

WEST VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE

2025 REGULAR SESSION

Introduced

SENATE BILL 565

By Senators Taylor, Clements, Garcia, Hamilton,

Morris, Roberts, Rose, and Rucker

[Introduced on February 21, 2025; referred
to the Committee on Health and Human Resources]

1 A BILL to amend and reenact §30-8-3, §30-8-6, §30-8-9, and §30-8A-1 of the Code of West
2 Virginia, 1931, as amended; and to amend the code by adding a new article, designated
3 §30-8B-1, §30-8B-2, §30-8B-3, §30-8B-4, §30-8B-5, §30-8B-6, and §30-8B-7, relating to
4 the practice of optometry; defining terms; removing obsolete areas of the code; updating
5 contract provisions; and permitting a licensee to perform certain procedures trained by an
6 approved and accredited body.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of West Virginia:

ARTICLE

8.

OPTOMETRISTS.

§30-8-3.

Definitions.

1 As used in this article:

2 (a) "Accreditation Council on Optometric Education (ACOE)" is the accrediting body for
3 professional optometric degree (O.D.) programs, optometric residency programs, and optometric
4 technician programs in the United States and Canada and is recognized as an accrediting body by
5 the Council on Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA).

6 "Appendages" means the eyelids, the eyebrows, the conjunctiva and the lacrimal
7 apparatus.

8 (b) "Applicant" means any person making application for a license, certificate or temporary
9 permit under the provisions of this article.

10 (c) "Board" means the West Virginia Board of Optometry.

11 (d) "Business entity" means any firm, partnership, association, company, corporation,
12 limited partnership, limited liability company or other entity owned by licensees that practices
13 optometry.

14 (e) "Certificate" means a prescription certificate issued under section fifteen of this article.

15 (f) "Certificate holder" means a person authorized to prescribe certain drugs under section
16 fifteen of this article.

(g) "Examination, diagnosis and treatment" means a method compatible with accredited optometric education and professional competence pursuant to this article.

(h) "License" means a license to practice optometry.

(i) "Licensee" means an optometrist licensed under the provisions of this article.

~~(j) "Ophthalmologist" means a physician specializing in ophthalmology licenced licensed in West Virginia to practice medicine and surgery under article thereof this chapter or osteopathy under article fourteen of this chapter.~~

(k) "Permittee" means a person holding a temporary permit.

(l) "Practice of optometry" means the examining, diagnosing, and treating of any visual defect or abnormal condition of the human eye or its appendages within the scope established in this article or associated rules and the performance of those procedures taught and trained through schools or colleges of optometry accredited by the Accreditation Council on Optometric Education, or its successors or equivalents.

~~(m)~~ "Temporary permit" or "permit" means a permit issued to a person who has graduated from an approved school, has taken the examination prescribed by the board, and is awaiting the results of the examination.

§30-8-6.

Rulemaking.

(a) The board shall propose rules for legislative approval, in accordance with the provisions of §29A-3-1 *et seq.* of this code, to implement the provisions of this article, including:

(1) Standards and requirements for licenses, certificates, and permits;

(2) Procedures for examinations and reexaminations;

(3) Requirements for third parties to prepare and/or administer examinations and reexaminations;

(4) Educational and experience requirements;

(5) The passing grade on the examinations;

(6) Standards for approval of courses and curriculum;

(7) Procedures for the issuance and renewal of licenses, certificates and permits;

(8) A fee schedule;

(9) A prescription drug formulary classifying those categories of oral drugs rational to the diagnosis and treatment of visual defects or abnormal conditions of the human eye and its appendages, which may be prescribed by licensees from Schedules III, IV, and V of the Uniform Controlled Substances Act. The drug formulary may also include oral antibiotics, oral nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs, and oral carbonic anhydrase inhibitors;

(10) Requirements for prescribing and dispensing contact lenses that contain and deliver pharmaceutical agents that have been approved by the Food and Drug Administration as a drug;

(11) Continuing education requirements for licensees;

(12) The procedures for denying, suspending, revoking, reinstating, or limiting the practice of licensees, certificate holders, and permittees;

(13) Requirements for inactive or revoked licenses, certificates, or permits;

~~(14) Requirements for an expanded scope of practice for those procedures that are taught at fifty percent of all accredited optometry schools and~~

~~(15)~~ (14) Any other rules necessary to effectuate the provisions of this article.

