

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA

SESSION 1995

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SENATE BILL 573

Short Title: Optometry Changes.

(Public)

Sponsors: Senators Conder, Blackmon, McDaniel, Clark, Hoyle, Ballance, Foxx, Parnell, Soles, Carpenter, Winner, Lucas, Plyler, Carrington, Ballantine, McKoy, Speed, Davis, East, Ledbetter, Webster, Martin of Pitt, Martin of Guilford, Jordan, Sherron, Dannelly, and Edwards.

Referred to: Commerce

April 6, 1995

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

1
2 AN ACT TO ENHANCE THE ROLE OF OPTOMETRISTS IN MEDICAL COST
3 CONTAINMENT THROUGH REVISION OF THE HOSPITAL PRIVILEGES
4 LAW, TO REPEAL THE REQUIREMENT FOR AN OPTOMETRIST TO
5 COLLABORATE WITH A PHYSICIAN IN THE USE OR PRESCRIPTION OF
6 CERTAIN PHARMACEUTICAL AGENTS, TO ESTABLISH PEER REVIEW FOR
7 OPTOMETRISTS, AND TO ESTABLISH AN OPTOMETRIST PRIVILEGE.

8 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

9 Section 1. G.S. 90-114 reads as rewritten:

10 **"§ 90-114. Optometry defined.**

11 Any one or any combination of the following practices shall constitute the practice of
12 optometry:

- 13 (1) The examination of the human eye by any method, other than surgery,
14 to diagnose, to treat, or to refer for consultation or treatment any
15 abnormal condition of the human eye and its adnexa; or
16 (2) The employment of instruments, devices, pharmaceutical agents and
17 procedures, other than surgery, intended for the purposes of

1 investigating, examining, treating, diagnosing or correcting visual
2 defects or abnormal conditions of the human eye or its adnexa; or

- 3 (3) The prescribing and application of lenses, devices containing lenses,
4 prisms, contact lenses, arthoptics, vision training, pharmaceutical
5 agents, and prosthetic devices to correct, relieve, or treat defects or
6 abnormal conditions of the human eye or its adnexa. The use and
7 prescription of pharmaceutical agents shall be limited to the scope of
8 practice of optometry.

9 ~~Provided, however, in using or prescribing pharmaceutical agents, other than topical~~
10 ~~pharmaceutical agents within the definition hereinabove set out which are used for the~~
11 ~~purpose of examining the eye, the optometrist so using or prescribing shall communicate~~
12 ~~and collaborate with a physician duly licensed to practice medicine in North Carolina~~
13 ~~designated or agreed to by the patient."~~

14 Sec. 2. G.S. 131E-85 reads as rewritten:

15 "**§ 131E-85. Hospital privileges and procedures.**

16 (a) The granting or denial of privileges to practice in hospitals to physicians
17 licensed under Chapter 90 of the General Statutes, Article 1, ~~dentists—dentists,~~
18 optometrists, and podiatrists and the scope and delineation of such privileges shall be
19 determined by the governing body of the hospital on a non-discriminatory basis. Such
20 determinations shall be based upon the applicant's education, training, experience,
21 demonstrated competence and ability, and judgment and character of the applicant, and
22 the reasonable objectives and regulations of the hospital, including, but not limited to
23 appropriate utilization of hospital facilities, in which privileges are sought. Nothing in
24 this Part shall be deemed to mandate hospitals to grant or deny to any such individuals or
25 others privileges to practice in hospitals, or to offer or provide any type of care.

26 (b) The procedures to be followed by a licensed hospital in considering
27 applications of ~~dentists—dentists,~~ optometrists, and podiatrists for privileges to practice in
28 such hospitals shall be similar to those applicable to applications of physicians licensed
29 under Chapter 90 of the General Statutes, Article 1. Such procedures shall be available
30 upon request.

31 (c) In addition to the granting or denial of privileges, the governing body of each
32 hospital may suspend, revoke, or modify privileges.

33 (d) All applicants or individuals who have privileges shall comply with all
34 applicable medical staff bylaws, rules and regulations, including the policies and
35 procedures governing the qualifications of applicants and the scope and delineation of
36 privileges.

37 (e) The Department shall not issue or renew a license under this Article unless the
38 applicant has demonstrated that the procedures followed in determining hospital
39 privileges are in accordance with this Part and rules of the Department.

40 (f) This section shall not be construed as enlarging the scope of practice of any
41 provider."

42 Sec. 3. Chapter 90 of the General Statutes is amended by adding a new Article
43 to read:

"ARTICLE 6A.**"OPTOMETRY PEER REVIEW.****"§ 90-127.4. Peer review agreements.**

(a) The North Carolina State Board of Examiners in Optometry may, under rules adopted by the Board in compliance with Chapter 150B of the General Statutes, enter into agreements with the North Carolina State Optometric Society (Society), for the purpose of conducting peer review activities. Peer review activities to be covered by such agreements shall be limited in peer review proceedings to review of clinical outcomes as they relate to the quality of health care delivered by optometrists licensed by the Board.

(b) Peer review agreements shall include provisions for the Society to receive relevant information from the Board and other sources, provide assurance of confidentiality of nonpublic information and of the review process, and make reports to the Board. Peer review agreements shall include provisions assuring due process.

(c) Any confidential patient information and other nonpublic information acquired, created, or used in good faith by a Society pursuant to this section shall remain confidential and shall not be subject to discovery or subpoena in a civil case.

(d) Peer review activities conducted in good faith pursuant to any agreement under this section are deemed to be State directed and sanctioned and shall constitute State action for the purposes of application of antitrust laws. The Board shall be responsible for legal fees arising from peer review activities."

Sec. 4. Article 7 of Chapter 8 of the General Statutes is amended by adding the following new section to read:

"§ 8-53.9. Optometrist/patient privilege.

No person licensed pursuant to Article 6 of Chapter 90 of the General Statutes shall be required to disclose any information that may have been acquired in rendering professional optometric services, except that the presiding judge of a superior or district court may compel this disclosure, if, in the court's opinion, disclosure is necessary to a proper administration of justice and disclosure is not prohibited by other statute or rule."

Sec. 5. This act is effective upon ratification.