

# ***Annual Report***

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## ***Fiscal Year 2020***

### **ALASKA BOARD OF EXAMINERS IN OPTOMETRY**



**Department of Commerce, Community  
and Economic Development**

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**Division of Corporations, Business  
and Professional Licensing**

This annual performance report is presented in accordance with  
Alaska statute AS 08.01.070(10).

Its purpose is to report the accomplishments, activities, and the  
past and present needs of the licensing program.

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**Identification of the Board**

<b>Board Member</b>	<b>Duty Station</b>	<b>Date Appointed</b>	<b>Term Expires</b>
<b>Dr. Damien Delzer</b> OD Optometrist, Chairperson	Fairbanks	Mar 01, 2014	Mar 01, 2022
<b>Dr. Erik Christianson</b> OD Optometrist	Ketchikan	Mar 01, 2017	Mar 01, 2021
<b>Dr. Bradley Cross</b> OD Optometrist	Soldotna	Mar 01, 2019	Mar 01, 2023
<b>Dr. Pamela Steffes</b> OD Optometrist	Sitka	Mar 01, 2016	Mar 01, 2024
<b>Eric Lingle</b> Public Member	Juneau	Mar 01, 2014	Mar 01, 2022

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**Identification of Staff**

**Emily Mesch – Licensing Examiner (7/1/2019- 6/1/2020)**

Department of Commerce, Community & Economic Development  
Division of Corporations, Business and Professional Licensing  
Post Office Box 110806  
Juneau, Alaska 99811-0806  
(907) 465-2550

**Rebecca Powers – Records and Licensing Supervisor (7/1/2019- 6/1/2020)**

Department of Commerce, Community & Economic Development  
Division of Corporations, Business and Professional Licensing  
Post Office Box 110806  
Juneau, Alaska 99811-0806  
(907) 465-2550

**Joseph Bonnell – Records and Licensing Supervisor (6/2/2020- 6/30/2020)**

Department of Commerce, Community & Economic Development  
Division of Corporations, Business and Professional Licensing  
Post Office Box 110806  
Juneau, Alaska 99811-0806  
(907) 465-2691

**Sher Zinn – Regulations Specialist**

Department of Commerce, Community & Economic Development  
Division of Corporations, Business and Professional Licensing  
Post Office Box 110806  
Juneau, Alaska 99811-0806  
(907) 465-1049

**Jasmin Bautista – Investigator**

Department of Commerce, Community & Economic Development  
Division of Corporations, Business and Professional Licensing  
550 West 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Anchorage, Alaska 99501  
(907) 269-8026

# ALASKA BOARD OF EXAMINERS IN OPTOMETRY

## FY 2020 Annual Report

### Narrative Statement

*Five teleconferenced meetings were held during fiscal year 2020:  
(In person meeting not available during COVID-19 pandemic)*

- August 5, 2019 – Teleconference
- October 11, 2019 – Teleconference
- February 3, 2020 – Teleconference
- March 25, 2020- Emergency Teleconference to Address COVID-19
- April 17, 2020 – Teleconference

Meetings were necessary due to the large regulation project that followed the signing of CSHB 103(FIN) as well as HB159 and SB74 and pursuant to AS 08.72.278.

Public trust and protection remained the primary mission of the Board, and were the primary foci of the meetings and regulation projects. Licensure applications were carefully reviewed throughout the year via OnBoard Passageways Board Secure Board Portal Software and on-line voting allowed expedient decisions, however those requiring full Board discussion were reviewed during teleconferenced meetings.

Licensure renewal, continuing education audits and reviews, as well as investigative reports were also reviewed and dispositions made during these live meetings. All correspondence requiring Board attention, input and decision were also carefully reviewed.

No Board roster change occurred during FY2020.

There were no open investigations requiring Board action during FY2020.

During FY2020, one extensive regulation project was completed and adopted into law. 12 AAC 48.040 was adopted following legal review, public comment and signature from the Lt Governor. This regulation addresses specifics of practice pertaining to the statutory change adopted in Alaska Sec. 08.72.278 and published in July 2018. Determination of education requirements prior to granting any changes to scope of practice were studied at length to assure appropriate education and training as well as mechanisms to determine and document said training and education were paramount in the construction of this regulation project to ensure public protection.

During FY2020, three regulation projects were initiated and studied. 12 AAC 48.330 has been moved forward to the Regulation Specialist and will clarify the requirements necessary for any provider who desires to use the term “Specialist” in a specific area of practice. 12 AAC 48.015(b) will be amended to allow the use of an electronic format to provide the law examination to new licensees. 12 AAC 48.920 will address modernization of contact lens prescription requirements. These last two regulation projects require FAQ completion and finalization of draft language prior to forwarding to the Regulation Specialist.

Due to ongoing carry-forward investigative and the large Regulation project expenses, a future increase in 2020 license renewal fees may be necessary to reduce and eventually eliminate any revenue deficit following the increase freeze due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Travel expenses for FY2020 were kept minimal through the use of teleconferenced meetings.

