
Media Statement

CAUTIONING ON THE DANGERS OF PURCHASING READY MADE AND/OR ADJUSTABLE READERS WITHOUT THE ADVICE OF A REGISTERED OPTOMETRIST OR EYE CARE PRACTITIONER

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For immediate release

Pretoria - The Professional Board for Optometry and Dispensing Opticians has recently become aware of a marketing campaign promoting “100% adjustable readers” and would like to raise your awareness around the dangers of purchasing readymade and/or adjustable readers without the advice of a recognised eye care practitioner.

The advertisement is misleading and contradictory to acceptable professional practice standards and protocols. It implies that persons with impaired vision will have the ability to self-diagnose and to sufficiently correct their visual problems by simply purchasing these spectacles. The advert suggests that the adjustable spectacles will ‘cure’ blurry vision, eliminating the need to consult with an optometrist.

Impaired vision may be caused by other eye conditions including cataract, glaucoma and age-related macular degeneration (AMD), in addition to uncorrected refractive errors. Furthermore, certain conditions, such as diabetic eye disease and glaucoma, may result in permanent loss of vision if not detected and treated appropriately. A comprehensive eye examination by a registered eye care practitioner such as an optometrist or an ophthalmologist is fundamental for detecting and treating these conditions to help prevent permanent loss of vision.

Uncorrected vision problems, poorly corrected vision and untreated eye health conditions in children often result in learning difficulties and adversely affect social development. Therefore, it is essential for both adults and children with poor vision to consult registered optometrists or eye care providers who have the necessary expertise to diagnose, treat and manage the vision impairment or loss.

The Professional Board therefore emphasises that, “over-the-counter” and “self-adjustable” spectacles are NOT a substitute for a comprehensive eye examination and should not be considered as an alternative to a registered eye care practitioner.

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About the Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA)

The Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA) also known as Council is a statutory body established under the Health Professions Act, 56 of 1974. The HPCSA is committed to protecting the public and guiding the professions. The mission of the HPCSA is quality and equitable healthcare for all.

The HPCSA is mandated to regulate the health professions in the country in aspects pertaining to education, training and registration, professional conduct and ethical behaviour, ensuring Continuing Professional Development (CPD), and fostering compliance with healthcare standards.

In order to safeguard the public and guiding the professions, registration in terms of the Act is a prerequisite for practising any of the health professions registrable with Council.

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