

MAB Community Services Vision Rehabilitation Program

Eastern Mass: (617) 926-4232 • (800) 852-3029

Central Mass: (508) 854-0700 • (888) 613) 2777

Western Mass: (413) 734-7343

www.mabcommunity.org

WHO'S WHO IN EYE CARE

Ophthalmologist

An ophthalmologist is a physician (M.D. or D.O., doctor of osteopathy) who is licensed to practice medicine and surgery and specializes in all aspects of the eye and vision care. In diagnosing and treating eye conditions, the ophthalmologist uses and prescribes medications, glasses or contact lenses, and performs surgery. Ophthalmologists attend four years of college, four years of medical school, and have one or more years of general hospital experience in treating disease and three or more years in a hospital-based eye residency program. Ophthalmologists may engage in further study, specializing in areas such as diseases of the cornea or retina.

Optometrist

An optometrist is a doctor of optometry (O.D.). He or she is licensed to practice optometry and specializes in screening patients for abnormalities of the eye and determining the need for glasses. Optometrists attend two to four years of college and four years of optometry college. Optometrists treat visual problems with glasses or contact lenses and may prescribe exercises for muscle imbalances.

Optician

Opticians are licensed to fit, adjust, and dispense glasses and other optical devices prescribed by an ophthalmologist or optometrist.

Low Vision Specialist

A low vision specialist may be an ophthalmologist or an optometrist.

Legal Blindness

Legal blindness is defined as central vision (or acuity) of not more than 20/200 in the better eye with correction (glasses) or as having peripheral fields (side vision) of no more than 20 degrees diameter or 10 degrees radius.

In Massachusetts, ophthalmologists and optometrists are required by law to register people whose vision has reached those levels with the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind.