



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 Statutes, as many parts are over 50 years old. It allows the Board of Examiners of Optometry the authority to regulate its practice the same as other prescribing health professions such as dentistry, medicine and nursing.

The board will be allowed to update their current standards of practice and move the continuing education (CE) requirements back into regulations. CE requirements are 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 board to determine prescribed drug schedules, including standards and limitations on practice. 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.

Ophthalmic surgery cannot be performed by a licensee without the proper education and training from an accredited school of optometry. The board must also authorize any procedures that are performed by a licensee. The definition of optometry has been updated to reflect current and modern day practice.

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