

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2341

As Reported by House Committee On:
Health Care

Title: An act relating to optometry.

Brief Description: Modifying optometry licensing requirements.

Sponsors: Representatives Moeller, Hinkle, Williams, Sells, Upthegrove and Lantz.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Health Care: 1/12/06, 1/13/06 [DPS].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

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

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH CARE

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 15 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, Lantz, 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 a diagnostic or therapeutic purpose 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.

Summary of Substitute 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 is authorized to adopt rules to allow a licensed optometrist to place his or her license on inactive status.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:

The substitute bill removes the authority of the Optometry Board to establish inactive license fees and requires that the Secretary of Health establish these fees.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Testimony For: This bill is about training for optometrists, not increasing scope of practice. This will achieve a single, consistent standard for optometrists statewide which will bring clarity for consumers and simplicity to the licensing process.

(With Concerns): Optometrists who have no intentions of using medications in their practice, should not be required to have such training.

Testimony Against: While it is fine for all new optometrists to meet the medication standards, currently licensed optometrists should have a grandfather clause to prevent the potential closure of optometric businesses that do not use these medications and do not meet the standards.

Persons Testifying: (In support) Representative Moeller, prime sponsor; and Brad Tower, Chris Barry and Dr. Ted Cadet, Optometric Physicians of Washington.

(With concerns) Susie Tracy, Washington Academy of Eye Physicians.

(Opposed) Randy Ray, Luxotica.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.