



Notice of Proposed Changes in The Regulations of the Alaska Board of Examiners in Optometry

Proposed Regulations - FAQ

February, 2023

1. What is the purpose of the proposed regulations? What will this regulation do?

12 AAC 48.011(a)(7), 48.020(c)(5), 48.026(c)(7) and 48.900(c)(6). Verification of Federal Employment.

The proposed regulation changes will remove the additional requirements specific to individuals, presently, or previously, employed by a federal agency and applying to the Board for either an initial license (by examination or by credentials), a retired status license, or reinstatement of a lapsed license. Under the existing regulations, these applicants must submit verification of their current employment status together with a record of their disciplinary history directly from the federal agency (or agencies, if more than one). The removal of this requirement will reduce barriers to licensure for optometrists who have been employed with federal agencies.

12 AAC 48.020(c). License by Credentials.

The proposed regulations will add a new section clarifying that applicants for initial licensure by credentials must complete a Board approved, seven-hour, nontopical therapeutic pharmaceutical agent injection course (or training acceptable by the Board as equivalent). The course must be taken after the applicant has graduated from optometry school.

12 AAC 48.200. License renewals and continuing education.

The proposed regulations will add a new section establishing criteria for exemption from, or postponement of, continuing education requirements, to be granted by the Board in cases of acute ill health or hardship. This will provide the Board with the flexibility to consider alternative options for the individual to maintain their license, without meeting the required number of CE hours prior to renewal. The exemption will only apply in cases of good cause which must be demonstrated in writing by the applicant explaining their particular circumstance and the allowance requested, such as an extension of the time period to complete their CE hours.

12 AAC 48.370. Telehealth.

The proposed regulation will add a new section establishing the scope of, and standards of practice for, optometry services provided by telehealth in Alaska; including the requirement to

be licensed by the Board before practicing, offering to practice or attempting to practice or provide, optometry services via telehealth in Alaska. The public will benefit from, and be comforted by, knowing that whether an optometry service provider is resident in this state or another jurisdiction, they will all be required to obtain a license before providing optometry services via telehealth. This will be of benefit to the public who will be protected from the improper use of telehealth, such as for comprehensive eye examinations.

2. What are the costs to comply with the proposed regulations?

There are no expected costs to comply with the regulations.

3. When will the regulations be effective?

After the public comment deadline, comments received are compiled and given to the Board for consideration. The Board may adopt the regulation as written/publicly noticed, may amend and adopt them, choose to take no action, or may withdraw the proposed regulations in part or in its whole. After Board action, the adopted regulations goes to Department of Law (DOL) for final review/approval. DOL either approves or disapproves regulations. Once approved by DOL, it goes to the Lt. Governor for filing. Regulation takes effect on the 30th day after they have been filed by the Lt. Governor.

Do you have a question that is not answered here? Please email RegulationsAndPublicComment@alaska.gov so it can be added.