

**STATEMENT OF ALDEN N. HAFFNER, O.D., EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,
OPTOMETRIC CENTER OF NEW YORK CITY, REPRESENTING
AMERICAN OPTOMETRIC ASSOCIATION; ACCOMPANIED BY WIL-
LIAM P. McCracken, WASHINGTON COUNSEL, AMERICAN OP-
TOMETRIC ASSOCIATION**

Dr. HAFFNER. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, and I am deeply appreciative to the good Congressman from the Bronx who sent that very kind letter. My associate this morning is William P. McCracken, Jr., Washington counsel for the American Optometric Association.

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, it is a pleasure to appear before this committee.

I am Alden N. Haffner, executive director of the Optometric Center of New York City. Today I am testifying on behalf of the American Optometric Association which represents the optometric profession in this country. There are some 17,000 doctors of optometry throughout the United States engaged in the full-time practice of their profession. The association represents over two-thirds of these practicing optometrists.

Briefly, my background includes a bachelor of arts degree from Brooklyn College, a doctor of optometry degree from Pennsylvania State College of Optometry, master's and doctor of philosophy degrees from the graduate school of public administration, New York University. The graduate degrees were in the field of public policy in social issues involved in health and welfare.

I am chairman of the association's social and health care trends committee and also serve as chairman of the public health section of the American Academy of Optometry. During the Korean war I served as an Army optometry officer, most of the time in La Rochelle, France, with the rank of first lieutenant. I received an honorable discharge and since then have been practicing my profession in New York City.

The term "group practice" implies comprehensive care—health care which is broader and more profound than any single practitioner can professionally bring to the people. This holds true for both types of group practice, the interdisciplinary or multidiscipline groups.

Interdisciplinary groups offer a broad range of practitioners who represent the entire spectrum of the health team—physicians, dentists, podiatrists, and optometrists. The single-discipline group practice provides concentration of knowledge in depth within a particular specialty area. Optometrists participate and render their services in the visual sciences in both types of group practices throughout the country.

The great interdisciplinary comprehensive group practices have optometrists on their professional staffs as an integral part of the health team. They include: Ross-Loos, Kaiser-Permanente, Health Insurance Plan of Greater New York, Community Health Association, and the Gouveneur Ambulatory Care Unit of Beth Israel Medical Center in lower Manhattan. The latter is a very large and extensive group practice facility, jointly operated by the city of New York and the Beth Israel Medical Center. It has all types and kinds of health