



IDFPR

Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulation

Division of Professional Regulation

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JB PRITZKER
Governor

MARIO TRETO, JR.
Secretary

CAMILE LINDSAY
Director

The Illinois Optometric Licensing and Disciplinary Board convened an open meeting on Thursday, May 15, 2025 at 10:00 a.m. The meeting was held in the IDFPR offices at 555 W. Monroe Street, Chicago, IL 60661 and at 320 W. Washington Street, Springfield, IL 62786. The locations were connected by video conferencing.

Board members physically present for the meeting:

Kristen Buskirk, OD, Member
John Gialousakis, OD, Member
Chelsey Moore, OD, Member
Melissa Suckow, OD, Member

Jennifer Dunne, OD, Member
Leslie Grant, Public Member
M. Brian Sehy, OD, Member

IDFPR representatives physically present for the meeting:

Ronald Almiron, Assistant General Counsel
Todd Robertson, Board Liaison

Guests present for the meeting:

Leigh Ann Vanausdoll, Illinois Optometric Association
Katie Lewis, Illinois Optometric Association

Call to Order - Welcome and Roll Call

The meeting was called to order at 10:00 a.m. with Dr. Sehy serving as chairperson.

Introductions - Board Members and Department Representatives

All Board members except for Dr. Sehy were appointed subsequent to the last board meeting held in March of 2023. Additionally, staff changed for the General Counsel Attorney and Board Liaison positions for the Illinois Optometric Licensing and Disciplinary Board.

All Board members and IDFPR representatives introduced themselves and provided background information about themselves.

Election of Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson

Motion was made/seconded (Sehy/Buskirk) to nominate Chelsey Moore, O.D. as Chair of the Illinois Optometric Licensing and Disciplinary Board. The motion passed unanimously.

Motion was made/seconded (Sehy/Moore) to nominate Melissa Suckow, O.D. as Vice-Chair of the Illinois Optometric Licensing and Disciplinary Board. The motion passed unanimously.

Illinois Optometric Association (IOA) Update

Leigh Ann Vanuasdoll provided information about pending legislation that may impact the optometric profession. HB2676 - would amend the Underserved Health Care Provider Workforce Act (110 ILCS 935) to allow eligible students studying optometry in an Illinois optometry college to apply for scholarships under the program based on a commitment to practice as an optometrist in a designated shortage area. Ms. Vanuasdoll also noted that the Illinois Optometric Practice Act is scheduled to sunset in less than 2 years.

Leigh Ann Vanuasdoll inquired whether IDFPR expects to fill the vacant position of Optometric coordinator prescribed by Sec. 11.5 of the Illinois Optometric Practice Act (225 ILCS 80/11.5). Mr. Almiron advised that the Department will look into the vacancy and provide an update.

Acthar Gel

Mr. Almiron advised that he was recently contacted by the IOA regarding Achthar Gel. Specifically, about the Acthar Gel pre-filled injector, SelfJect, which was approved by the FDA in 2024. The IOA had inquired whether licensed optometrists could prescribe this ocular medication to patients.

Mr. Almiron responded during the meeting that Sec. 15.1 (a-5) of the Illinois Optometric Practice Act [225 ILCS 80/15.1 (a-5)] states that Ocular pharmaceutical agents administered by injection may be used only for the treatment of anaphylaxis. However, the Department will need to review the information further to determine whether licensed optometrists may prescribe this medication in accordance with the Illinois Optometric Practice Act including Sec. 3 (a), Sec 15.1 (a-5), and Sec 15.1 (a-3).

“Sunset” and Ad-Hoc Group

Mr. Almiron provided background information about the upcoming “Sunset” date for the Illinois Optometric Practice Act. This act is scheduled to be repealed (or Sunset) effective January 1, 2027, unless extended. The Department anticipates filing legislation to extend the Illinois Optometric Practice Act in the 2026 legislative session.

