

Emails of Support for SB 55 Optometry Compiled Feb. 25 – March 4, 2105

Senator Giessel's office

Please support SB 55.

This bill updates the Alaska Optometry statutes in several areas, making it similar to the dental and nurse practitioner statutes, whereas the board determines the regulatory details of practice. This allows more flexibility as technology advances.

It places the details of the continuing education requirements back into regulation where they belong, as the Department indicated they desired many years ago. Current regulations already require 36 hours per license period, and the deleted hours shown are redundant and require unnecessary work for Occupational Licensing. We do not need the additional seven hours of injectables training every four years. It is an added cost and requires travel outside of Alaska which results in less days in our clinics treating patients.

SB 55 leaves the details of the current pharmaceutical prescribing authority up to the board through regulation, as with the other prescribing professions. But the bill does clearly prohibit injections into the vitreous body of the eye, which is done by specialty ophthalmologists.

SB 55 re-writes the optometry definition which is currently over 40 years old. Optometrists are trained to perform far more advanced procedures than many years ago. The new definition clearly defines modern optometry, and allows the board the flexibility to assure protection of the public. And there is a section on limitations on practice which excludes any invasive surgery, and a section clearly defining all the excluded surgery reserved for ophthalmology, including laser PRK, even though many optometrists can perform this in a few other states, it is still prohibited in SB 55.

CDR Sarah Stienbarger, OD, FAAO

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Thank you.

Marilyn Holm, OD

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Mrs. Conway,

Please support SB 55.

This bill updates the Alaska Optometry statutes in several areas, making it similar to the dental and nurse practitioner statutes, whereas the board determines the regulatory details of practice. This allows more flexibility as technology advances and in today's ever changing healthcare environment it is important to be able to adapt quickly.

It places the details of the continuing education requirements back into regulation where they belong, as the Department indicated they desired many years ago. Current regulations already

require 36 hours per license period, and the deleted hours shown are redundant and require unnecessary work for Occupational Licensing. It has been my personal experience that working with the State Licensing Department is cumbersome at best. When I was first applying for my Alaska license in 2010, there was not even a person designated to handle Optometry licenses which caused unnecessary delay.

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Sincerely,

Benjamin Crawford, O.D.

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Dear Senator Giessel,

I am writing to you in support of SB 55 regarding the practice of Optometry. As a former chair of the State of Alaska Board of Examiners, I have spent a lot of time reviewing and working with both the Optometry statutes and regulations. SB 55 should be supported because it not only removes the required continuing education requirements from the statute and puts it back in regulation, but also because it redefines Optometry and defines invasive surgery.

I feel these changes would enable the board to react, via the regulatory process, to changes as technology advances. This is more consistent with other prescribing professions in the state. Having the definitions of Optometry and invasive surgery in statute provides safety to the public in that these definitions clearly define modern Optometry and limits invasive surgery. While the Board would be confined to these definitions and restrictions, I feel SB 55 still allows the Board enough room to update the regulations to coincide with advancements in the field of Optometry for the foreseeable future.

Thank you for your consideration of this bill.

Sincerely,

Jill Geering Matheson, OD

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