



Republic of the Philippines
Department of Education
REGION VI – WESTERN VISAYAS
SCHOOLS DIVISION OF AKLAN

August 11, 2026

DIVISION MEMORANDUM

No. 452, s. 2026

**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**

To: Chief Education Supervisors
Education Program Supervisors
Public Schools District Supervisors, Principals In-Charge of the District
Head Teacher-In-Charge of the District
Senior/Education Program Specialists
Heads of Public Elementary, Secondary and Integrated Schools
All Others Concerned

1. Attached is Regional Memorandum No. 194, s. 2026 dated March 3, 2026 regarding the **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**, which is self-explanatory.
2. Immediate dissemination of this Memorandum is desired.

FOR THE SCHOOLS DIVISION SUPERINTENDENT:


MARY CHERRY LYNN M. TABERNILLA EdD
Education Program Supervisor – Science
Curriculum and Implementation Division
In-charge of the Division

Enclosure: None.
Reference: Regional Memorandum No. 194, s. 2026
To be indicated in the Perpetual Index
under the following subjects:

HEALTH EDUCATION
PROGRAMS

RMF/lpmoy



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Republic of the Philippines
Department of Education
REGION VI-WESTERN VISAYAS

REGIONAL MEMORANDUM

MAR 03 2026

No. 194, s. 2026

**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**

To: Schools Division Superintendents
All Others Concerned

1. Attached is Memorandum OM-OUGOPS-2026-08-08392 from **Hon. Malcom S. Garma**, Undersecretary for Governance and Operations, dated January 20, 2026 regarding the **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**, which is self-explanatory.
2. Immediate dissemination of this Memorandum is desired.


CRISTITO A. ECO, CESO III
Regional Director

Enclosure: As stated

Reference: Memorandum OM-OUGOPS-2026-08-08392 dated 01-20-2026

To be indicated in the Perpetual Index
under the following subjects:

HEALTH EDUCATION
PROGRAMS

JAM/ESSD-EndorsementDepEdIPAOMemorandum
022/February 23, 2026



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Republika ng Pilipinas
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 Yaman 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 (EOR), 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.

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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 endorsement 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. Mirando-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.



Integrated Philippine Association of Optometrists (IPAO), Inc.

(Formerly Samahan ng mga Optometrists sa Pilipinas)

The integrated national organization accredited by the Professional Regulation Commission (PRC) – IAPO-No 019

12 January 2026

HON. JUAN EDGARDO "SONNY" M. ANGARA

Secretary

Department of Education

DepEd Complex, Meralco Avenue

Pasig City

ATTN: HON. MIGUEL ANGELO S. MANTARING

Director IV

Bureau of Learner Support Services (BLSS)

RE: NATIONAL VISION SCREENING PROGRAM

Dear Secretary Angara:

Greetings from the Integrated Philippine Association of Optometrists (IPAO), Inc.!

In view of the successful national launching of DepEd's National Vision Screening Program in partnership with the Philhealth YAKAP and the IPAO last December 17, 2025 at Rosario Elementary School in Pasig, we would like to inform your good office that IPAO is preparing to mobilize its network of members to coordinate and assist the various DepEd Schools Division Offices (SDO) in conducting the vision screening of learners to identify and address Error of Refraction (EOR), binocular vision (BV) anomalies and eye diseases.

The IPAO is communicating with the regional, provincial and city SDOs of DepEd to obtain the list of schools in their respective area of jurisdiction as well as coordinate the vision screening activities that we may be able to participate or assist pursuant to our Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).

We have established communication with the SDOs of the following regions: Regions I, CAR, II, III, National Capital Region, IV-A, IV-B, V, VI, VII, XIII, IX, X and XI and hope to commence activities in these areas within the month.

The learners who fail the vision screening shall be referred for full optometric services and will be required by Philhealth to register as a member in order to avail of the FREE prescription eyeglasses.

In this respect, we would like to seek your endorsement of this joint activity between the DepEd SDOs and IPAO in order to establish a formal working partnership at the regional and local level.

Should you require any further information or clarification, please do not hesitate to contact me at 0917-839-1230 or E-mail: ary.charlieho@gmail.com or ipao_od@yahoo.com

Thank you very much for your kind assistance and continued support of initiatives that promote children's health and well-being.

Yours,

DR. CHARLIE L. HO

National President

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;

