PETITION

TO the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

Whereas age-related macular degeneration (AMD) is the leading cause of blindness in the elderly and is present in some form in 25-33% of seniors over the age of 75. AMD has two forms, the more common “dry” type, and the “wet” type. Although the wet type occurs in only 15% of AMD patients, these patients account for 90% of the legal blindness that occurs with AMD. The wet type is further sub-divided into “classic” and “occult” sub-types based on the appearance of the AMD on special testing. Photodynamic therapy, a treatment where abnormal blood vessels are closed with a laser activated chemical, has been shown to slow the progression of vision loss in both sub-types of wet AMD.

Whereas OHIP has not extended coverage for photodynamic therapy to the occult sub-type of wet AMD, despite there being substantial clinical evidence demonstrating the effectiveness of this treatment in patients with either form of wet AMD. Untreated, these patients can expect a progression in their visual loss, with central blindness as the end result.

Whereas affected patients are in a position where a proven treatment is available to help preserve their vision, but this treatment can only be accessed at their own personal expense. Treatment costs are between $12,500 and $18,000 over an 18-month period. Many patients resign themselves to a continued worsening of their vision, as for them the treatment is financially unattainable. The resultant blindness in these patients manifests itself as costs to society in other forms, such as an increased need for home care, missed time from work for family members providing care, and an increased rate of injuries such as hip fractures that can be directly attributable to their poor vision.

WE the undersigned petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to fund the treatment of the occult sub-type of macular degeneration with photodynamic therapy for all patients awaiting this service.

PLEASE PRINT

NAME (PRINT CLEARLY)	FULL MAILING ADDRESS & POSTAL CODE	SIGNATURE

Return to: Garfield Dunlop, 14 Coldwater Road West, P. O. Box 2320, Orillia, Ontario, L3V 6S2