



Representative Ivy Spohnholz

House Health & Social Services Committee Chair

*Serving House District 16: College Gate, Russian Jack, Nunaka Valley, & Reflection Lake
Committee Member: Education, Energy, Military & Veterans Affairs, Legislative Budget & Audit*

Sponsor Statement

House Bill 103

“An Act relating to the practice of optometry; and providing an effective date.”

HB 103 modernizes and updates the Alaska Optometry Statute, as many parts are over 50 years old. It allows the optometry board the authority to regulate its practice the same as other prescribing health professions such as dentistry, medicine and nursing. This bill also allows the board to continue to adopt regulations, updated to current practice and moves the continuing education (CE) requirements back into regulations.

Continuing education is still required by current statute, but the hours and subjects will be determined by the board as with other professions. This change allows the board flexibility to control CE requirements and is recommended by the Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development. The current regulations require more CE hours than the statute subsection deleted by this bill.

HB 103 allows the optometry board to determine prescribed drug schedules, including standards and limitations on practice determined by the board.

The bill ensures that no licensee may perform any procedure beyond the scope of the licensee’s education, training, and experience as established by the board. This allows for future new and improved diagnostic and therapeutic procedures as determined by the board, while not having to return to the legislature for every new technological advance, which is currently the case and unnecessarily burdensome.

The optometry definition in this bill is updated to reflect current and modern-day practice.

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State Capitol
Juneau, AK 99801
Phone (907) 465-4049

Rep.Ivy.Spohnholz@akleg.gov
www.repivyspohnholz.com
Toll-Free (866) 465-4940

Interim (May-December):
1500 W. Benson Blvd
Anchorage, AK 99503
Phone (907) 269-0123