

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6265

As of January 20, 1998

Title: An act relating to authorizing dispensing opticians to perform eye refraction and modify existing prescriptions to reflect changes in vision.

Brief Description: Allowing dispensing opticians to perform eye refractions.

Sponsors: Senators Wood, Wojahn and Fairley.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Health & Long-Term Care: 1/22/98.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & LONG-TERM CARE

Staff: Joan K. Mell (786-7447)

Background: Opticians are not authorized to perform refractions. Refractions are a process whereby ophthalmologists or optometrists measure a person's vision. The process, simply stated, involves observation and examination by the physician as the patient looks through a series of lenses. Opticians presently are restricted to dispensing corrective lenses according to the physician's prescription.

Summary of Bill: Certified opticians who are authorized to dispense lenses may be authorized to perform refractions.

The Department of Health establishes a dispensing optician committee to administer licensing exams and make recommendations on licensing.

Refracting opticians must: complete 80 hours of coursework related to refraction; complete a 20-hour practicum with a licensed optometrist or ophthalmologist; meet continuing education requirements; pass an examination; and pay a fee.

Refracting opticians must refer customers to a licensed optometrist or ophthalmologist if the optician cannot: (1) select lenses that provide a minimum 20/40 vision in either eye; (2) select lenses that provide less than a two-line difference of acuity between the two eyes of a child under ten; or (3) if the optician observes a change of more than plus or minus 2.00 diopter of power in either eye.

Certified refracting opticians may modify only those prescriptions from consumers that have had an eye health exam within two years for contact lenses and within four years for glasses.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 16, 1998.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.