COPE HOLDS SUCCESSFUL TRAINING WORKSHOP

Charlotte, NC – The Council on Optometric Practitioner Education (COPE) held a training workshop on Friday, April 1, 2016 to educate CE providers on its new accreditation criteria and changes to the COPE accreditation processes. Over 100 people attended the workshop which took place at the Loews Chicago O’Hare Hotel in Rosemont, Illinois. Attendees of the workshop included Optometry/Medical Schools, State/Regional Optometric Associations, Insurance/Health Benefits Companies, Media/Journals, Ophthalmology Practices, National CE Providers, Medical Education Companies, International CE Providers, and State Boards of Optometry.

The workshop was designed to assist optometric CE professionals in developing strategies to ensure their organizational compliance with the COPE Accreditation Criteria, Standards for Commercial Support, and COPE policies. In addition to representatives from COPE, there were speakers at the workshop from the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medication Education (ACCME), the Accreditation Council for Pharmacy Education (ACPE), and the Alliance for Continuing Education in the Health Professions (ACEHP). There was also a presentation on Best Practices in CE/CME from the Veterans Health Administration Employee Education System (VHA EES). COPE announced in 2015 that it was changing its CE accreditation system to be equivalent to other healthcare professions, to support the overall direction towards collaborative, inter-disciplinary care for better patient outcomes and improved community health.

The workshop provided participants with an interactive platform to engage with their CE colleagues as well as members of the COPE Committee and ARBO Staff. Following the meeting attendees reported having a better understanding of why COPE accreditation is evolving and how the new requirements, which align COPE with other healthcare accreditors, will strengthen their CE programs. One attendee, Diana Durham, Associate Director for Accreditation, Veterans Health Administration Employee Education System (VHA EES), remarked, “I’m truly excited about the changes COPE is making to go in an interprofessional direction. We are currently accredited to provide continuing education to 18 different professions and I’m thrilled to add optometry to the list. Becoming a COPE Accredited Provider will allow the VHA EES to educate our optometrists to provide better care for veterans, which is the ultimate goal.”

COPE has historically accredited individual CE activities. Starting in 2017, CE providers will be able to choose to become an Accredited Provider, which allows them greater freedom and flexibility, or to
continue to have their activities individually accredited by COPE. Dr. Susy Yu, ARBO President, commented, “The workshop was a huge success! We brought together a community of optometric CE professionals to learn the new process and share ideas with each other. We had such a great response to the workshop that we’re planning to make this an annual event.”

ARBO established COPE in 1993 to accredit continuing education on behalf of optometric licensing boards for the public welfare. There are over 2,000 CE Providers in the COPE system who have presented over 48,000 COPE accredited courses and events. ARBO is a non-profit organization based in Charlotte, North Carolina, and serves 66 Boards of Optometry in the United States, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. For more information on ARBO, please contact Lisa Fennell, ARBO Executive Director, 200 South College Street, Suite 2030, Charlotte, NC 28202 ph: (704) 970-2710 or e-mail: lfennell@arbo.org.