

FINAL BILL REPORT

ESSB 5535

C 232 L 06

Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Concerning the practice of optometry.

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

Senate Committee on Health & Long-Term Care

House Committee on Health Care

Background: The practice of optometry involves the examination of the human eye and the human vision system. Optometrists may test patients' visual acuity, prescribe eyeglasses and contact lenses, prescribe visual therapy, and adapt prosthetic eyes.

Upon meeting additional requirements, optometrists may also use or prescribe topically applied drugs for diagnostic or therapeutic purposes. They may apply topical drugs for diagnostic purposes upon completing 60 hours of didactic and clinical instruction in general and ocular pharmacology and receiving certification from an accredited institute of higher learning. Optometrists may prescribe topical drugs for therapeutic purposes upon completing the requirements for diagnostic drugs plus an additional 75 hours of instruction and receiving certification.

To use or prescribe an oral drug for a diagnostic or therapeutic purpose, an optometrist must meet the existing requirements for topically applied drugs, complete an additional 16 hours of didactic and eight hours of supervised clinical instruction, and receive certification from an accredited institute of higher education.

To use injectable epinephrine, an optometrist must meet the existing requirements for topically applied drugs, complete an additional four hours of didactic and supervised clinical instruction, and receive certification from an accredited institute of higher education.

Summary: This bill sets a required timeline for optometrists to reach a uniform level of licensure.

By January 1, 2007, all optometrists receiving an initial license in Washington must meet the standard requirements of the Board of Optometry and meet the requirements for using topically applied drugs for diagnostic and therapeutic purposes, the requirements to use or prescribe an oral drug, and the requirements for use of injectable epinephrine.

By January 1, 2009, all persons licensed to practice optometry must meet the standard requirements of the Board of Optometry and also the requirements for using topically applied drugs for diagnostic and therapeutic purposes.

By January 1, 2011, all persons licensed to practice optometry must be certified under the standard requirements of the Board of Optometry, and must meet the requirements for using topically applied drugs for diagnostic and therapeutic purposes, the requirements to use or prescribe an oral drug, and the requirements for use of injectable epinephrine.

The Board of Optometry is authorized to adopt rules to allow a licensed optometrist to place his or her license on inactive status. An inactive license may be placed on active status by complying with rules established by the optometry board. Disciplinary action taken against a person with an inactive license is comparable to that taken against a person with an active license except the inactive license will remain so, until disciplinary proceedings have been completed.

Votes on Final Passage:

Senate	40	0	
House	97	0	(House amended)
Senate	45	0	(Senate concurred)

Effective: June 7, 2006