

ANNUAL REPORT

OHIO OPTICAL DISPENSERS BOARD

JULY 1, 2013 THROUGH JUNE 30, 2014



The mission of the Ohio Optical Dispensers Board is to protect and serve the public of Ohio by effectively and efficiently regulating the practice of Opticianry and Ocularistry in the State of Ohio

Prepared for The Honorable John Kasich, Governor



OHIO OPTICAL DISPENSERS BOARD

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November 1, 2014

The Honorable John Kasich
Governor, State of Ohio
77 South High Street, 30th Floor
Columbus, Ohio 43215

Dear Governor Kasich,

On behalf of the Ohio Optical Dispensers Board (Board), we are pleased to submit this annual report for fiscal year 2014. This annual report highlights the work of the nine-member Board, supported by a staff of three employees.

The Board continues to meet the obligations specified by Sections 4725.40-4725.99 Ohio Revised Code. All activities have been directed towards fulfillment of the Board's mission, to actively safeguard the optical health of the public through the effective regulation of Opticianry and Ocularistry care in Ohio. Licenses and apprentice registrations were issued to qualified individuals and renewed according to the Board's schedule as outlined in the law. Continuing education programs were approved by the Board. The Board has taken actions against entities that illegally dispense and sell decorative contact lenses and individual licensees who failed to practice in accordance to standards set forth in the law and rules.

Thank you for your support as the Board administers and enforces Sections 4725.40-4725.99 of the Revised Code.

Respectfully yours,

Thomas Barracato, President

Nancy Manns, RN, MS, CNS
Executive Director

INTRODUCTION

The Mission of the Ohio Optical Dispensers Board is to protect and serve the public of Ohio by effectively and efficiently regulating the practice of Opticianry and Ocularistry in the state of Ohio.

This report will reflect the accomplishments of the Ohio Optical Dispensers Board (Board) toward meeting the mission and the goals of the Board for FY '14.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION.....	i
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	ii
BOARD MEMBERS.....	1
STAFF.....	1
FISCAL OPERATIONS/REVENUE.....	2
OPERATIONAL COSTS.....	3
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY.....	3
COMMUNICATIONS.....	3
REGULATORY ACTION/ LEGISLATIVE ACTION.....	4
OPTICIANRY AND OCULARISTRY PRACTICE.....	5
OPTICIANRY AND OCULARISTRY EDUCATION.....	5
CONTINUING EDUCATION.....	6
LICENSURE.....	6
DISCIPLINE.....	7
SUMMARY.....	7

BOARD MEMBERS

<u>NAME</u>	<u>CITY</u>	<u>TERM EXPIRES</u>
Thomas Barracato, President Optician	Akron	3/22/2015
Susan Robus, Vice-President Optician	Newark	3/22/2012
Brian Miller, Treasurer Optician/Ocularist	Toledo	3/22/2015
Paul King, Optician	Amelia	3/22/2015
Dr. Jeffrey D. Hutchison Ophthalmologist	Columbus	3/21/2016
Dr. Timothy Fries Optometrist	Worthington	3/21/2012
Jeffrey Rohlf, Optician	Columbus	3/22/2016
VACANCY Public Member		3/22/12
James O. Ashenhurst Public/Senior Member	Hilliard	3/22/2015

Governor-appointed Board members serve for a five-year term and are eligible to serve a second five-year term. The Board currently has one vacancy for a public member, and two (2) Board members whose terms expired in March, 2012. Board law allows those members to continue to serve until reappointed or replaced. In addition, four (4) Board members' terms expire in March of 2015.

The Board met six (6) times in Fiscal Year '13, but decreased the number of meetings to five (5) per year in FY'14 as a cost saving measure. The Board accomplished all the goals of the Board in five meetings per year because of policy changes that streamlined the licensure approval process and the process for approval of continuing education programs that no longer requires Board approval at Board meetings.

