



Republic of the Philippines
Department of Education
REGION VIII
SCHOOLS DIVISION OF CALBAYOG CITY

July 21, 2026

DIVISION MEMORANDUM
NO. **291** s. 2026

**ENDORSEMENT OF THE MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN THE
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND THE INTEGRATED PHILIPPINE
ASSOCIATION OF OPTOMETRISTS, INC. (IPAO) FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF
THE NATIONAL VISION SCREENING PROGRAM**

TO: Assistant Schools Division Superintendent
Chief Education Superintendent
Education Program Supervisors
Public Schools District Supervisors
School Heads (Elementary & Secondary)
Non-teaching Personnel
All Others Concerned

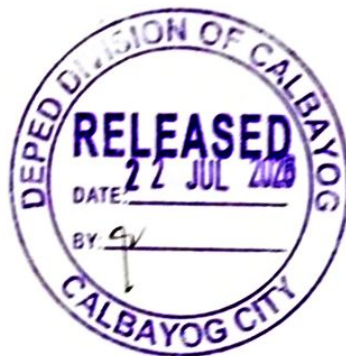
1. Attached is the Office of the Undersecretary for Governance and Operations (OUOPS) Memorandum No. 2026-08392 dated January 20, 2026, entitled **"Endorsement of the Memorandum of Understanding Between the Department of Education and the Integrated Philippine Association of Optometrists (IPAO), Inc. for the Implementation of the National Vision Screening Program (NVSP),"** for the information and guidance of all concerned.
2. The memorandum formally endorses the Memorandum of Understanding between the Department of Education (DepEd) and the Integrated Philippine Association of Optometrists (IPAO), Inc. to strengthen the implementation of the National Vision Screening Program through accessible, age-appropriate, and school-based vision screening interventions for learners.
3. In line with this, all public elementary and secondary schools are directed to:
 - a. Coordinate with their respective District Offices and the Schools Division Office on the implementation of vision screening activities.
 - b. Extend full assistance and support to authorized IPAO personnel during the conduct of vision screening activities in schools, subject to existing DepEd policies and regulations.
 - c. Ensure that parents or guardians of learners identified with possible vision problems are properly informed for appropriate referral and management.
 - d. Facilitate the submission of reports and other required documents relative to the implementation of the program.
 - e. Ensure that all activities are conducted in accordance with child protection, data privacy, and other existing DepEd policies.



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4. Schools are reminded that participation in school-based vision screening activities shall not disrupt regular teaching and learning activities and shall be undertaken in close coordination with the Schools Division Office.
5. Immediate dissemination of and strict compliance with this Memorandum is desired.


MARGARITO A. CADAYONA JR., PhD, CESO VI
Schools Division Superintendent





Republic of the Philippines
Department of Education

OFFICE OF THE UNDERSECRETARY FOR GOVERNANCE AND OPERATION

MEMORANDUM

OM OUGOPS 2026-08392

**FOR REGIONAL DIRECTORS
SCHOOLS DIVISION SUPERINTENDENTS
PRINCIPALS/SCHOOL HEADS/TEACHERS-IN CHARGE
SCHOOL HEALTH PERSONNEL
ALL OTHERS CONCERNED**

FROM MALCOLM S. GARMA
Undersecretary

**SUBJECT ENDORSEMENT OF THE MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING
BETWEEN THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION (DEPED) AND
THE INTEGRATED PHILIPPINE ASSOCIATION OF
OPTOMETRISTS (IPAO), INC. TO DEPED REGIONAL AND
DIVISION OFFICES**

DATE January 20, 2026

In line with the successful launch of the National Vision Screening Program (NVSP) in partnership with PhilHealth's Yamani ng Kalusugan Program (YAKAP), last December 17, 2025, the Department of Education (DepEd) hereby formally endorses the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between DepEd and the Integrated Philippine Association of Optometrists (IPAO), Inc. to all Regional and Schools Division Offices. The MOU aims to ensure the provision of accessible, age-appropriate, and quality optometric services to learners through school-based interventions, pursuant to Republic Act No. 11358, otherwise known as the *National Vision Screening Act*.

