Oversupply of Lawyers, Optometrists and Pharmacists

Same Cause and Consequences
Mark Twain

“What gets us into trouble is not what we don’t know. It’s what we know for sure that just ain’t so.”
With Too Many Schools and Graduates
“The Perfect Storm”

- Declining Full-Time Employment Opportunities
- Decline in Admissions Applicants and Enrollments
- Financial Stability of Tuition-Dependent Schools and Colleges Threatened
The Rapid Increase in Graduates

Law Schools

- Opened 19 New Law Schools Since 2000

  - Increased From 186 to 205 Schools in 15 years with More Planned

  - Over 40,000 Graduates Annually
The Rapid Increase in Graduates

Optometry Schools and Colleges

- 7 New Optometry Schools Founded-- 2008 to 2016
  - From 17 to 24 Schools in 8 Years (a 41% Increase)
  - Increased Enrollments at Some Existing Schools
  - Increase in Graduates: 1127 in 1997 (When Supply=Demand) to 1600 in 2014
New Schools of Optometry Founded 2008-2016

1. Midwestern University College of Optometry (AZ)
2. Univ. of the Incarnate Word School of Optometry (TX)
3. Western University College of Optometry (CA)
4. MCPHS University School of Optometry (MA)
5. Midwestern University College of Optometry (IL)
6. University of Pikeville College of Optometry (KY)
7. Alderson Braddus College of Optometry (WVA)

- Appalachian College of Optometry (VA) Status?
The Rapid Increase in Graduates

Pharmacy Schools and Colleges

- Opened 48 New Schools in 14 years
  - Increase from 82 Schools to 130 (58.5% Increase)
  - 8,000 Graduates in 2003 to 14,000 in 2015
  - Now 269,900 Pharmacists in 2015
Oversupply of Lawyers

- Number of Lawyers Tripled Over Last 35 Years While US Population Increased Just 40%

- Increase From 404,000 to 1.22 Million Lawyers in US During This Period
Oversupply of Optometrists


- Lewin Study Indicated Current 30% Excess of Optometrists or 12,672 FTE

- 30,000 in 1997 (S=D) to 40,000 Optometrists in 2015
Oversupply of Pharmacists

- 25% Oversupply Predicted by 2018
Consequences of Oversupply on Employment of Lawyers

- Underemployment and Unemployment of Graduates
  - 45% of Graduates Unable to Find Full Time Positions
  - Compensation Has Declined to Median Starting Salary of $61,000
  - Top Schools Employ 3-17% of Their Own Graduates
Consequences of Oversupply On Employment of Optometrists

- Lewin 2012: 46% of Graduates under 30 yrs. Practice at Two or More Part Time Locations
- 11.5% Practice at 4 Locations
- Suggests a Shortage of Full Time Positions
- Lewin: Optometrists Practice at 68% of Capacity
Consequences of Oversupply on Employment of Pharmacists

- Some Graduates Can Only Find Employment as Floaters
- Oversupply is to Drug Chains’ Advantage by Forcing Pharmacists’ Income Down
Consequences of Oversupply on Law Schools

- Applicants Down 37% and Enrollment Down 24% Since 2010

- Less Qualified Students Being Admitted with LSAT Scores Less than 145

- Declining Pass Rate on Bar Exam: Lowest in 13 Years Only 46.6% Passed in California

- Misrepresentation Law Suits by Students/Graduates
Consequences of Oversupply on Optometry Schools and Colleges

- 1.5 Applicants per Entering Seat: Only 1.2 are Likely Qualified for Admission

- Applicants Apply to an Average of 5 Schools

- Small Positive Changes in Applicant Pool in Recent Years Are Quickly Absorbed by New Schools

- Cyclical Variations in the Applicant Pool Have Occurred in the Past
Admission Standards and NBEO Pass Rate

- Admissions Standards Vary Significantly Among Optometry Schools and Colleges:
  - Entering GPA 3.61 to 3.18
  - Mean Science OAT 350 to 287
  - Pass Rate on NBEO Also Varies: 100% to 77%
Consequences of Oversupply on Pharmacy Schools and Colleges

- Applications for Admission Down 8.1%
Comprehensive Approach to Mitigate the Effects of Oversupply of Optometrists

Schools and Colleges

Profession
Optometry Schools and Colleges

Decrease Enrollments
Consolidations and Affiliations
Modify Curricula
Decrease Enrollments, Consolidations and Affiliations

- Reduce Entering Class Size and Overall Enrollments
- Consolidation of Schools and Colleges
- Pursue Innovative Programs and Affiliations with Health Sciences Centers and Universities for Private Schools
Curricula Modifications

- Make An Optometry Career More Attractive and Control Debt by Shortening the Overall Length of Education for O.D, While Developing a Clinical Training Model to Potentially Qualify for $15 Billion GME Program

- Would Permit Current 4th Year Students (Who Become Residents) to Contribute to Billable Services and Receive Stipends.

- Explore Additional Educational Offerings in High Demand Health Care Professions
Profession of Optometry Responsibilities

Accreditation Actions

Publish an Employment Index

Aggressive/Consistent Federal Advocacy
Profession’s Responsibility

- Do Not Accredit New Schools of Optometry Until There is a Market Correction to the Supply and Demand of Optometrists:
  - Currently, there is 12,672 FTE Surplus
  - In the Future Accredit New Schools to a Maximum Enrollment
  - Develop and Annually Publish an Index of the Number of Graduates to Practice Openings in the Private, Government and Commercial Sectors
Aggressive and Consistent Federal Advocacy

- Seek Inclusion of Optometry in Federal Programs: GME, National Health Service Corps, Scholarships, Loan Forgiveness and Practice Start-Up Support

- Require Explanation and/or Correction of Bureau of Labor Statistics Projections - Rationale for New Schools

- Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) Projects 11,000 FTE Additional Optometrists Needed by 2024

- Inconsistent With All Previous Manpower Studies
Increase Demand for Optometric Services

Address Underserved Areas

Consistent Student Marketing

Restructure the Practice of Optometry
Public Health Approach to Oversupply

- Increase Demand for Optometrists by Addressing Need for Eye Care in Inner-City and Rural Areas
  - 3,278 FTE Needed in Community Health Centers
- Only 20% of Federally Qualified Community Health Centers Offer Optometric Service
Student Marketing

- Develop and Implement a Comprehensive and Sustained Marketing Program in Collaboration with ASCO and the AOA
Restructure Optometric Practice: Lewin Study Suggested Actions

- Lewin Projects a Decrease in Current Optometry Surplus of 12,672 FTE to 4,400 FTE by 2025

- **If** Optometrists Provide the Same Scope of Practice As Ophthalmologists

- And 1.36 FTE OD Surplus Fill 1.0 FTE MD Shortage
Are Lewin’s Suggestions Realistic?

- Management of Diabetic and Elderly Patients with Multiple Medical Problems Requires:
  - Advanced Clinical Training
  - Legal Authority in All States to Treat With Systemic Medications and Perform Invasive Procedures
  - Acceptance of Optometrists Providing These Procedures by Insurance Carriers is Necessary