STAFF

<u>NAME</u>	<u>POSITION</u>
Nancy Manns	Executive Director
William Lehman	Investigator
Wilma Simmons	Administrative Professional 4

The Workforce Plan for the Board was approved as submitted and is updated as needed. Unless there is a catastrophic unforeseen event, the staffing of the Board will remain stable and is at a level that allows for meeting the mission and goals of the Board. Should such an event occur, the Board will be able to take steps to recruit qualified individuals and have policies, procedures and training manuals in place to train and educate new staff.

FISCAL OPERATIONS

The chart below depicts the income collected by the Board from licensing and other fees. The majority of Optician (\$100.00 renewal fee) and Ocularist renewals (\$100.00 renewal fee) occur during November and December of each year. The majority of the apprentice renewals (\$20 renewal fee) occur during May and June of each year. Due to the disproportionate amount of the Optician/Ocularistry fees to the amount of the apprentice fees, the Board experiences an irregular flow of income throughout the year making it possible for the Board to expend more than it takes in during a six-month period of time. The Board anticipates continued increases in its operational costs due to the expected increases in payroll, inflation and increased CSA/DAS costs such as rent, eLicensing 2, and OIT.

Conversion to VoIP cut phone costs in half resulting in approximately \$480 annual savings for the Board.

The budgeted allotment for FY '14 was \$366,000.

Ohio Optical Dispensers Board
4K9 Fund FY '14
Revenue

<u>SOURCE OF REVENUE</u>	<u>TOTAL COLLECTED</u> \$
Apprentice Registration /Renewal Fee	39,600
Optician Renewal	316,00
Ocularist Renewal	800
Penalty Fee	6,150
New Optician/Ocularist License	6,600
Ocularist Exam/ Application Fee	0
License by Endorsement	550
Duplicate Licenses	180
Fines	800
Rosters/Misc.	190
Total Revenue FY'14	370,870

The total revenue collected for FY '14 reflects a decrease of 1% in revenue from FY'13 due in large part to a minimal decrease in the number of opticians who did not renew in 2014.

Operational Costs

FY'14

<u>Description of Expenditure</u>	<u>\$ Amount</u>	<u>% of Operational Costs</u>
Staff and Board Member Payroll	284087	81
Office Maintenance	65941	19
Equipment	0	0
Refunds	0	0
Total Expenditures	350,003	100%

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (IT)

The Board works diligently to keep pace with the changing IT needs of the office and advantages offered through technological innovations.

- The Board continues to review and implement data security measures to ensure safety and security of sensitive employee, Board member and licensee information in accordance with State of Ohio requirements.
- The Board continues a service contact with the Department of Administrative Services, IT Services Division. The IT Services Division will be providing desk-top services support, shared drive services, secure storage, and encryption of data at a cost savings to the Board of approximately \$250/year.
- The Board maintains its contract with the DAS Cost-per-Copy program that prints color, black and white, scans and faxes. Maintenance and toner costs are included in the monthly fee.
- The Board leases three phones for use with the VoIP system.
- The Board continues to use on-line renewal for opticians, ocularists and Apprentices. 98% of licensees renewed using the on-line system. 91% of apprentices renewed on-line.

COMMUNICATIONS

Throughout the year, the Board continues to inform the public, licensees, apprentice registrants and other interested parties about the laws and rules governing practice and other issues regulating the practice of Opticianry and Ocularistry. The Board has also provided information to employers regarding regulations, standards and disciplinary actions. The Board relies on personal interaction, written materials, and the use of

technologies such as e-mail, the Board's web page and newsletters of professional organizations and other state agencies to disseminate information about the law and rules, changes to the law and rules and the work of the Board.

The prominent message of most of the newsletter articles focused on the regulations related to the practice of Opticianry and Ocularistry in Ohio.

The Executive Director provided two four-hour programs for the Opticians Association of Ohio during FY'14. The presentations focused on the laws and rules regulating the practice of Opticians, Ocularists and apprentices in the state of Ohio.

