

Department of Commerce, Community
and Economic Development

Division of Corporations, Business
and Professional Licensing

Alaska Board of Examiners in Optometry

Annual Report

Fiscal Year 2022



Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development
Division of Corporations, Business and Professional Licensing
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Alaska Board of Examiners in Optometry
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Identification of the Board

Board Member	Duty Station	Date Appointed	Term Expires
Dr. Bradley Cross Optometrist - Chairperson	Soldotna	Mar 1, 2019	Mar 1, 2023
Dr. Michael Mavencamp Optometrist - Secretary	Fairbanks	Mar 1, 2021	Mar 1, 2025
Dr. Pamela Steffes Optometrist	Sitka	Mar 1, 2016	Mar 1, 2024
Dr. Kathleen Rice Optometrist	Kenai	Mar 1, 2022	Mar 1, 2026
Vacant Public Member			

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Identification of Staff

Thomas Bay - Licensing Examiner

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(907) 465-2550

Terry Ryals - Records & Licensing Supervisor

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Jasmin Bautista - Licensing Examiner

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Jun Maiquis - Regulations Specialist II

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Marilyn Zimmerman - Paralegal II

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Narrative Statement

During FY 22:

- 11 new licenses were issued
- 7 licenses lapsed since the last report
- 225 active Optometry licenses at the time of this report.

5 meetings were held during the fiscal year 2022. These were all teleconferenced due to COVID-19 restrictions on state of Alaska travel.

- July 9,2021: Teleconferenced
- October 22,2021: Teleconferenced
- January 28,2022: Teleconferenced
- March 2, 2022: Teleconferenced
- April 18,2022: Teleconferenced
- Tentative 5/26/2022 teleconference for final review of a regulations project

These meetings were necessary to review and approve ongoing regulation projects, license application reviews, license audits, and correspondence with Department of Commerce personnel.

The trust of the public and the protection of Alaskans is the primary mission of the board and that mission was represented as the focus of our meetings and ongoing regulatory projects. License applications were carefully reviewed throughout the year via the use of OnBoard, Board Secure Board Portal Software. This platform with online voting allowed for expedient decisions when appropriate. Some applications required full board discussion and those were reviewed during our teleconferenced meetings.

Continuing education audits were reviewed and finalized, as well as investigative reports that required review and board actions were completed during our meetings. All correspondence requiring board attention, input and decision have been reviewed and action taken.

Kathleen Rice, OD from Kenai was appointed to the board in March of 2022. Dr. Damien Delzer completed his 8 years of eligibility and service to the board and rotated off the board on 3/1/2022. Also, the public member Eric Lingle termed out of his board service on 3/1/2022. That position is unfilled at the time of this writing.

The COVID-19 Pandemic has had ongoing impact for licensees throughout the fiscal year. Most continuing education venues are beginning to open to in-person meetings once again and that should allow for Optometrists to obtain the required amount of CE credits for license renewal at the end of 2022.

Three investigations were opened during the fiscal year. One was closed as non-jurisdictional, one was related to continuing education requirements and was resolved and closed, and the final one was completed with the help of the Division Investigator and has been closed.

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Narrative Statement (continued)

During FY 2022, many of the regulatory projects that started in FY 2021 were finalized. These include 12 AAC 48.015, 12 AAC 48.022, 12 AAC 48.200, 12 AAC 48.330, 12 AAC 48.900, 12 AAC 48.920, and 12 AAC 48.990. These regulation updates have all been implemented and are now a part of our Statutes and Regulations for Optometrists which has been updated as of 8/2021. The summaries of these changes were listed in the FY 2021 annual report.

Currently, 12 AAC 48.035 is undergoing a regulatory update. It pertains to streamlining military licensing for Optometrist and/or their spouse. That project is currently awaiting public comment and then is expected to proceed.

The status of our board balance sheet has improved to a moderate surplus. This is a result of a grant that the Division Director was able to procure for our board. Our license fees and renewal fees are projected to maintain this surplus for the next several fiscal years. The fee increase for renewal of licenses may be able to be delayed as a result.

Travel expenses were minimized for the past FY through the use of teleconferenced meetings exclusively. It is to be determined if in-person board meetings will resume in the next FY.

The outgoing board chair, Dr. Delzer, has been integral in seeing the Legislative Sunset Audit advance through the Legislature. At the time of this writing, the Senate has moved the bill out of committee. It is expected to be finalized in this year's working session. This will continue the Board of Optometry until June of 2028.