Mr. Almiron made a recommendation for the Illinois Optometric Board to establish an Ad-Hoc group consisting of 2 or 3 Board members for the purpose of identifying and discussing potential changes to the Optometric Practice Act. The Ad-Hoc group would meet outside of the Board’s regularly scheduled business meetings and communicate only with its 3 members and with Mr. Almiron as General Counsel Attorney. The Ad-Hoc group would not communicate with the full Board outside of its regularly scheduled business meetings. Any recommendations made by the Ad-Hoc group would be presented to the full board for discussion during one of the Board’s regularly scheduled business meetings.

Motion was made/seconded (Sehy/Suckow) to form a 3 member Ad-Hoc group that will make recommendations concerning updates to the Illinois Optometric Practice Act. The motion passed unanimously. A second motion was made/seconded (Suckow/Moore) to nominate Dr. Buskirk, Dr. Gialousakis and Dr. Sehy. The motion passed unanimously.

National Board of Examiners in Optometry (NBEO) Part III Examination

Mr. Almiron and Mr. Robertson shared information provided by NBEO concerning prior changes to their Part III Examination. The NBEO Part III Clinical Skills Examination (CSE) exam was replaced by the Part III Patient Encounters and Performance Skills (PEPS) exam in August 2024. Most states including Illinois have state regulations that call for candidates to receive a passing score on the NBEO Part III exam. States with this requirement receive a NBEO score report that includes a “PEPS Overall Result”. If the score report states that a candidate has a “PEPS Overall Result” of “Pass”, this means that the candidate has passed the NBEO Part III exam. Some states

have additional regulations related specifically to patient encounters or performance skills. Those states receive a NBEO score report that show the PEPS Overall Result as well as Pass/Fail results for the Patient Encounters and Performance Skills subcomponents. Dr. Gialousakis explained that it is possible for a candidate to Fail the Skills subcomponent and still score high enough to receive a Pass for their PEPS Overall Result. Mr. Robertson shared a sample NBEO score report that showed an example of a candidate with a fail decision for the Skills subcomponent and a pass decision for the PEPS Overall Result. Dr. Buskirk explained that the Part III CSE exam scoring was similar - candidates could have failed in skills but received an overall pass result for Part III CSE exam. Subsequent to discussion, the Board agreed that no additional rules requirements should be added related to subcomponents of the NBEO Part III exam. This means that a candidate has passed the NBEO Part III exam if their score report has a PEPS Overall Result of Pass. In addition, the Board discussed whether Section 1320.40 of the Illinois Administrative Code should be updated to clarify the examination requirement for licensure as an optometrist.

Motion was made/seconded (Sehy/Buskirk) to recommend changes to 68 IAC 1320.40 (b) as follows:

Section 1320.40 Examinations

- b) An applicant must direct NBEO to submit evidence of passage of the ~~entire~~ NBEO examination ~~sequence, by NBEO standards,~~ to the Division.

The motion passed unanimously.

Motion was made/seconded (Gialousakis/Sehy) to recommend changes to 68 IAC 1320.40 (a) as follows:

- a) The examination for licensure as an optometrist in Illinois shall be Part I, Part II, including passage of the Treatment and Management of Ocular Disease (TMOD) section ~~after January 1, 1996,~~ and Part III of the examination administered by the National Board of Examiners in Optometry (NBEO).

In addition, this section should be amended to reflect that a PEPS Overall Result of Pass for Part III means that the candidate has passed Part III of the NBEO examination sequence.

The motion passed unanimously.

Minimum Eye Examination required by 68 Illinois Administrative Code 1320.90

Mr. Almiron asked the Board members whether a change should be made in Section 1320.90 of the Illinois Administrative Code to distinguish between an initial examination of patient and minimum eye examination. The question was raised following an inquiry received from the Texas Board of Optometry who is considering changes to their definition of “initial visit” to be provider or practice specific and/or specify a length of time between visits. A brief discussion was held related to the background information provided. However, the discussion was tabled pending additional review by the IDFPR and the IOA.

General Counsel’s Report

No additional report at this time.

Adjournment

Motion was made/seconded (Sehy/Buskirk) to adjourn the meeting at 11:45 a.m. Motion passed by voice vote.