

American Assn. of Doctors of Optometry
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF DOCTORS OF OPTOMETRY (AADO)
RETAINS ANTI-TRUST ATTORNEY TO INVESTIGATE
THIRD-PARTY PAYER PRACTICES**

AGOURA HILLS, CA, November 15, 2013 – The newly formed American Association of Doctors of Optometry (AADO; www.TheAADO.org) announced today that it has retained the services of Washington D.C. antitrust attorney Mr. David A. Balto.

Mr. Balto is an accomplished and well-known antitrust attorney and considered one of the country's leading experts on healthcare competition and regulation. Before entering private law practice, Mr. Balto served as the Policy Director of the Bureau of Competition for the Federal Trade Commission and as a trial attorney in the Antitrust Division of the Department of Justice. He helped guide many of the FTC's seminal healthcare enforcement efforts, and also helped author the DOJ/FTC healthcare antitrust enforcement guidelines.

Craig Steinberg, O.D., Esq., founder and Executive Director of the AADO, explains that, "Mr. Balto has been retained by the AADO following the imposition of an avalanche of new rules imposed by various third party plans on their contracted providers. The AADO believes these onerous rules have led to a near-complete erosion of the natural competition among providers in the eye care marketplace. The predatory practices of the third-party plans are leaving eye care providers handcuffed, quality of care has suffered, patients have fewer choices, and prices for products and services to non-covered consumers increase."

According to Dr. Steinberg, the AADO retained Mr. Balto for two reasons. First, Mr. Balto will investigate whether the practices of third party plans are anticompetitive or violate the law, including Federal antitrust law. If it is determined that they do, then Mr. Balto, on behalf of the AADO, will ask the Federal Trade Commission or Department of Justice to initiate an investigation and take appropriate action against offending plans. Mr. Balto, who regularly defends healthcare providers in FTC antitrust matters, will also serve as a legal advisor to the AADO to help ensure that the AADO is able to aggressively pursue its mission without violating any antitrust laws itself, says Dr. Steinberg.

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About the American Association of Doctors of Optometry (AADO):

The **American Association of Doctors of Optometry (AADO)** is an organization of eye care providers whose purpose is to improve access to and the quality of eye care in the United States. It seeks to achieve that purpose by removing barriers to quality care imposed by third-party payers, removing the barriers to free competition among eye care providers, and by advancing and protecting the interests of optometrists during times of significant change in American health care delivery. With the support of AADO's members, the AADO, alone, on its own behalf, can do that which individual providers have neither the means nor power to do alone, and which groups of providers cannot do collectively without violating antitrust law. The result will be that consumers in need of eye care will have access to providers able to once again offer cost-effective quality eye care along with the full range of product options without the restrictions imposed by third-party plans.