

HOUSE HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE FOR  
HOUSE BILL 213

**57TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - SECOND SESSION, 2026**

This document may incorporate amendments proposed by a committee, but not yet adopted, as well as amendments that have been adopted during the current legislative session. The document is a tool to show amendments in context and cannot be used for the purpose of adding amendments to legislation.

AN ACT

RELATING TO LICENSING; AMENDING SECTIONS OF THE OPTOMETRY ACT  
TO EXPAND THE SCOPE OF PRACTICE AND PROVIDE THE BOARD OF  
OPTOMETRY WITH ADDITIONAL POWERS AND DUTIES.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO:

**SECTION 1.** Section 61-2-2 NMSA 1978 (being Laws 1973,  
Chapter 353, Section 2, as amended) is amended to read:

"61-2-2. DEFINITIONS.--As used in the Optometry Act:

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Amendments: new = →bold, blue, highlight←  
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A. "practice of optometry" means:

(1) the employment of any subjective or objective means or methods, including but not limited to the use of lenses, prisms, autorefractors or other automated testing devices, and includes the prescription or administration of drugs for the purpose of diagnosing the visual defects or abnormal conditions of the human eye and its adnexa;

(2) the employing, adapting or prescribing of preventive or corrective measures, including but not limited to lenses, prisms, contact or corneal lenses or other optical appliances, ocular exercises, vision therapy, vision training and vision rehabilitation services, and includes the prescription or administration of all drugs rational for the correction, relief or referral of visual defects or abnormal conditions of the human eye and its adnexa; and

(3) does not include the use of surgery or injections in the treatment of eye diseases except for the use of the following types of in-office ~~[minor]~~ surgical procedures:

(a) non-laser removal, destruction or drainage of superficial eyelid lesions and conjunctival cysts;

(b) removal of nonperforating foreign bodies from the cornea, conjunctiva and eyelid;

(c) non-laser corneal debridement,

culture, scrape or anterior puncture, not including removal of pterygium, corneal biopsy or removal of corneal neoplasias;

(d) removal of eyelashes; ~~and~~

(e) probing, dilation, irrigation or closure of the tear drainage structures of the eyelid; scalpel use is to be applied only for the purpose of use on the skin surrounding the eye;

(f) laser application to the lens capsule in the treatment of capsular clouding or other defects;  
and

(g) laser application to structures within the ocular anterior segment for the prevention or treatment of glaucoma, including laser trabeculoplasty and laser peripheral iridotomy;

B. "ophthalmic lens" means a lens that has a spherical, cylindrical or prismatic value, is ground pursuant to a prescription and is intended to be used as eyeglasses;

C. "contact lens" means a lens to be worn on the anterior segment of the human eye;

D. "prescription" means a written order by an optometrist or a physician for an individual patient for:

- (1) ophthalmic lenses;
- (2) contact lenses; or
- (3) a pharmaceutical agent that is regulated

pursuant to the New Mexico Drug, Device and Cosmetic Act;

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E. "eyeglasses" means an exterior optical device using ophthalmic lenses for the correction or relief of disturbances in and anomalies of human vision; and

F. "board" means the board of optometry."

HJC→SECTION 2. Section 61-2-5 NMSA 1978 (being Laws 1973, Chapter 353, Section 4, as amended) is amended to read:

"61-2-5. BOARD CREATED--TERMS--APPOINTMENT--CONTINUANCE--REMOVAL.--

A. There is created a six-member "board of optometry". The board shall be administratively attached to the regulation and licensing department. The board consists of four persons who have resided in and have been continuously engaged in the practice of optometry in New Mexico for at least five years immediately prior to their appointment and two persons who shall represent the public. The public members of the board shall not have been licensed as optometrists, nor shall the public members have any significant financial interest, whether direct or indirect, in the occupation regulated. No later than December 31, 2028, at least one professional member of the board shall be credentialed for the performance of procedures involving the use of a laser.

B. Professional members of the board shall be appointed by the governor from a list of five names for each vacancy submitted to ~~him~~ the governor by the state organization affiliated with the American optometric



association. Not more than one professional board member shall maintain ~~[his]~~ a place of business or reside in any one county, and professional appointments shall be made on a geographical basis to effect representation of all areas of the state.

Board members shall be appointed for staggered terms of five years or less, each. The term of each board member shall be made in such a manner that the term of one board member ends on June 30 of each year. Board members shall serve until their successors have been appointed and qualified. A professional member vacancy shall be filled for the unexpired term by the appointment by the governor of a licensed optometrist from the general area of the state represented by the former member.

All members of the board of optometry in office on the effective date of the Optometry Act shall serve out their unexpired terms.

C. The governor may remove a member from the board for the neglect of a duty required by law, for incompetence, for improper or unprofessional conduct as defined by board regulation or for a reason that would justify the suspension or revocation of ~~[his]~~ the board member's license to practice optometry.

D. A board member shall not serve more than two consecutive terms, and a member failing to attend, after proper notice, three consecutive meetings shall automatically be removed as a board member unless excused for reasons set forth

in board regulations.

