (The certificate of registration of Bruce Bergez R.O. C-1192 was suspended by order of the COO Executive Committee under section 37 of the *Health Professions Procedural Code* on November 16, 2006.)

In Ontario, only Opticians, Optometrists and Physicians are legally authorized to dispense eyewear and only Optometrists and Physicians are legally authorized to prescribe eyewear because inappropriately prescribed or dispensed eyewear can cause patients harm. Mr. Bergez and the Great Glasses outlets were performing illegal eye examinations to replace prescriptions and were dispensing eyewear without an Optician, Optometrists or Physician. The practice continued despite revocation of Mr. Bergez' registration by the COO. The COO was granted intervenor status in an action commenced by the College of Optometrists. Several judgments were obtained against Mr. Bergez and Great Glasses involving fines of several million dollars, but they were ignored. The Attorney General of Ontario joined the proceedings earlier this year in order to enforce the outstanding judgments.



"This has been a very frustrating and expensive exercise for the College. To date, the College has incurred more than \$1.5 million in legal costs." Said Caroline Maclsaac-Power, COO Registrar. "The Bergez case clearly illustrated a weakness in the *Regulated Health Professions Act* and we hope that this very sad saga is incentive enough for the Ontario Government to close the loophole that all health care regulatory Colleges face in stopping illegal practice."

The College of Opticians is the statutory self-governing body for Opticians who are registered by the College to practise in Ontario under the *Regulated Health Professions Act, 1991* and the *Opticianry Act, 1991*. There are currently, 2131 Opticians registered to practise in Ontario by the College. The College urges all Ontarians to purchase eyewear only through registered Opticians or Optometrists.

CONTACT: College of Opticians of Ontario at 416-368-3616

Fazal Khan, President, (416) 845-3937

Caroline Maclsaac-Power, (416) 553-1966