The Board's web page, www.optical.ohio.gov, continues to be an excellent source of information for employers and licensees and is a repository of the Board's current publications, applications, forms, as well as past and future Board meeting information. For the FY '14 reporting period there were approximately 39,278 successful hits to the Board's web site. This is an average of 111 hits per day. All forms, applications and information related to frequently asked practice questions can be found on the web page. The increase use of the Board's web page has contributed to the decreased number of calls to the Board office.

Information specific to the initial licensure and renewal of licenses for military veterans, military members and their spouses was added to the Board's web page. All licensure applications now have questions related to the applicant's status as a military member or as a veteran or a spouse of a military member or veteran.

The Board continues to provide the "Open Forum" agenda item for each Board meeting. The intended purpose of the open forum agenda item is to provide an opportunity for individuals or representatives of a group to communicate directly with the Board on a specific issue or topic at the presenters request or by invitation of the Board. This set-aside time on the agenda has been used successfully by licensees, employers and professional association members to address practice and licensure issues directly with the Board members for quick resolution of practice and licensure issues.

REGULATORY ACTION/ LEGISLATIVE ACTION

The Board has also continued a planned review of the law found in Sections 4725.40-4725.99 of the Revised Code in order to streamline processes, make language clear and easy for licensee and employers to understand and implement. The law review process continues into FY'15 as the Board reviews segments of the law and rules at each Board meeting seeking input from interested parties. The Board continues to search for a legislative member to sponsor the necessary changes to the Board's law.

Opticianry and Ocularistry Practice

An initiative of the Board is to promote public safety according to established regulatory standards by responding to questions regarding the practice of Opticianry and Ocularistry based on relevant law and rules governing the practice; by providing public information and education; and, assisting in the development of legislation and regulation. Opticianry and Ocularistry, for the purposes of the Board, encompass the practice of Optician and Ocularistry apprentices as well.

Board staff continues to answer approximately 3600-4000 phone calls during the year, a similar number compared with the previous reporting period, and responded to numerous e-mail inquiries dealing with Opticianry and Ocularistry practice, licensure and renewal issues, and, the supervision and registration of apprentices. The number of registered apprentices continues to increase resulting in a noticeable increase in the calls related to the registration and supervision of apprentice Opticians.

The Board's web page has been updated frequently with information concerning Board meetings, publications and forms. A section for "Frequently Asked Questions" is maintained and updated with new frequently-asked questions and answers added to the web page as needed. The web page continues to be an easily accessible venue for licensees to obtain the most commonly requested forms and applications.

A new section has been added to the menu of items on the Board's main page related to the licensure and renewal of military members, veterans and their spouses.

Opticianry and Ocularistry Education

Another initiative of the Board in its mission to promote public safety and the safe practice of Opticianry and Ocularistry in Ohio is to approve basic Opticianry education programs in schools of higher learning. As of June 30, 2014 there were two Board-approved pre-licensure Opticianry programs in Ohio:

- ◆ Hocking College, New Lexington
- ◆ Cuyahoga Community College, Cleveland

And the following out-of-state schools:

- ◆ Indiana University, Bloomington, IN
- ◆ Hillsboro Community College, Tampa FL.
- ◆ Camden County College, Blackwood, NJ
- ◆ J. Sergeant Reynolds Community College, Richmond, VA

The Board-approved schools remain steady at seven schools of opticianry in the United States. The full list of approved schools can be found on the Board's web page:

www.optical.ohio.gov

The majority of applicants for licensure have completed a two thousand hour (minimum of two calendar years) of on-the-job apprenticeship training under the direct supervision of a licensed Optician. The earn-as-you-learn apprenticeship provides an excellent opportunity for individuals to be a productive tax-paying citizen while learning a viable profession.

