

# STATE OF NEW YORK

1519

2021-2022 Regular Sessions

## IN SENATE

January 12, 2021

Introduced by Sen. BAILEY -- read twice and ordered printed, and when printed to be committed to the Committee on Higher Education

AN ACT to amend the education law, in relation to the use of oral medications by optometrists

The People of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assembly, do enact as follows:

1 Section 1. Paragraph (e) of subdivision 1 of section 7101-a of the  
2 education law, as added by chapter 517 of the laws of 1995, is amended  
3 to read as follows:

4 (e) [~~Phase one~~] Topical therapeutic pharmaceutical agents. [~~Phase one~~]  
5 Topical therapeutic pharmaceutical agents shall mean those drugs which  
6 shall be limited to topical application to the surface of the eye for  
7 therapeutic purposes and shall be limited to:  
8 (i) antibiotic/antimicrobials;  
9 (ii) decongestants/anti-allergenic;  
10 (iii) non-steroidal anti-inflammatory agents;  
11 (iv) steroidal anti-inflammatory agents;  
12 (v) antiviral agents;  
13 (vi) hyperosmotic/hypertonic agents;  
14 (vii) cycloplegics;  
15 (viii) artificial tears and lubricants; and  
16 (ix) immunosuppressive agents.

17 § 2. Paragraph (f) of subdivision 1 of section 7101-a of the education  
18 law, as added by chapter 517 of the laws of 1995, is amended to read as  
19 follows:

20 (f) [~~Phase two therapeutic~~] Therapeutic pharmaceutical agents for  
21 treatment of glaucoma and ocular hypertension. [~~Phase two~~] Therapeutic  
22 pharmaceutical agents for treatment of glaucoma and ocular hypertension  
23 shall mean those drugs which shall be limited to topical application to  
24 the surface of the eye and shall be limited to:  
25 (i) beta blockers;

EXPLANATION--Matter in italics (underscored) is new; matter in brackets  
[-] is old law to be omitted.

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- 1 (ii) alpha agonists;  
2 (iii) direct acting cholinergic agents;  
3 (iv) prostaglandin analogs; and  
4 (v) carbonic anhydrase inhibitors.

5 § 3. Subdivision 1 of section 7101-a of the education law is amended  
6 by adding a new paragraph (g) to read as follows:

7 (g) Oral therapeutic pharmaceutical agents. Oral therapeutic pharma-  
8 ceutical agents shall mean those orally administered drugs used for  
9 therapeutic purposes solely for the treatment of diseases of the eye and  
10 adnexa and shall be limited to:

11 (i) the following antibiotics:

12 (1) amoxicillin/clavulanate potassium;

13 (2) cephalexin;

14 (3) azithromycin;

15 (4) sulfamethoxazole/trimethoprim;

16 (5) doxycycline; and

17 (6) tetracycline;

18 (ii) the following antiglaucoma agents used for the management of  
19 acute increases in intraocular pressure; provided, however, an optome-  
20 trist may use or prescribe a maximum of one twenty-four hour  
21 prescription and shall immediately refer the patient to a licensed  
22 physician specializing in diseases of the eye:

23 (1) acetazolamide; and

24 (2) methazolamide; and

25 (iii) the following antiviral agents used for herpes zoster ophthalmi-  
26 cus; provided an optometrist shall use or prescribe in maximum, one  
27 seven-day prescription; provided, however, if a patient is diagnosed  
28 with herpes zoster ophthalmicus and has not already been examined by a  
29 primary care physician or other appropriate physician for such viral  
30 condition, an optometrist shall refer the patient to a licensed primary  
31 care physician, licensed physician specializing in diseases of the eye,  
32 or other appropriate physician within three days of such diagnosis:

33 (1) valacyclovir; and

34 (2) acyclovir.

