

Date of Hearing: August 20, 2025

**ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS**

Buffy Wicks, Chair

SB 776 (Ashby) – As Amended July 2, 2025

Policy Committee: Business and Professions

Vote: 17 - 0

Urgency: No

State Mandated Local Program: Yes

Reimbursable: No

**SUMMARY:**

This bill extends the operations of the California State Board of Optometry Board (Board) until January 1, 2030, and makes changes in response to issues raised in the sunset review process.

Specifically, this bill:

- 1) Extends the repeal date on the Board and its authority to appoint an executive officer until January 1, 2030.
- 2) Establishes a definition of “dispensing ophthalmic business.”
- 3) Requires registrants and licensees provide the Board with a valid email address at the time of an application for an initial or renewed registration or license, exempts those email addresses from the California Public Records Act, and provides that information sent to an applicant, registrant, or licensee by the Board via email is presumed to have been delivered.
- 4) Authorizes the Board to issue a probationary registration to a registered dispensing optician (RDO) applicant.
- 5) Removes the limit on the owner and operator of a mobile optometric office (MOO) to no more than 12 offices within the first two-year renewal period.
- 6) Changes the frequency with which owners and operators of MOOs must report to the Board, from quarterly to annually, and removes the requirement that the report include a summary of all complaints received by each MOO, the disposition of those complaints, and referral information.
- 7) Changes the maximum reserve balance the Board may maintain in the Optometry Fund, from six months, to 24 months.
- 8) Makes various additional substantive, technical, and clarifying changes to the Optometry Practice Act.

**FISCAL EFFECT:**

Extending the operations of the Board will cost approximately \$4.3 million per year (Optometry Fund, Professions and Vocations Fund). The Board does not anticipate significant costs to implement other provisions of this bill.

In addition, the Department of Consumer Affairs (DCA) Office of Information Services estimates absorbable costs of \$1,000 to remove the governing rule that limits the number of mobile optometric offices to 12 during the first two years from its online licensing and enforcement system.

**COMMENTS:**

- 1) **Purpose.** Each year, the Assembly Committee on Business and Professions and the Senate Committee on Business, Professions, and Economic Development hold joint sunset review oversight hearings to review the licensing boards under the DCA. The DCA boards are responsible for protecting consumers and the public and regulating the professionals they license. The sunset review process provides an opportunity for the Legislature, DCA, boards, and stakeholders to discuss the boards' performance and make recommendations for improvements.

Each board subject to review has an enacting statute with a repeal date. Each board's authority must be extended by the Legislature before the repeal date; otherwise the board will lose its statutory mandate. This bill extends the repeal date for the Board.

- 2) **Background. *California Board of Optometry.*** The Board licenses approximately 7,800 optometrists and registers approximately 1,185 registered dispensing ophthalmic businesses, 3,300 registered spectacle lens dispensers, 1,370 registered contact lens dispensers, and 23 nonresident ophthalmic lens dispensers. The Board also issues certifications for optometrists to use diagnostic pharmaceutical agents, therapeutic pharmaceutical agents (TPA); TPA with lacrimal irrigation and dilation; and TPA with glaucoma certification; and TPA with lacrimal irrigation and dilation and glaucoma certification. The Board additionally issues statements of licensure and fictitious name permits.

***Issues Raised during Sunset Review.*** The background paper for the Board's sunset review oversight hearing contained 20 issues and recommendations, many of which are addressed in this bill.

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