An annual report has been prepared and will be submitted to the annual meeting of ARBO, which takes place in June of 2022. This report contains some of the demographic statistics about the Optometry landscape in Alaska that are found in this report.

The board continues to be represented by the Chair at the biweekly Joint Board Chair meetings and the Biweekly PDMP meetings.

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Budget Recommendations for FY 2023

Budget Recommendations section anticipates the board's fiscal priorities for the upcoming year. Please complete all parts of this section with details about anticipated meetings, conferences, memberships, supplies, equipment, to other board requests. Meeting expenses that are being funded through third-party reimbursement or direct booking must be identified separately from expenses paid through license fees (receipt-supported services or RSS). Be sure to explain any items listed as "other" so they may be tracked appropriately.

Board Meeting Date	Location	# Board	# Staff
October TBD, 2022	TBD	4	2
<input type="checkbox"/> Airfare:			\$ 2,000.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Hotel:			\$ 800.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Ground:			\$ 400.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Other:			\$ 360.00
Total Estimated Cost:			\$ 3,560.00

Board Meeting Date	Location	# Board	# Staff
January TBD 2023	Teleconference	4	2
<input type="checkbox"/> Airfare:			
<input type="checkbox"/> Hotel:			
<input type="checkbox"/> Ground:			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other:			\$ 300.00
Total Estimated Cost:			\$ 300.00

Board Meeting Date	Location	# Board	# Staff
April TBD 2023	TBD	4	2
<input type="checkbox"/> Airfare:			
<input type="checkbox"/> Hotel:			
<input type="checkbox"/> Ground:			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other:			\$ 1,000.00
Total Estimated Cost:			\$ 1,000.00

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Budget Recommendations for FY 2023 (continued)

Travel Required to Perform Examinations

Not Applicable

Date	Location	# Board	# Staff

Description of meeting and its role in supporting the mission of the Board:

- Airfare:
- Hotel:
- Ground:
- Conference:
- Other:

Total Estimated Cost: \$ 0.00

Travel Required to Perform Examinations

Not Applicable

Date	Location	# Board	# Staff

Description of meeting and its role in supporting the mission of the Board:

- Airfare:
- Hotel:
- Ground:
- Conference:
- Other:

Total Estimated Cost: \$ 0.00

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Budget Recommendations for FY 2023 (continued)

Out-of-State Meetings and Additional In-State Travel (Rank in order of importance)

#1 Rank in Importance or Not Applicable

Date	Location	# Board	# Staff
June 18-20, 2023	Washington, DC	2	

Description of meeting and its role in supporting the mission of the Board:

Annual conference for the Association of Regulatory Boards of Optometry (ARBO) where member boards congregate to discuss emerging topics related to the profession.

Expenditure	License Fees (RSS)	Third-Party Reimbursement	Third-Party Direct Booked	Total
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Airfare:	\$650.00			\$650.00
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hotel:	\$790.00			\$790.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Ground:				\$0.00
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Conference:	\$500.00			\$500.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Other				\$0.00
Describe "Other" (break out all sections):				
Net Total:	\$ 1,940.00	\$ 0.00	\$ 0.00	\$ 1,940.00

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Budget Recommendations for FY 2023 (continued)

Non-Travel Budget Requests

- Not Applicable Resources Examinations
 Membership Training Other

Product or Service	Provider	Cost Per Event
Membership	ARBO	\$850.00

Description of item and its role in supporting the mission of the Board:

The mission of ARBO is to represent and assist member licensing boards in regulating the practice of optometry for the public welfare. ARBO's purpose is to exchange information and engage in programs and joint activities relating to the professional education, licensure and continuing education of optometrists, to improve reciprocal relations and help in solving the mutual problems of the member boards.

Other Items with a Fiscal Impact

- Not Applicable**

Cost Per Event:
Number of Events:

Product or Service	Provider	Cost Per Event

Description of item and its role in supporting the mission of the Board:

Summary of FY 2023 Fiscal Requests

Board Meetings and Teleconferences:	\$4,860.00
Travel for Exams:	\$0.00
Out-of-State and Additional In-State Travel:	\$1,940.00
Dues, Memberships, Resources, Training:	\$850.00
Total Potential Third-Party Offsets:	\$ 0.00
Other:	\$0.00
Total Requested:	\$7,650.00

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Legislative Recommendations - Proposed Legislation for FY 2023

No Recommendations

The Board has no recommendations for proposed legislation at this time.