Learners who fail the vision screening shall be referred by the DepEd Regional and Schools Division Offices to IPAO for comprehensive optometric services, including assessment and management of errors of refraction (FOR), binocular vision (BV) anomalies, and eye diseases. To avail of free prescription eyeglasses, referred learners are required to be registered members of PhilHealth.

In accordance with the MOU, IPAO may also provide assistance during school-based vision screening activities. Such participation shall not, in any way, hinder or affect the existing partnership between DepEd and the Philippine Eye Research Institute (PERI), which covers the training of Vision Screening Trainers and the recommendation of appropriate vision screening tools and materials.

DepEd



15th Floor, Independence Building, 233 Sen. R. Ejay Ave., San Antonio Village, Makati, Metro Manila 1200
Telephone Nos. (02) 8613 5333 / (02) 8613 5437
Email Address: communications@deped.gov.ph | Website: www.deped.gov.ph





Republika ng Pilipinas

Department of Education

OFFICE OF THE UNDERSECRETARY FOR GOVERNANCE AND OPERATION

All activities undertaken pursuant to the MOU shall support the objectives of the National Vision Screening Program and shall be implemented in close coordination with the concerned DepEd offices, subject to existing DepEd policies, guidelines, and regulations.

All concerned DepEd offices are hereby directed to take note of this enforcement and to extend the necessary support and coordination with IPAO to ensure the effective and timely implementation of the activities stipulated in the Memorandum of Understanding.

For questions or clarifications, you may contact Dr. Lilibeth P. Miranda-Gonzales, Supervising Health Program Officer, OIC-School Health Division of BLSS - SHD through email blss_shd@deped.gov.ph, or landline 02 8632-9935.

For information, guidance, and appropriate action.

ATTN: DR. MICHELANGELO S. MASTARINO

RE: NATIONAL VISION SCREENING PROGRAM

1992 C. C. ABERNETHY ET AL.

Pharmacokinetic Parameters

WHEREAS, Republic Act (RA) No. 11358, otherwise known as the National Vision Screening Act of 2019, establishes the National Vision Screening Program (NVSP) under the Department of Education to screen the eyes and vision of kindergarten learners. This act aims to ensure that children have access to proper eye care, promoting their overall well-being and educational success;

WHEREAS, Section 6 of RA No. 11358 provides that the Philippine Health Insurance Corporation (PhilHealth) shall develop a benefit package for the consultation and treatment of eye diseases of children;

WHEREAS, the PhilHealth Optometric Benefit Package, covering vision assessment, prescription eyeglasses, and follow-up consultations for children aged 0-15, was implemented on January 18, 2025, as stated in PhilHealth Circular No. 2025-0002;

WHEREAS, the optometrists are the PhilHealth-designated service providers of the optometric benefit package for school children until fifteen (15) years old, covering optometric services and prescription eyeglasses, relieving the families of financial burden related to the cost of services and eyeglasses;

WHEREAS, RA No. 12028, otherwise known as the Academic Recovery and Accessible Learning (ARAL) Program, supports learners by establishing a free and effective national learning intervention program to ensure that all learners who are struggling in their lessons, especially in reading, mathematics, and science, will be able to attain the competencies set by the DepEd in their respective levels;

WHEREAS, learners with vision impairment or refractive errors need eye and vision examination and assessment, including management of refractive errors through prescription eyeglasses to see better, read, and perform better academically;

WHEREAS, both Parties acknowledge the importance of early detection, prevention, and treatment of vision problems, especially among school children, to support learning and overall development;

WHEREAS, DepEd acknowledges the need for licensed optometrists to deliver optometric services and be part of the referral pathway after conducting vision screening of learners at the school level to address the impact of vision problems on literacy and academic performance;

