Announcement

ASCO's Public Awareness Campaign "Optometry Gives Me Life" Surpasses Benchmarks

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In the eight months since its March 2019 launch, ASCO's public awareness campaign ? *Optometry Gives Me Life* ? has gained impressive momentum. The online, e-mail and social media ads associated with the campaign have been viewed nearly 35 million times.[1] According to the media and communications agency partnered with ASCO on the initiative, the percentage of people who see the ads and click on them, known as the "click-through rate," is 80% higher than the benchmark typically achieved with this type of campaign. *Optometry Gives Me Life* also surpassed the benchmark for the percentage of people who watch campaign videos in their entirety. At 85.41%, the campaign's rate is 187% higher than the 30% benchmark.[1] In addition, nearly 99,000 people visited the campaign landing page, https://futureeyedoc.org/,[1] in the initial eight-months.

Why Doesn't Everyone See the Campaign Ads?

Optometry Gives Me Life is a multipronged and highly targeted campaign. Its intended audience is college juniors and seniors pursuing STEM degrees who have expressed an interest in a health profession. Internet users whose age and online activity don't match the target audience criteria won't see the ads. The ads present to those who fit the criteria and direct them to the https://futureeyedoc.org/ landing page. There, they see the campaign videos and can access additional information.

Also as part of the campaign, each ASCO member school and college of optometry received a toolkit containing *Optometry Gives Me Life* materials they can customize and use to promote optometry, recruit optometry students and expand the reach of the campaign.

The Impetus for *Optometry Gives Me Life*

The *Optometry Gives Me Life* campaign supports one of ASCO's key strategic objectives, which is to attract a robust, highly qualified and diverse pool of applicants pursuing the education necessary for providing optometric vision care, thus improving the overall health of patients everywhere. The campaign addresses the concern that a recent decrease in the number of optometry school applicants and the resulting increase in seat availability may lead to less competition for optometry school acceptance and a less-qualified applicant pool. The number of optometry school applicants has been on the decline since 2015-2016,[2] and the applicant-to-matriculant ratio decreased from 1.53 (2503:1639) in 2010 to 1.39 (2527:1822) in 2018.[3]

The Applicant Pool Development Task Force (APDTF) is the steward of ASCO's applicant development efforts. Formed in 2017, it includes representatives from schools and colleges of optometry with expertise in admissions, marketing and communications; industry partners; and a representative from the ASCO Diversity and Cultural Competency Committee. In the Association's Strategic Plan 2018-2022, applicant pool development is tied to measurable results:

- recruit at least two applicants with an undergraduate grade-point average higher than 3.0 for every available training slot in a United States-based optometry program by June 2022
- increase by 100% the number of highly qualified applicants from Hispanic/Latino and African American/Black backgrounds by June 2022
- maximize the percentage/number of high school students who are aware of optometry as a career option

Off to a Good Start

It's too early to determine the overall impact *Optometry Gives Me Life* will have, but the early indicators are promising. By promoting and renewing interest in optometry as a career, the campaign is moving ASCO and its member institutions closer to the important goal of increasing the quantity, quality and diversity of optometry school applicants.

References

1. ASCO media campaign performance dashboard, "Optometry Gives Me Life" campaign. March 2019-present. Author: Butler/Till Media Services.
2. OptomCAS Applicant Data Reports [Internet]. Rockville, MD: Association of Schools and Colleges of Optometry [cited Oct 16, 2019]. Available from: https://www.optomcas.org/
3. Zadnik K, Reich LN. An analysis of the optometric applicant pool relative to matriculants. Optom Vis Sci. 2019 Sep;96(9):637-646.

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