

# HOUSE BILL REPORT

## ESSB 5535

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**As Reported by House Committee On:**  
Health Care

**Title:** An act relating to optometry.

**Brief Description:** Modifying optometry licensing requirements.

**Sponsors:** Senate Committee on Health & Long-Term Care (originally sponsored by Senators Franklin, Brandland, Berkey, Spanel, Schoesler, Rockefeller, Delvin, Kohl-Welles, Oke and Shin).

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:**

Health Care: 2/16/06, 2/17/06 [DPA].

**Brief Summary of Engrossed Substitute Bill**  
**(As Amended by House Committee)**

- Establishes a timetable for all optometrists to meet standards for the use and prescription of medications.

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### HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH CARE

**Majority Report:** Do pass as amended. Signed by 14 members: Representatives Cody, Chair; Campbell, Vice Chair; Morrell, Vice Chair; Hinkle, Ranking Minority Member; Curtis, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Alexander, Appleton, Bailey, Clibborn, Condotta, Green, Moeller, Schual-Berke and Skinner.

**Staff:** Chris Blake (786-7392).

**Background:**

The practice of optometry involves the examination of the human eye and the human vision system. Optometrists may test patients' visual acuity, depth and color perception, and the ability to focus and coordinate the eyes; prescribe eyeglasses and contact lenses; prescribe visual therapy; and adapt prosthetic eyes. Upon meeting additional requirements, optometrists may also use or prescribe topical or oral drugs for diagnostic or therapeutic purposes and epinephrine by injection for the treatment of anaphylactic shock.

Optometrists may use topical drugs for diagnostic purposes upon completing 60 hours of didactic and clinical instruction and receiving certification from an accredited institution of higher education. Optometrists may use or prescribe topical drugs for therapeutic purposes

upon completing the requirements for diagnostic drugs; completing an additional 75 hours of didactic and clinical instruction; and receiving certification from an accredited institution of higher education.

Optometrists may use or prescribe an oral drug for diagnostic or therapeutic purposes upon meeting the existing requirements for topically applied drugs; completing an additional 16 hours of didactic instruction and eight hours of supervised clinical instruction; and receiving certification from an accredited institution of higher education.

Optometrists may administer injectable epinephrine upon meeting the existing requirements for topically applied drugs; completing an additional four hours of didactic and supervised clinical instruction; and receiving certification from an accredited institution of higher education.

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### **Summary of Amended Bill:**

#### Medication Training

All applicants for an initial license to practice optometry on or after January 1, 2007, must meet the requirements for using topically applied drugs for diagnostic and therapeutic purposes, using or prescribing oral drugs, and administering injectable epinephrine.

All optometrists renewing their license on or after January 1, 2009, must meet the requirements for using topically applied drugs for diagnostic and therapeutic purposes.

All optometrists renewing their license on or after January 1, 2011, must meet the requirements for using topically applied drugs for diagnostic and therapeutic purposes, using or prescribing oral drugs, and administering injectable epinephrine.

#### Inactive License Status

The Board of Optometry (Board) may adopt rules to allow a licensed optometrist to place his or her license on inactive status.

### **Amended Bill Compared to Engrossed Substitute Bill:**

The Board is authorized to adopt rules to allow optometrists to place their licenses on inactive status.

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**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

**Effective Date of Amended Bill:** The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

**Testimony For:** This presents a reasonable way to phase in higher optometrist standards.

**Testimony Against:** None.

**Persons Testifying:** Senator Franklin, prime sponsor; and Holly Chisa, Optometric Physicians of Washington.

**Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying:** None.