~~(b) All of the board's rules in effect on July 1, 2010, shall remain in effect until they are amended or repealed, and references to provisions of former enactments of this article are interpreted to mean provisions of this article.~~

~~(c)~~(b) The board shall promulgate procedural and interpretive rules in accordance with §29A-3-8 of this code
§30-8-9. Scope of practice.

(a) A licensee may:

(1) Examine, diagnose, and treat diseases and conditions of the human eye and its appendage within the scope established in this article or associated rules;

(2) Administer or prescribe any drug for topical application to the anterior segment of the human eye for use in the examination, diagnosis, or treatment of diseases and conditions of the human eye and its appendages: *Provided*, That the licensee has first obtained a certificate;

(3)(A) Administer or prescribe any drug from the drug formulary, as established by the board pursuant to §30-8-6 of this code, for use in the examination, diagnosis or treatment of diseases and conditions of the human eye and its appendages: *Provided*, That the licensee has first obtained a certificate;

(B) New drugs and new drug indications may be added to the drug formulary by approval of the board;

(4) Administer epinephrine by injection to treat emergency cases of anaphylaxis or anaphylactic shock;

(5) Prescribe and dispense contact lenses that contain and deliver pharmaceutical agents and that have been approved by the Food and Drug Administration as a drug;

(6) Prescribe, fit, apply, replace, duplicate or alter lenses, prisms, contact lenses, orthoptics, vision training, vision rehabilitation;

(7) Perform the following procedures:

(A) Remove a foreign body from the ocular surface and adnexa utilizing a noninvasive method;

(B) Remove a foreign body, external eye, conjunctival, superficial, using topical anesthesia;

(C) Remove embedded foreign bodies or concretions from conjunctiva, using topical anesthesia, not involving sclera;

(D) Remove corneal foreign body not through to the second layer of the cornea using topical anesthesia;

(E) Epilation of lashes by forceps;

(F) Closure of punctum by plug; and

(G) Dilation of the lacrimal puncta with or without irrigation;

(8) Furnish or provide any prosthetic device to correct or relieve any defects or abnormal conditions of the human eye and its appendages;

(9) Order laboratory tests rational to the examination, diagnosis, and treatment of a disease or condition of the human eye and its appendages;

(10) Use a diagnostic or therapeutic laser; and

~~(11) A licensee is also permitted to perform those procedures authorized by the board prior to January 1, 2010.~~

(11) A licensee may perform those procedures he or she was taught and trained through schools or colleges of optometry accredited by the Accreditation Council on Optometric Education, or its successors or equivalents.

(12) A licensee may perform laser procedures as outlined in section §30-8B-1 et seq. of this code.

(b) A licensee may not:

(1) Perform surgery except as provided in this article; or by legislative rule

~~(2) Use a therapeutic laser;~~

~~(3)~~(2) Use Schedule II controlled substances. However, an oral pharmaceutical certified licensee may prescribe hydrocodone and hydrocodone containing drugs for a duration of no more than three days;

~~(4)~~(3) Treat systemic disease; or

~~(5)~~(4) Present to the public that he or she is a specialist in surgery of the eye.

ARTICLE 8A. EYE CARE CONSUMER PROTECTION LAW.

§30-8A-1. Definitions.

As used in this article:

2 ~~(a)~~ "Contact Lens" means a lens placed directly on the surface of the eye, regardless of
3 whether it is intended to correct a visual defect. Contact lens includes, but is not limited to, a
4 cosmetic, therapeutic, or corrective lens.

5 ~~(b)~~ "Board" means the West Virginia Board of Optometry.

6 ~~(c)~~ "Diagnostic contact lens" means a contact lens used to determine a proper contact lens
7 fit.

8 ~~(d)~~ "Direct supervision" means supervision that occurs when a licensee is actually present
9 in the building.

10 ~~(e)~~ "Examination and evaluation" means an assessment of the ocular health and visual
11 status of a patient that does not consist solely of objective refractive data or information generated
12 by an automated refracting device or other automated testing device for the purpose of writing a
13 valid prescription.