Continuing Education

A third initiative of the Board in keeping with its mission to promote public safety and the safe practice of Opticianry and Ocularistry is accomplished by assuring that licensees maintain competency, based on continuing education standards set forth in the law and rules of the Board. The Board adopted a policy in FY'12 to accept continuing education courses that have been approved by national accrediting associations, such as the American Board of Opticianry, National Contact Lens Examiners, and the National Examining Board of Ocularistry, for renewal of licenses versus accepting only those programs that have been specifically approved by the Board. The new policy has reduced the amount of time spent by Board members outside the Board meeting hours for review of continuing education programs submitted for approval as well as during the actual Board meetings to approve individual programs. The change in the renewal has increased access to approved continuing education programs for all Opticians and Ocularists whether located in Ohio or another state.

To assure compliance with the continuing education requirements, all Opticians and Ocularists are expected to provide verification of completion of the continuing education requirements for licensure renewal by sending to the Board documentation of courses taken during the renewal period or to report the obtained hours on the on-line licensure renewal form. A post-renewal audit was conducted of approximately 15% of those who renewed on-line to determine that those individuals had, indeed, completed the courses as reported. Individual licensees who did not meet the continuing education requirements within the specified time were not issued a license until the required documentation and any applicable late fees were received at the Board office.

LICENSURE

TYPE OF LICENSEE	NUMBER AS OF 6/30/12	NUMBER AS OF 6/30/13	NUMBER AS OF 6/30/14
Optician	3203	3298	3159
Ocularist	8	8	8
Apprentice	1865	2048	1167

The number of licensed Opticians decreased from FY'13 to FY'14 by about 4%. The number of apprentice registrations decreased by 6% over the past fiscal year. The numbers of both licensed opticians is expected to increase over the next year due to a number of different factors including: a surge in the number of new apprentice registrations since the beginning of the new fiscal year and an increased number of times that the national qualifying licensure exam is being offered each year. Apprentices complete a two-year-on-the-job training after which they are required to pass a national certifying exam in order to apply for licensure as a dispensing Optician. The chart below depicts the average time it takes currently for approval of a completed license application. This is a decrease of an average of 2-4 months down to 12.71 days.

Application	REC'D TO COMPLETE # DAYS	COMPLETE TO APPROVED/#DAYS	REC'D TO APPROVED/DAYS
Average	11.58	1.17	12.71

The Board provides verification of licensure in good standing in writing to those Opticians and Ocularists who are seeking licensure into another state. Licensure verification of Ohio Opticians is also available to the public via the web page. The Board provided ten letters of good standing for licensees who are seeking licensure in other states. This number is a dramatic decrease from the 40 letters mailed the previous year, a good indication that the opticians are remaining in Ohio to practice.

DISCIPLINE

An additional strategic initiative of the Board is to promote public safety and the safe practice of Opticianry and Ocularistry by providing timely and effective investigatory and adjudication processes while preserving the individual's right to due process under the law. There were a total of 39 cases investigated for alleged violations of the law and rules during FY'14.

The chart below outlines the types and numbers for FY'13 and FY'14.

Type of Investigation	FY'13	FY'14
Illegal sales/dispensing of contact lenses	10	19
Repeat offenders sales/dispensing of contact lens resulting in permanent injunctions	1	0
Consumer complaints	2	1
Practice issues	1	1
Misc. (Unlicensed practice, etc.)	19	18
TOTAL	32	39

SUMMARY

The Optical Dispensers Board has demonstrated in FY'14 effective regulation of Ohio's licensed Opticians, Ocularists, and registered apprentices by:

- ▶ Adopting and implementing fiscally responsible practices;
- ▶ Maintaining current knowledge of the OAKS Financial, HCM, Time and Labor management programs and other statewide initiatives;
- ▶ Implementing effective electronic, personal, and written communication with licensees, employers and consumers; and,
- ▶ Continuing review and revision, as appropriate, of the law and rules regulating the practice of Opticianry and Ocularistry in Ohio to ensure that the statutes and rules reflect current standards of safe practice and common sense business regulation.