



Alaska Optometric Association

Alaska's Authority on Primary Eye & Vision Care

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March 22, 2010

House of Representatives
State Capitol
Juneau, AK 99801

Dear Representative,

On behalf of Alaska Doctors of Optometry, I am writing in support of HB 235.

Communities throughout the state struggle to find optometrists who are willing to move to their area and it is even more difficult to encourage them to stay. Alaska does not offer a doctor of optometry degree program so students must leave the state in order to earn their degree. HB 235 offers an incentive to encourage them to return.

Although there are more than 115 doctors of optometry in Alaska serving more than 25 communities throughout the state and traveling to more than 60 additional sites, many communities are still left with no eyecare. Doctors of optometry are trained to examine, diagnose, treat, and manage disorders that affect the eye or vision. Because optometrists are also trained to recognize critical health issues, such as diabetes and hypertension, while examining the eye, having an optometrists in all Alaska communities can not only save vision, it can save lives.

I welcome any questions you have regarding optometry in Alaska and urge your support of HB 235.

Sincerely,

Tracy Oman
Executive Director