



Board of Optometry

Office of Professional Regulation, Vermont Secretary of State

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Approved Special Meeting Minutes Wednesday, September 27th, 2023 8:30am

Board Members Present: Francis Pinard, OD, Chair; Karena Shippee, OD; and Robert Bauman, OD

Board Member(s) Absent: None

OPR Staff Present: Lauren Layman, General Counsel; Emily Tredeau, Staff Attorney, and Corrine Reynolds, Licensing Administrator.

Public: Emma Shouldice, Dean Barcelow, Stephanie Winters, and Jess Barnard

1. Call to Order

- Dr. Pinard called the meeting to order at 8:30 am.

2. Changes to the agenda

3. Approval of September 15th, 2023, meeting minutes

- Dr. Shippee made a motion to approve the minutes as written. Dr. Bauman seconded the motion. Approved.

4. Discipline: None

5. Discussion:

- Purpose of the Meeting: Discussion of the recommendations for optometrist scope expansion and the 2023 Legislative Report
- The Board reviewed and responded to comments on the scope expansion recommendation from the Vermont Medical Society
- The Board suggested OPR amend its recommendation for scope expansion to reduce the number of hands-on procedures optometrists would be required to perform on human patients during a preceptorship.
- Dr. Pinard moved to adopt the following statement from the Board regarding optometrist scope expansion. Dr. Bauman seconded. The motion passed.

The Vermont Board of Optometry wishes to state its position regarding scope expansion of the profession of optometry. It is the mission of this board and OPR to ensure the safety of the public while seeking to allow the profession to practice at its highest level of training. Allowing providers to practice at their highest level of training promulgates a healthcare system with improved access to the highest quality of care, that draws highly skilled providers to our state, and decreases cost to the public by increasing competition which helps maintain a reasonable cost structure for the public. This board is obligated to make choices that build a highly skilled network of optometrists for our patients.

Public safety of course is of paramount importance and is our first charge in considering scope expansion. The board of optometry has reviewed available studies regarding safety outcomes from states that have scope of practice that includes optometric procedures above those that Vermont currently allows. These studies show safety outcomes equivalent with those when performed by an ophthalmologist. Furthermore, these states have had no increase in insurance liability costs due to optometrists performing these procedures. For these reasons, we feel the evidence is compelling that these procedures are safe when performed by an optometrist trained to perform them. The outcomes of these studies demonstrate that the education of the optometrist in our Optometry schools and via advanced procedure courses is adequate in education.

For these reasons, the Vermont Board of Optometry firmly holds that it is in the best interest of the public to allow Vermont optometrists to practice at their fullest scope of training in order to provide increased access to high quality eyecare.

6. Adjournment

- Dr. Shippee moved to adjourn the meeting at 11:18 a.m. Dr. Bauman seconded the motion. Meeting adjourned.

Next Meeting Date – December 15th, 2023

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