WHEREAS, the IPAO, as a national organization of optometrists with chapters nationwide, has members distributed in all the geographical regions of the Philippines who are willing to provide school-based optometric services to learners in public and private schools;

WHEREAS, the IPAO members in the various geographical regions of the Philippines shall participate by providing school-based optometric services to learners referred by DepEd for examination or assessment at the locations agreed to by the Parties;

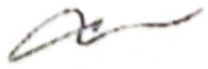
WHEREAS, the IPAO shall assist in working out a scheme with its public and private partners, including PhilHealth, to cover the financing of prescription eyeglasses for school children.

WHEREAS, both Parties agree to enter a partnership to ensure the effective implementation of the National Vision Screening Program, the ARAL Program, and other eye and vision care programs for kindergarten, elementary, and high school learners aimed at addressing the reading comprehension, and learning and development issues of school children;

NOW, THEREFORE, for and in consideration of the foregoing premises and the terms and conditions herein set forth, the Parties agree as follows:

Article I. PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

1. This Understanding formalizes the partnership between the DepEd and IPAO to ensure systematic referral of pre-screened learners from the school and its catchment areas to IPAO and its Regional Optometric Centers for optometric services.
2. The partnership aims:
 - a. to provide accessible, age-appropriate, and quality optometric services to school children through school-based interventions;
 - b. to establish a referral mechanism from the schools to the network of optometrists provided by the IPAO.



- c. to promote early detection of eye and vision problems, and timely provision of prescription eyeglasses for school children; and
- d. to facilitate data sharing and monitoring of vision outcomes among referred children, in alignment with DepEd health and wellness programs, to ensure optimum academic performance and overall child development.

Article II. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Subject to a more definitive Memorandum of Agreement, which will clearly set forth the specific terms and conditions between the Parties:

1. DepEd undertakes to:

- 1.1 Establish a national referral system with IPAO National and Regional Centers to ensure coordination, access, and delivery of comprehensive optometric services and intervention to school children with eye and vision problems;
- 1.2 Include vision screening as part of the annual physical or medical examination through the Learner Health Assessment and Screening (LHAS) utilizing standardized screening protocols, ensuring proper documentation and parental consent;
- 1.3 Identify and refer school children pre-screened by school health personnel or designated health workers with actual or potential vision problems to IPAO for comprehensive eye and vision assessment and intervention. The referral shall be properly documented using forms mutually agreed upon by the Parties;
- 1.4 Provide education to parents on the importance of eye health and the optometric benefits and prescription eyeglasses covered under PhilHealth, with emphasis on the effect of vision on academic performance and overall child development;
- 1.5 Monitor and record health outcomes and share non-identifiable data with IPAO for follow-up actions; and
- 1.6 Perform other responsibilities necessary for the effective and efficient implementation of the Program.

2. IPAO undertakes to:

- 2.1 Establish a national referral system with DepEd National, Regional, and Division offices to deploy optometrists to DepEd-identified schools to perform and deliver optometric services to pre-screened school children in line with the National Vision Screening Law, the ARAL Program, and other eye and vision health programs of DepEd;
- 2.2 Accept and respond to referrals from the DepEd National, Regional, or Division offices and coordinate with authorized personnel in a timely manner, the delivery of optometric services to pre-screened school children with eye and vision problems;
- 2.3 Mobilize PRC-licensed optometrists, preferably PhilHealth/IPAO-accredited members with training in pediatric vision care, in predetermined locations (such as DepEd offices, schools, or community centers) to ensure compliance with existing service and product standards;
- 2.4 Conduct school-based or community-based optometric service provision for school children, with appropriate vision assessment, prescription, and provision of corrective lenses if needed;
- 2.5 Conduct training of teachers or health workers in vision screening methods and protocol;
- 2.6 Devise the process of PhilHealth Optometric Benefit Package availment to enable the learners to receive free prescription eyeglasses in accordance with PhilHealth regulations and guidelines;
- 2.7 Promote DepEd's implementation of the National Vision Screening Program, the ARAL Program, and other eye health programs that will benefit learners and teachers; and
- 2.8 Perform other responsibilities necessary for the effective and efficient implementation of the Program.

Article III. PROGRAM COST

DepEd shall not shoulder any costs or expenses in relation to this program.

Article IV. IMPLEMENTATION MECHANISMS

- 1. A Joint Referral Protocol shall be developed and adopted by both Parties within thirty (30) days from the signing of a Memorandum of Agreement, detailing specific procedures for patient referral, documentation requirements, and communication channels;

- Both Parties shall collaborate in health promotion campaigns, school screening, and parent-teacher orientation activities, with costs shared based on agreed terms, subject to the availability of funds, and execution of a definitive Memorandum of Agreement. A Joint Monitoring Committee comprising equal representation from both Parties shall be created to oversee implementation, quality operational review, and ensure compliance with this Understanding, and Periodic Review Meetings shall be conducted quarterly to evaluate effectiveness and update commitment every year. Both Parties shall maintain comprehensive records on all management and activities under this Understanding for audit and monitoring purposes.

Article V. DATA PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY

Both Parties shall comply with the provisions of the Data Privacy Act of 2012 (RA 10173) in handling national information and health records. Patient data shall be used solely for the purposes outlined in this Understanding and shall not be disclosed to third Parties without proper consent or regulation.

Article VI. DURATION AND TERMINATION

This Understanding shall remain in effect for a period of two (2) years from the date of signing and may be renewed or renewed upon renewal written consent of both Parties at least thirty (30) days before expiration.

Article VII. AMENDMENTS AND MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS

- Amendments to this Understanding shall be made in writing and signed by duly authorized representatives of both Parties. This Understanding constitutes the entire agreement between the Parties and supersedes all prior negotiations, representations, or agreements relating to its subject matter.
- If any provision of this Understanding is declared invalid or unenforceable, the remaining provisions shall continue in full force and effect. This Understanding shall be governed by and construed in accordance with the laws of the Republic of the Philippines.
- This Understanding shall take effect upon signing by both Parties and notarization in accordance with Philippine law.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the Parties have signed this Memorandum of Understanding as of the date first written above.

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
(DepEd)


JUAN EDGARDO M. ANGARA
Secretary

INTEGRATED PHILIPPINE ASSOCIATION
OF OPTOMETRISTS, INC.
(IPAO)


CHARLES L. HO
National President

SIGNED IN THE PRESENCE OF


ATTY. FATIMA ELPIDIO PANONTONGAN
Undersecretary and Chief of Staff
Department of Education


JOHN C. NAKPIL
Chairman
Integrated Philippine Association of Optometrists, Inc.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

REPUBLIC OF **PASIG CITY**

I, JOSE M. A. Nolasco of the City and Province of PASIG CITY		do hereby appear at the following:
Name:	Government-issued ID (Details):	Date and Place Issued:
JOSE EDUARDO M. ANGARA		

Knows to all and to me known to be the same persons who executed the foregoing instrument and understanding, signed by the PARTIES and their instrumental witnesses, and their acknowledgment to wit that the same is their free voluntary act and deed and that of the corporations they represent inasmuch as the acknowledgment of understanding consists of its 1st page including this page in which the acknowledgment is written signed by the Parties and their instrumental witnesses every page thereof.

WITNESS MY HAND AND SEAL AS ARIAL AT ... on the date at the place first written above.

NOTARY PUBLIC

ATTY. GERARD P. RUBIO

Notary Public

Baro Quezon City, 11-11-2018

Baro No. 84082

Baro Quezon City, 11-11-2018

Baro No. 1012211

Appointment No. 11-11-2018

ACLF Certificate No. 11-11-2018

TIN No. 11-11-2018

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Series of 2018

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