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**Budget Recommendations for FY 2021**

The 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
August 2020	Videoconference	5	2
<input type="checkbox"/> Airfare:			\$0.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Hotel:			\$0.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Ground:			\$0.00
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other: Per diems and incidentals			\$350.00
<b>Total Estimated Cost:</b>			<b>\$350.00</b>

Board Meeting Date	Location	# Board	# Staff
October 2020	Juneau	5	2
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Airfare:			\$1,700.00
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hotel:			\$850.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Ground:			\$0.00
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other: Per diems and incidentals			\$400.00
<b>Total Estimated Cost:</b>			<b>\$2,950.00</b>

Board Meeting Date	Location	# Board	# Staff
January 2021	Videoconference	5	2
<input type="checkbox"/> Airfare:			\$0.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Hotel:			\$0.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Ground:			\$0.00
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other: Per diems and incidentals			\$350.00
<b>Total Estimated Cost:</b>			<b>\$350.00</b>

**Budget Recommendations for FY 2021 (continued)**

Board Meeting Date	Location	# Board	# Staff
April 2021	Videoconference	5	2
<input type="checkbox"/> Airfare:			\$0.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Hotel:			\$0.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Ground:			\$0.00
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other:			\$350.00
<b>Total Estimated Cost:</b>			<b>\$350.00</b>

<b>Travel Required to Perform Examinations</b>			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Not applicable			
Date	Location	# Board	# Staff
<b>Description of meeting and its role in supporting the mission of the Board:</b>			
<input type="checkbox"/> Airfare:			\$0.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Hotel:			\$0.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Ground:			\$0.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Conference:			\$0.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Other:			\$0.00
Describe "Other" (break out all sections):			
<b>Total Estimated Cost:</b>			<b>\$0.00</b>

<b>Out-of-State Meetings and Additional In-State Travel</b>				
(Rank in order of importance)				
<input type="checkbox"/> #1 Rank in Importance or <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable				
Date	Location	# Board	# Staff	
<b>Description of meeting and its role in supporting the mission of the Board:</b>				
Expenditure	License Fees (RSS)	Third-Party Reimbursement	Third-Party Direct Booked	Total
<input type="checkbox"/> Airfare:	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Hotel:	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Ground:	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Conference:	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Other	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Describe "Other" (break out all sections):				
<b>Net Total:</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>

**Budget Recommendations for FY 2021 (continued)**

**Non-Travel Budget Requests**

- |  |                                    |                                       |
|--|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable        | <input type="checkbox"/> Resources | <input type="checkbox"/> Examinations |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Membership | <input type="checkbox"/> Training  | <input type="checkbox"/> Other        |

Product or Service	Provider	Cost Per Event
Membership	ARBO	\$750.00

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

ARBO is a national organization that links regulators and Optometrists together to maintain national standards of patient care, practice and licensing requirements.

**Other Items with a Fiscal Impact**

**Cost Per Event: \$0.00**

- Not Applicable

**Number of Events: 0**

Product or Service	Provider	Total Cost
		\$0.00

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

**Summary of FY 2021 Fiscal Requests**

Board Meetings and Teleconferences:	\$4,000.00
Travel for Exams:	\$0.00
Out-of-State and Additional In-State Travel:	\$0.00
Dues, Memberships, Resources, Training:	\$750.00
Total Potential Third-Party Offsets:	-\$0.00
Other:	\$0.00
<b>Total Requested:</b>	<b>\$4,750.00</b>

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**Legislation Recommendations Proposed Legislation for FY 2021**

**No Recommendations**

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

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**Recommendations**

The Board has the following recommendations for proposed legislation:

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**Regulation Recommendations Proposed Legislation for FY 2021**

**No Recommendations**

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

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**Recommendations**

The Board has the following recommendations for proposed regulations:

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**Goals and Objectives**

**Part I**

***FY 2020's goals and objectives, and how they were met:***

- 1)** Extensive regulation projects were completed and regulatory change implemented to further the protection and access to care for the public.
- 2)** Board reports were provided to practitioner stakeholders during the annual Alaska Optometric Association meetings regarding regulation changes and advisories.
- 3)** Five video conferences were held to address the large number of regulation projects.
- 4)** Travel expenses in FY2020 were minimized through teleconference.
- 5)** There were no significant non-discrimination legislative issues requiring Board action.
- 6)** The Board continued to carefully manage issues regarding Controlled Substances and Opioid Use and Misuse as well as additional topic specific educational requirements. The Board is pleased to report there were no issues concerning this issue during FY2020.
- 7)** One extensive regulation changes was adopted into law following the regulation process.
- 8)** Three new regulation project (12AAC48.330, 12AAC48.015(b), 12AAC48.920) were initiated and judiciously studied and await final regulation specialist review prior to public comment.
- 9)** Cumulative deficit showed an appropriate reduction following a department recommended fee increase, however additional fee increases may be necessary to bring the budget into a neutral position.
- 10)** COVID-19 issues became central for the Board and rendering guidance to practitioners to mitigate risks to patients and staff was a core objective for FY2020.

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**Goals and Objectives**

**Part II**

**FY 2021's goals and objectives, and proposed methods to achieve them.**

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

*All of those issues listed in FY 2020 will remain as goals and objectives for FY 2021, however with the following items added:*

- 1)** Finalize and implement the three regulatory project following the public comment process.
- 2)** Assess the cumulative deficit near the end of 4Q FY2021 to determine if an additional license fee increase appears necessary.
- 3)** Remain vigilant in monitoring the COVID19 Pandemic and act quickly to address changing needs to maintain and mitigate the pandemic and assure safety of patients and practitioner.

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**Sunset Audit Recommendations**

**Date of Last Legislative Audit:** 06/30/2013  
**Board Sunset Date:** 06/30/2022

**Audit Recommendation:** DCBPL's Director should continue efforts to improve the investigative case management system's integrity and confidentiality.

**Action Taken:** The division has taken action to address deficiencies and improve the investigative case management systems efficiency and reliability in service areas.

**Next Steps:** N/A

**Date Completed:** FY2014