E. In the event of a vacancy for any reason, the board secretary shall immediately notify the governor, the board members and the state optometric association of the vacancy, the reason for its occurrence and the action taken by the board, so as to expedite the appointment of a new board member."←HJC

SECTION HJC→2.←HJC HJC→3.←HJC Section 61-2-6 NMSA 1978 (being Laws 1973, Chapter 353, Section 5, as amended) is amended to read:

"61-2-6. OPTOMETRY BOARD ORGANIZATION--MEETINGS--  
COMPENSATION--POWERS AND DUTIES.--

A. The board shall annually elect a chair, a vice chair and a secretary-treasurer; each shall serve until a successor is elected and qualified.

B. The board shall meet at least annually for the purpose of examining candidates for licensure. Special meetings may be called by the chair and shall be called upon the written request of a majority of the board members. A majority of the board members currently serving constitutes a quorum.

C. Members of the board may be reimbursed as provided in the Per Diem and Mileage Act but shall receive no other compensation, perquisite or allowance.

D. The board has the authority to determine what

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constitutes the practice of optometry in accordance with the provisions of the Optometry Act and has jurisdiction to exercise any other powers and duties pursuant to that act. The board may issue advisory opinions and declaratory rulings pursuant to that act and rules promulgated in accordance with the State Rules Act, but shall not expand the scope of practice of optometry beyond the provisions of the Optometry Act.

E. The board shall:

(1) administer and enforce the provisions of the Optometry Act;

(2) promulgate in accordance with the State Rules Act, all rules for the implementation and enforcement of the provisions of the Optometry Act;

(3) adopt and use a seal;

(4) administer oaths and take testimony on matters within the board's jurisdiction;

(5) keep an accurate record of meetings, receipts and disbursements;

(6) keep a record of examinations held, together with the names and addresses of persons taking the examinations and the examination results. Within thirty days after an examination, the board shall give written notice to each applicant examined of the results of the examination as to the respective applicant;

(7) certify as passing each applicant who

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obtains a grade of at least seventy-five percent on each subject upon which the applicant is examined; providing that an applicant failing may apply for re-examination at the next scheduled examination date;

(8) keep a book of registration in which the name, address and license number of licensees shall be recorded, together with a record of license renewals, suspensions and revocations;

(9) grant, deny, renew, suspend or revoke licenses to practice optometry in accordance with the provisions of the Uniform Licensing Act for any cause stated in the Optometry Act;

(10) develop and administer:

(a) qualifications for certification for the use of pharmaceutical agents as authorized in Section 61-2-10.2 NMSA 1978, including minimum educational requirements and examination, as required by Section 61-2-10.2 NMSA 1978 and provide the board of pharmacy with an annual list of optometrists certified to use pharmaceutical agents as authorized in Section 61-2-10.2 NMSA 1978; and

(b) credentialing requirements for the performance of procedures involving the use of a laser; and

(11) provide for the suspension of an optometrist's license for sixty days upon a determination of use of pharmaceutical agents without prior certification in

accordance with Section 61-2-10.2 NMSA 1978, after proper notice and an opportunity to be heard before the board."

SECTION HJC→3.←HJC HJC→4.←HJC A new section of the Optometry Act is enacted to read:

"[NEW MATERIAL] LASER PROCEDURES--OPTOMETRIST CREDENTIALING--REPORTING.--

A. Unless an optometrist obtains credentialing from the board, an optometrist shall not perform a laser application to:

(1) a lens capsule to treat capsular clouding or other capsular defects; or

(2) structures within the ocular anterior segment for the prevention or treatment of glaucoma, including laser trabeculoplasty and laser peripheral iridotomy.

B. The board shall issue an optometrist the credentials to perform the procedures listed in Subsection A of this section if the optometrist:

(1) completes one of the following education and examination requirements:

(a) graduation from an accredited college or university of optometry in 2026 or any year thereafter and passage of a standardized national examination approved by the board; or

(b) completion of a minimum thirty-two-clock-hour training course accredited by a college of

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optometry, osteopathy or medicine and approved by the board;  
and

(2) demonstrates successful performance of any  
of the following series of procedures on live human patients  
under the direct, in-person supervision of a licensed  
ophthalmologist or optometrist licensed and certified to  
perform the procedures listed in Subsection A of this section:

(a) five yttrium aluminum garnet laser  
capsulotomies;

(b) five selective laser  
trabeculoplasties; or

(c) four laser peripheral iridotomies.

C. An optometrist shall report to the board, in a  
form and manner prescribed by the board, an adverse outcome  
that results from the optometrist's performance of a procedure  
listed in Subsection A of this section within ten days of  
occurrence."

SECTION HJC→4.←HJC HJC→5.←HJC Section 61-2-15 NMSA 1978  
(being Laws 1973, Chapter 353, Section 13, as amended) is  
amended to read:

"61-2-15. EXEMPTIONS.--

A. Except for the provisions of [Section] Sections  
61-2-14.1 and 61-2-16 NMSA 1978 and as provided in this  
subsection, the Optometry Act does not apply to a licensed  
physician or a person, clinic or program under [his] the

licensed physician's responsible supervision and control, provided that the person, clinic or program under the responsible supervision and control of the licensed physician shall not use either loose or fixed trial lenses for the sole purpose of determining the prescription for eyeglasses or contact lenses.

B. Except as provided in Sections 61-2-2, 61-2-14, 61-2-16 and 61-2-17 NMSA 1978, the Optometry Act does not apply to a person selling eyeglasses who does not represent ~~himself~~ the person's own self as being qualified to detect or correct ocular anomalies and who does not traffic upon assumed skill in adapting ophthalmic lenses to the eyes."

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