

**Chapter 48. Board of Examiners in Optometry.**

(Words in **boldface and underlined** indicate language being added; words [CAPITALIZED AND BRACKETED] indicate language being deleted. Complete new sections are not in boldface or underlined.)

12 AAC 48 is amended by adding a new section to Article 1 to read:

**12 AAC 48.040. Expanded therapeutic procedures.** (a) A licensee may not perform ophthalmic surgery as defined in AS 08.72.278(c), unless the procedure is an expanded therapeutic procedure as defined under this section and the licensee is authorized by the board to perform it.

(b) The board may authorize licensees qualified by education and training to perform an expanded therapeutic procedure or procedures in the practice of optometry. A licensee requesting to perform an expanded therapeutic procedure in the practice of optometry shall have satisfactorily completed a course in the expanded therapeutic procedure provided by an institution accredited by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation and approved by the board, and shall further satisfy the requirements of this section.

(c) The board may authorize a licensee to perform an expanded therapeutic procedure if the applicant provides:

(1) proof of a current license in good standing to practice optometry in this state;  
and

(2) evidence satisfactory to the board of successful completion of a course of instruction in an expanded therapeutic procedure approved by the board.

(d) To be approved by the board, a course in an expanded therapeutic procedure shall include:

(1) didactic classroom instruction in:

(A) laser physics, hazards, and safety;

- (B) biophysics of lasers;
- (C) laser application on clinical optometry;
- (D) laser tissue interactions;
- (E) laser indications, contraindication, and potential complications;
- (F) gonioscopy;
- (G) laser therapy for open angle glaucoma;
- (H) laser therapy for angle closure glaucoma;
- (I) laser posterior capsulotomy;
- (J) common complications: lids, lashes, lacrimal system;
- (K) local complications;
- (L) medicolegal aspects of anterior segment procedures;
- (M) peripheral iridotomy;
- (N) laser trabeculoplasty;
- (O) minor surgical procedures;
- (P) overview of surgical instruments, asepsis, and Occupational Safety and Health Administration regulations;
- (Q) surgical anatomy of the eyelids;
- (R) emergency surgical procedures;
- (S) chalazion management;
- (T) epiluminescence microscopy;
- (U) local anesthesia techniques and complications;
- (V) anaphylaxis and other office emergencies;
- (W) radiofrequency surgery; and
- (X) post-operative wound care;

(2) clinical or laboratory experience in:

(A) video demonstration;

(B) in vitro observation or participation; and

(C) in vivo observation;

(3) passage of a formal clinical or laboratory practical examination; and

(4) passage of a written test administered by the educational institution providing the course, that utilizes the National Board of Examiners in Optometry format.

(e) A course of instruction may be considered for approval by the board if the course;

(1) meets the requirements of (d) of this section;

(2) is provided by an accredited optometry school under (b) of this section;

(3) is at least 32 clock hours in length;

(4) is completed after graduation from optometry school; and

(5) is completed after January 1, 2016.

(f) Courses satisfying the requirements of (e)(1) through (e)(4) of this section, but completed before January 1, 2016, may be approved by the board if the licensee

(1) has been practicing in a state that allows expanded therapeutic procedures immediately preceding the date of request for authorization of expanded therapeutic procedures;

(2) has continuously practiced in that state from the time of completion of the approved course; and

(3) provides an affidavit verifying a minimum of 1,040 hours of active clinical practice in optometry for each year since the date of completion of the approved course.

(g) An optometrist licensed and authorized by the board to perform an expanded therapeutic procedure in the practice of optometry shall be limited within the scope of the licensee's education, training and experience as found acceptable by the board under (b) of this

section. Any license issued to the licensee shall expressly identify the approved expanded therapeutic procedure or procedures the licensee may perform.

(h) “Expanded therapeutic procedure” means an ophthalmic surgery approved by the board in compliance with AS 08.72.278, and may include anterior segment laser procedures, anterior segment surgical procedures, YAG laser capsulotomy, laser peripheral iridotomy, and laser trabeculoplasty.

(i) Notwithstanding any other provision of this section, a licensee may not perform ophthalmic surgery for the following procedures, but may provide preoperative and postoperative care:

- (1) retina laser procedures;
- (2) laser-assisted in situ keratomileusis (LASIK) and photorefractive keratectomy (PRK);
- (3) surgery related to removal of the eye from a living human being;
- (4) surgery requiring full thickness incision or excision of the cornea or sclera other than paracentesis in an emergency situation requiring immediate reduction of the intraocular pressure;
- (5) penetrating keratoplasty, or lamellar keratoplasty;
- (6) non-laser surgery requiring incision of the iris and ciliary body, including iris diathermy or cryotherapy;
- (7) non-laser surgery requiring incision of the vitreous;
- (8) surgery requiring incision of the retina;
- (9) surgical extraction of the crystalline lens;
- (10) surgical implantation of intraocular lens implants;
- (11) incisional or excisional surgery of the extraocular muscles;

(12) non-laser surgery of the eyelid for eyelid malignancies or for incisional cosmetic or mechanical repair of blepharochalasis, ptosis, and tarsorrhaphy;

(13) surgery of the bony orbit, including orbital implants;

(14) incisional or excisional non-laser surgery of the lacrimal system other than lacrimal probing or related procedures;

(15) surgery requiring full thickness conjunctivoplasty with graft or flap;

(16) any non-laser surgical procedure that does not provide for the correction and relief of ocular or ocular adnexa abnormalities; and

(17) injection into the posterior chamber of the eye to treat any macular or retinal disease.

(j) A patient with an eyelid or adnexal lesion found to be malignant shall be referred by the treating licensee to a practitioner trained and qualified to treat those lesions.

(k) An injection into the posterior segment or chamber, or retinal tissue to treat any macular or retinal disease is prohibited under this chapter.

(l) Performing an expanded therapeutic procedure without board authorization may be grounds for imposition of disciplinary sanctions under AS 08.72.240. (Eff. \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_, Register \_\_\_\_)

**Authority:** AS 08.72.050 AS 08.72.278