

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **Ontario Opticians Association Applauds Court Decision in Bergez Case and Supports Regulatory Colleges' Actions**

**(December 1, 2006 Toronto, Ontario)** The Ontario Opticians Association (OOA) went on record today in support of the Ontario Superior Court's Judgment in the Bergez case. The Judgment was rendered on November 24 and found Bruce Bergez, his company Great Glasses and other respondents guilty of contempt of court and imposed an historic \$1,000,000 fine.

"The OOA does not in any way condone or sympathize with the activities of Mr. Bergez. Mr. Bergez has characterized his defiance of previous decisions by the College of Opticians and the Courts as an attempt to fight an optometric monopoly on refracting", explained Lorne Kashin, OOA President and a registered optician. "This is self-serving and has no basis in fact. The Court confirmed that Mr. Bergez had structured his businesses in order to deceive. Mr. Bergez dispensed eyewear without a prescription; dispensed eyewear only on the basis of a refraction (sight test); and dispensed eyewear without having a registered optician on site. Each of these is contrary to current legislation and standards of practice set by the College of Opticians."

Mary Field, Chief Administrative Officer of the Opticians Association of Canada said: "We believe that legislation should be changed to allow opticians to refract and dispense eyewear based on that refraction, within strict limitations prescribed by the provincial opticianry regulatory bodies. However, we also believe it vital that Mr. Bergez and all opticians abide by the current law and not try to prompt changes in legislation by flagrantly breaking the law. The integrity of our professional self-governing system depends on full observance of the law."

Mr. Kashin went on to note that Mr. Bergez's certificate of registration as an optician was suspended by the College of Opticians of Ontario effective November 16, 2006 pending a full hearing by a panel of the Discipline Committee of the College. The Ontario Association of Opticians fully supports this action by the College.

The Ontario Opticians Association is a voluntary, professional association for opticians who are registered to practise in Ontario. Opticians are regulated by the College of Opticians of Ontario as an independent, self-governing profession, pursuant to the *Regulated Health Professions Act, 1991* and the *Opticianry Act, 1991*.

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