

**SENATE BILL REPORT**

**SSB 5632**

**AS PASSED SENATE, MARCH 13, 1991**

**Brief Description:** Redefining what an ocularist is and his or her apprenticeship period.

**SPONSORS:** Senate Committee on Health & Long-Term Care (originally sponsored by Senators West, Niemi and Johnson).

**SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & LONG-TERM CARE**

**Majority Report:** That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5632 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators West, Chairman; L. Smith, Vice Chairman; Amondson, Johnson, L. Kreidler, Niemi, and Wojahn.

**Staff:** Scott Plack (786-7409)

**Hearing Dates:** March 6, 1991

**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH CARE**

**BACKGROUND:**

Ocularists are statutorily defined as persons who design, fabricate and fit ocular prosthetic appliances ("glass eyes"). Ocularists are licensed by the state and the Secretary of Health is the licensing and disciplinary authority. There are currently nine licensed ocularists in the state of Washington.

To be licensed as a ocularist one must be at least 18 years of age, have graduated from high school, be of good moral character and have five years of apprenticeship training, or have completed a prescribed course in ocularist training, or have been engaged in practice outside the state for at least eight years. An applicant for licensure must pass an examination. An ocularist is authorized to provide his or her services when referred by a physician.

The practice act permits the training of apprentices in the profession. A licensed ocularist may request from the Secretary of Health up to two apprentice ocularists at one time. The apprentices must complete their apprenticeships within eight years.

The practice act currently does not authorize an advisory committee to assist the secretary in implementing the chapter.

**SUMMARY:**

The state ocularist advisory committee is formed to assist the Secretary of Health in implementation of the chapter. The committee shall be composed of one medical doctor, one

licensed ocularist and one employee of the Department of Health. The committee and the director are immune from acts performed in the course of their duties. Credential by endorsement is authorized. Ocularists are required to explain exactly the type of prosthetic or services the patient receives or purchases. Failure to do so may result in license revocation.

Definitions for stock-eyes, modified stock-eyes and custom-eyes are added to the act. A referral from a physician is not needed for replacement of an ocular prosthetic appliance.

Applicants for licensure are permitted to meet minimum licensure requirements by presenting a general equivalency degree in lieu of a high school diploma. The apprenticeship program must include at least 10,000 hours of training under the direct supervision of a licensed ocularist. Provisions are deleted which allow licensure for persons having eight years of out-of-state experience.

Numerous housekeeping changes are made to make the act conform with the uniform credentialing boiler plate language.

**Appropriation:** none

**Revenue:** none

**Fiscal Note:** available

**TESTIMONY FOR:**

The bill makes technical housekeeping changes which will permit the regulatory program to operate more efficiently.

**TESTIMONY AGAINST:** None

**TESTIFIED:** Chas Erickson, Jerry Erickson, Jeff Larsen, Washington State Society of Ocularists (pro)

**HOUSE AMENDMENT(S):**

Failure by an ocularist to provide the patient with information explaining the type of prosthetic or service the patient receives or purchases is an act of unprofessional conduct and subject to discipline under the Uniform Disciplinary Act. The Senate version permitted the Secretary of Health to revoke the license of the ocularist or impose other disciplinary measures without reference to the Uniform Disciplinary Act.