14 ~~(f)~~ "Licensee" means a person who is authorized to engage in the practice of optometry
15 under §30-8-1 *et seq.* of this code.

16 ~~(g)~~ "Special requirements" means the type of lens design, lens material, tint, or lens
17 treatments.

18 ~~(h)~~ "Spectacles" means an optical instrument or device worn or used by an individual that
19 has one or more lenses designed to correct or enhance vision to address the visual needs of the
20 individual wearer. This includes spectacles that may be adjusted to achieve different types or
21 levels of visual correction or enhancement.

22 ~~(i)~~ "Valid prescription" means one of the following, as applicable:

23 (1) For a contact lens, a written or electronic order by a licensee who has conducted an
24 examination and evaluation of a patient and has determined a satisfactory fit for the contact lens
25 based on an analysis of the physiological compatibility of the lens or the cornea and the physical fit
26 and refractive functionality of the lens on the patient's eye. To be a valid prescription under this
27 subdivision, it shall at least include the following:

- 28 (A) A statement that the prescription is for a contact lens;
- 29 (B) The contact lens type or brand name, or for a private label contact lens, the name of the
30 manufacturer, trade name of the private label brand, and, if applicable, trade name of the
31 equivalent or similar brand;
- 32 (C) All specifications necessary to order and fabricate the contact lens, including, if
33 applicable, the power, material, base curve or appropriate designation, and diameter;
- 34 (D) The quantity of contact lenses to be dispensed;
- 35 (E) The number of refills;
- 36 (F) Specific wearing instructions and contact lens disposal parameters;
- 37 (G) The patient's name;
- 38 (H) The date of the examination and evaluation;
- 39 (I) The date the prescription is originated;
- 40 (J) The prescribing licensee's name, address, and telephone number;
- 41 (K) The prescribing licensee's written or electronic signature, or other form of
42 authentication; and
- 43 (L) An expiration date of not less than one year from the date of the examination and
44 evaluation or a statement of the reasons why a shorter time is appropriate based on the medical
45 needs of the patient.
- 46 (2) For spectacles, a written or electronic order by a licensee who has examined and
47 evaluated a patient. To be a valid prescription under this subdivision, it shall include at least the
48 following:
- 49 (A) A statement that the prescription is for spectacles;
- 50 (B) As applicable and as specified for each eye, the lens power including the spherical
51 power, cylindrical power including axis, prism, and power of the multifocal addition;
- 52 (C) Any special requirements, the omission in the opinion of the prescribing licensee,
53 would adversely affect the vision or ocular health of the patient;

(D) The patient's name;

(E) The date of the examination and evaluation;

(F) The date the prescription is originated;

(G) The prescribing licensee's name, address, and telephone number;

(H) The prescribing licensee's written or electronic signature, or other form of authentication; and

(I) An expiration date of not less than one year from the date of the examination and evaluation or a statement of the reasons why a shorter time is appropriate based on the medical needs of the patient.

ARTICLE 8B. LASER PROCEDURES.

§30-8B-1. General.

This article establishes requirements, procedures, and standards for the certification of licensees to perform certain laser procedures.

§30-8B-2. Definitions.

"Laser Certificate Holder" means a licensee who has met the requirements of this rule and has been issued an Ophthalmic Laser Utilization Certificate by the Board.

"Ophthalmic Laser" means any of the commercially available light amplification by stimulated emission of radiation (LASER) devices approved by the US Food and Drug Administration for use on the human eye and adnexa.

"Posterior Capsulotomy" means the ophthalmic laser technique most commonly used to treat the clouding of the eye's posterior lens capsule (PCO) that commonly occurs following cataract surgery.

"Peripheral Iridotomy" means the standard first-line treatment in angle-closure glaucoma and eyes at risk for this condition most commonly treated utilizing ophthalmic lasers.

"Selective Laser Trabeculoplasty" means a simple, yet highly effective laser procedure that reduces the intraocular pressure associated with glaucoma that uses short pulses of low-energy

13 light to target the melanin, or pigment, in specific cells of the affected eye. The surrounding, non-
 14 pigmented cells are untouched and undamaged.