Recommendations

The Board has the following recommendations for proposed legislation:

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Regulation Recommendations - Proposed Regulations for FY 2023

No Recommendations

The Board has no recommendations for proposed regulations at this time.

Recommendations

The Board has the following recommendations for proposed regulations:

A new regulation project is likely due to the Telehealth bill which is moving through the legislature swiftly. The impact to the Optometry Board will be that definitions and exclusions for which types of care will be permitted, under this new regulation, will be required to be created.

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Goals and Objectives

Part I

FY 2022's goals and objectives and how they were met:

1. Completion and integration of seven regulatory projects that have streamlined and clarified the license application and license renewal processes.
2. Board reports were provided to stakeholders through annual reports posted to the board website.
3. Five teleconferenced board meetings were held to see the regulation projects to their completion, as well as carry out normal board business.
4. Travel expenses were held to a minimum in FY2021 through teleconference.
5. No non-discrimination legislative issues arose that required board action.
6. The board continued in its careful management of issues related to controlled substances and opioid use and abuse. The board is once again pleased to report no concerns or violations for licensees in this area for the FY 2021. We continue to be represented at the biweekly PDMP meetings.
7. Our fiscal picture shows great improvement following a grant secured by the Division Director. The likelihood of a license fee increase has been mitigated for the near future as a result.
8. The Legislative Sunset Audit was brought through the legislative channels and is awaiting its expected completion by the end of this legislative session.

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Goals and Objectives (continued)

Part II

FY 2023's goals and objectives, and proposed methods to achieve them.

Describe any strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats and required resources:

In addition to the ongoing goals and objectives in place, such as regular meetings and reporting, the following goals will be in our sights for FY 2023:

1. Initiate a regulatory project to complete and perfect the Telehealth bill as it relates to Optometry, if it makes it into law this year as expected.
2. Monitor our fiscal health as the next FY progresses. Our goal is to prevent future licensure fee increases by wise stewardship of our current surplus.
3. Provide board updates to the Alaska Optometric Association and the ARBO at their annual meetings.
4. Remain vigilant and adaptive to the changing needs of licensees and the Alaskan public in the face of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Ensuring the safety of both groups is our priority.
5. Implement recommendations of the Legislative Sunset Audit.

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Sunset Audit Recommendations

Date of Last Legislative Audit: 06/09/2021

Board Sunset Date: 06/30/2028

Audit Recommendation:

DCBPL's director should dedicate resources to ensure licensees holding a DEA number are consistently recorded in the licensing database.

Action Taken:

Written instructions were provided by management and regularly reinforced to program staff; subsequently, a standardized policy manual including this procedure was created January 2019. However, regular turnover in the Occupational Licensing Examiner and Records and Licensing Supervisor positions responsible for this program created gaps in training and oversight. During the three and a half years covered in the legislative audit period, the examiner changed five times, and supervisory responsibility changed four times due to vacancy and competing priorities among various programs within the position's purview. Given the limited staffing resources available to the division, there is very little redundancy in personnel when positions are vacated. The department is assisting the division in addressing these continued challenges.

Next Steps:

The division continues to monitor staffing. This is an ongoing issue.

Completed: No Yes

If yes, date completed:

Audit Recommendation:

The board chair and DCBPL's director should change the license renewal form to allow the board to monitor compliance with continuing education requirements.

Action Taken:

The license renewal form has been updated to contain this information. We find this matter has been resolved.

Next Steps:

The division considers this matter resolved. No next steps.

Completed: No Yes

If yes, date completed: 08/16/2021

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Sunset Audit Recommendations (continued)

Audit Recommendation:

DCBPL's director should ensure adequate resources are available to perform continuing education audits.

Action Taken:

The staff turnover mentioned above led to a lack of follow-through and oversight of the audit process for this program. Additional tools have been created to assist all programs in calendaring and implementing audit phases:

- The professional licensing program coordinator has been tasked to take a more proactive and accountable role in ensuring audits are completed timely and accurately.
- Tasks and timelines in the audit process have been added to the professional licensing renewal calendar. This instrument is accessible to all division staff, enabling further checks and balances in oversight in all professional licensing programs.
- The division paralegal is scheduling conferences with program staff according to the audit and renewal calendar to ensure each step is completed timely.

Next Steps:

The division continues to monitor staffing. This is an ongoing issue.

Completed: No Yes

If yes, date completed: