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ESSILOR OF AMERICA TO DISCUSS FUTURE OF INDEPENDENT OPTOMETRY

December 10 Forum Offers ECPs Industry Snapshot in the Face of New Challenges

DALLAS – December 4, 2012 – Essilor of America, the nation’s leading manufacturer of optical lenses, announced today that it will host a national discussion at 6:30 p.m. Central Time on Monday, December 10. The webinar will be led by Howard Purcell, O.D., FAAO, and Senior Vice President of Customer Development at Essilor, to provide independent ECPs with an overview of the industry and to engage participants in discussions about the challenges and opportunities they face today. Essilor will be joined by VSP Vision Care’s Dan Mannen, O.D., FAAO, who will offer insights from a Bain & Company study commissioned by VSP on the state of independent optometry.

To access the webinar, please visit www.optometry2020.com and click the “register” link at the top of the page.

“Clearly, the industry is evolving, and independent practitioners want to be part of the solution to preserve and enhance their business, in the wake of new competition, business expenses, and hiring challenges,” said Purcell. “Over the last few months Essilor has engaged with independent ECPs to hear about these issues and brainstorm ways to face the changing wave of optometry.”

As a means to inform independent ECPs about the dynamics of the industry today, to gather input and generate discussion, Essilor of America launched www.optometry2020.com earlier this year. The site features news about the independent eyecare industry, a section for practitioners to write in with observations and recommendations, and a blog written by Purcell, who shares his thoughts on the industry.

According to Purcell, independent ECPs have shared a number of common challenges that have been consistently voiced across the country:

- **Rising business expenses.** Many ECPs share concerns about operational costs – rent, staff compensation, utilities – that can be especially challenging in the current economy and distract practitioners from a focus on patients.
- **Alarming New OD Debt.** New ODs are graduating today with significant amounts of debt. A VSP Vision Care survey that found three-quarters of first year practitioners carry \$100,000 or

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more in debt, and require entry salaries that exceed what most independent ECP business owners can pay.

- **Looming Competition.** Many ODs have legitimate concerns about competition from current mass retailers and from foreign retailers, like SpecSavers, which has taken a large share of business away from independent ECPs in the U.K. and Australia.
- **Collaboration and Optimism.** Despite these concerns, most ECPs share a desire to pool resources to market themselves effectively, especially against the big marketing budgets of mass retailers.

“It’s imperative that we understand the dynamics of our changing industry and that includes participation from the independent ECP community. The upcoming webinar serves as a great forum for us to exchange ideas and best practices, and ensure independent optometry’s relevancy for years to come,” added Purcell.

About Essilor

Essilor is the leading manufacturer of optical lenses in the United States and is the market leader in progressive, high-index and anti-reflective coated lenses. A pioneer in the development and production of ophthalmic lenses, Essilor employs more than 9,000 people throughout North America. Essilor manufactures optical lenses under the Varilux[®], Crizal[®], Xperio[®], DEFINITY[®], Thin&Lite[®] and other Essilor brand names. Essilor Laboratories of America (ELOA) is the largest, and most trusted, optical lab network in the U.S. and offers a wide choice of services and lens brands, including Essilor premium lenses, to eyecare professionals across the nation. Essilor of America, Inc. (Essilor) is a subsidiary of Paris-based Essilor International, a publicly held company traded on the Euronext Paris stock exchange (Reuters: ESSI.PA).

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