
Health Care Committee

ESSB 5535

Brief Description: Modifying optometry licensing requirements.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Health & Long-Term Care (originally sponsored by Senators Franklin, Brandland, Berkey, Spanel, Schoesler, Rockefeller, Delvin, Kohl-Welles, Oke and Shin).

Brief Summary of Engrossed Substitute Bill

- Establishes a timetable for all optometrists to meet standards for the use and prescription of medications.

Hearing Date: 2/16/06

Staff: Chris Blake (786-7392).

Background:

The practice of optometry involves the examination of the human eye and the human vision system. Optometrists may test patients' visual acuity, depth and color perception, and the ability to focus and coordinate the eyes; prescribe eyeglasses and contact lenses; prescribe visual therapy; and adapt prosthetic eyes. Upon meeting additional requirements, optometrists may also use or prescribe topical or oral drugs for diagnostic or therapeutic purposes and epinephrine by injection for the treatment of anaphylactic shock.

Optometrists may use topical drugs for diagnostic purposes upon completing 60 hours of didactic and clinical instruction and receiving certification from an accredited institution of higher education. Optometrists may use or prescribe topical drugs for therapeutic purposes upon completing the requirements for diagnostic drugs; completing an additional 75 hours of didactic and clinical instruction; and receiving certification from an accredited institution of higher education.

Optometrists may use or prescribe an oral drug for diagnostic or therapeutic purposes upon meeting the existing requirements for topically applied drugs; completing an additional 16 hours of didactic instruction and eight hours of supervised clinical instruction; and receiving certification from an accredited institution of higher education.

Optometrists may administer injectable epinephrine upon meeting the existing requirements for topically applied drugs; completing an additional four hours of didactic and supervised clinical instruction; and receiving certification from an accredited institution of higher education.

Summary of Bill:

All applicants for an initial license to practice optometry on or after January 1, 2007 must meet the requirements for using topically applied drugs for diagnostic and therapeutic purposes, using or prescribing oral drugs, and administering injectable epinephrine.

All optometrists renewing their license on or after January 1, 2009 must meet the requirements for using topically applied drugs for diagnostic and therapeutic purposes.

All optometrists renewing their license on or after January 1, 2011 must meet the requirements for using topically applied drugs for diagnostic and therapeutic purposes, using or prescribing oral drugs, and administering injectable epinephrine.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.