



# **HB 309**

# **Optometry Practices**

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# Issue

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- Optometric practices do not have current statute language to allow the Board of Examiners of Optometry to regulate delegation of routine tasks to Optometric Technicians and Assistants
- Delegation of basic routine tasks are standard practice in other health professions licensed in Alaska, as well as optometric practices nationwide
- Without this authority, Optometrists would be required to perform all preliminary and ancillary testing on each patient, which would greatly restrict access to care.

# Other Healthcare professions in Alaska

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- Professions in Alaska that have solved this problem with incorporating delegation authority include:
  - Medical Doctors, Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine, Podiatry, Physician Assistants (08.64.106)
  - Dental (08.32.346)
  - Veterinary (08.98.050 (9,B))
  - Pharmacy (08.80.030,(9))
  - Chiropractic (08.20.168)

# Examples of routine tasks

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- Initial patient medical history and reason for visit
- Initial assessment of vision and current prescription verification
- Blood pressure screenings and automated measurements of the eye
- Ocular photography and digital imaging for review by the doctor
- Assisting in medication refills
- Performing peripheral vision testing for interpretation by the doctor

# Current challenges

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- In the absence of the ability to delegate tasks, Optometry will be less efficient and effective at meeting the demand of patient care that exists in the state currently.
- Optometry is projected to grow in the future.
- Adding a logistical and financial burden to current and future Optometrists may contribute to the shortage of healthcare professionals.

# HB 309 impacts

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- This bill will have no impact on billing practices and will not increase costs to the patient population.
- The impact of passing this bill will be to ensure that patients continue to receive appropriate and effective care supervised by licensed Optometric Physicians in Alaska.

# Support

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- The Alaska Optometric Association supports this legislative approach and action.
- HB 309 brings Optometrists in line with other health related professions in Alaska.

# Thank you

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