§30-8B-3. Certification Generally.

1 (a) A licensee shall meet all the requirements as listed in this article in order to be certified
 2 to utilize an ophthalmic laser.

3 (b) A licensee shall obtain Ophthalmic Laser Utilization certification to utilize Ophthalmic
 4 Lasers in West Virginia.

5 (c) An applicant for licensure by examination, by reciprocity, or by reinstatement after May
 6 1, 2025, shall only be granted licensure if the applicant meets the requirements for Ophthalmic
 7 Laser Utilization certification.

8 (d) Upon the licensee's successful completion of the requirements and application listed in
 9 §30-8B-4 of this code, §30-8B-5 of this code, and approval by the board, an Ophthalmic Laser
 10 Utilization Certificate may be issued.

§30-8B-4. Certification Requirements.

1 (a) To be certified the licensee shall:
 2 (b) Complete the required application form designed by the board;
 3 (c) Submit proof of attendance and satisfactory completion of the education and training
 4 established by the Board in §30-B-5 of this code.

§30-8B-5. Education and Training.

1 (a) Any license granted to an applicant who graduated from an accredited school or college
 2 of optometry in 2025 or thereafter, and who passed the Laser and Surgical Procedures
 3 Examination administered by the National Board of Examiners in Optometry or other equivalent
 4 proficiency examination approved by the Board shall be deemed to have met the education and
 5 training criteria listed in §30-8B-5 of this code.

6 (b) The Board shall accept post graduate courses or training programs for certification that
 7 are provided by or through a school or college of optometry accredited by the Accreditation

Council on Optometric Education or its successor organization provided, the courses or training programs include the criteria listed in §30-8B-5(c)(1) through §30-8B-5(c)(3);

(c) The Board, at its discretion, may approve courses or training programs provided through organizations other than accredited schools or colleges of optometry certifying that the optometrist is competent in the utilization of ophthalmic lasers if, and only if, the courses or training programs meets the following minimum criteria:

(1) Each course or training program shall include indications, contra-indications, techniques, risks, and benefits.

(2) Each course or training program shall include appropriate follow up and management protocols and techniques;

(3) Each course or training program shall teach the procedures in a closely supervised environment with a proficiency assessment.

(d) A list of approved courses or training programs for Ophthalmic Laser Utilization Certification will be maintained by the Board for public inspection.

§30-8B-6. Treatment Guidelines.

(a) A certificate holder may utilize ophthalmic lasers which are considered rational to the diagnosis and treatment of the human eye or its appendages.

(b) The Board will maintain a list of approved treatment indications and shall update the list as new treatments, technologies, and training become available.

(c) Effective upon passage of this article, approved treatment indications include:

(1) Posterior Capsulotomy;

(2) Peripheral Iridotomy;

(3) Selective Laser Trabeculoplasty (SLT).

(d) The certificate holder shall follow all applicable Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) guidelines pertaining to Ophthalmic lasers.

(e) The certificate holder shall adhere to generally accepted standards of care and follow

12 established clinical guidelines for utilization of ophthalmic lasers. The certificate holder shall
13 monitor the patient for any adverse reaction and provide appropriate follow up care.

§30-8B-7. **Restrictions.**

1 (a) The licensee shall perform only those ophthalmic laser procedures approved by the
2 board.

3 (b) New ophthalmic laser procedures may be added to the list of approved procedures by a
4 decision of the board based on the following criteria:

5 (1) A new or existing ophthalmic laser device or procedure has been approved by the Food
6 and Drug Administration for the treatment of the eye or its appendages.

7 (2) A new or existing ophthalmic laser device or procedure has gained accepted use in the
8 eye care field. Such acceptance may be identified by its inclusion in the curriculum of an optometry
9 school accredited by the Accreditation Council on Optometric Education or its successor, or
10 approved post-graduate continuing education, through peer-reviewed, evidence-based research
11 and professional journal articles, or by, inclusion in established standards of practice and care
12 published by professional organizations.

NOTE: The purpose of this bill is to update the practice of optometry.

Strike-throughs indicate language that would be stricken from a heading or the present law
and underscoring indicates new language that would be added.