35 § 4. The subdivision heading and paragraph (a) of subdivision 4 of  
36 section 7101-a of the education law, as added by chapter 517 of the laws  
37 of 1995, are amended to read as follows:

38 [~~Phase one~~] Topical therapeutic pharmaceutical agents. (a) Before  
39 using or prescribing [~~phase one~~] topical therapeutic pharmaceutical  
40 agents, each optometrist shall have completed at least three hundred  
41 hours of clinical training in the diagnosis, treatment and management of  
42 patients with ocular disease other than glaucoma and ocular hyperten-  
43 sion, not fewer than twenty-five hours of such training shall have been  
44 completed subsequent to June thirtieth, nineteen hundred ninety-three  
45 and additionally shall either have taken and successfully passed the  
46 treatment and management of ocular diseases portion of the National  
47 Board of Examiners in Optometry test or have taken and successfully  
48 passed an examination acceptable to the board.

49 § 5. Paragraph (b) of subdivision 4 of section 7101-a of the education  
50 law, as added by chapter 517 of the laws of 1995, is amended to read as  
51 follows:

52 (b) Before using or prescribing [~~phase two~~] therapeutic pharmaceutical  
53 agents for treatment of glaucoma and ocular hypertension, an optometrist  
54 must be certified for diagnostic and [~~phase one~~] topical therapeutic  
55 agents and have completed an additional one hundred hours of clinical  
56 training in the diagnosis, treatment and management of patients with

1 glaucoma and ocular hypertension, not fewer than twenty-five hours of  
2 such training shall have been completed subsequent to July first, nine-  
3 teen hundred ninety-four, and shall have taken and successfully passed  
4 an oral or written examination acceptable by the board.

5 § 6. Paragraphs (c) and (d) of subdivision 4 of section 7101-a of the  
6 education law are relettered paragraphs (d) and (e) and a new paragraph  
7 (c) is added to read as follows:

8 (c) Before using or prescribing oral therapeutic pharmaceutical  
9 agents, an optometrist must be certified to prescribe diagnostic pharma-  
10 ceutical agents and topical therapeutic and therapeutic pharmaceutical  
11 agents for treatment of glaucoma and ocular hypertension, have completed  
12 an oral therapeutic pharmaceutical agent certification course and have  
13 passed an examination within five years of the department's approval of  
14 the initial certification course or the initial examination, whichever  
15 is later provided, however, an optometrist who has commenced the oral  
16 therapeutic pharmaceutical agent certification course within the five  
17 year time period but has not yet passed an examination shall be allowed  
18 to take such examination and become certified after the five year time  
19 period provided for in this paragraph has ended.

20 (i) The curriculum for the oral therapeutic pharmaceutical agent  
21 certification course shall include, but not be limited to, instruction  
22 in pharmacology and drug interaction in treating ocular disease and be  
23 taught through clinical case scenarios and emphasize clinical decision  
24 making and shall be no less than forty hours, of which no less than  
25 twenty-four hours shall be live instruction.

26 (ii) Such course shall qualify towards meeting the continuing educa-  
27 tion per triennial registration requirement pursuant to subdivision  
28 seven of this section.

29 (iii) The examination shall assess the knowledge of materials in the  
30 curriculum and reflect the oral therapeutic pharmaceutical agents  
31 described in paragraph (g) of subdivision one of this section, and shall  
32 be acceptable to the department.

33 (iv) The initial, and any subsequent, curriculum and examination shall  
34 be subject to review and approval by the department.

35 (v) The requirement for the oral therapeutic pharmaceutical agent  
36 certification course and examination shall not apply to those optome-  
37 trists who graduated from an accredited college of optometry subsequent  
38 to January first, two thousand twenty-two and have taken and successful-  
39 ly passed the National Board of Examiners in Optometry examination or an  
40 examination acceptable to the department.

41 § 7. Subdivision 5 of section 7101-a of the education law, as added by  
42 chapter 517 of the laws of 1995, is amended to read as follows:

43 5. Suspension of certification. The department shall suspend the  
44 certification for the use and prescribing of [~~phase one~~] topical thera-  
45 peutic agents of any optometrist who fails to receive certification for  
46 [~~phase two~~] therapeutic pharmaceutical agents for treatment of glaucoma  
47 and ocular hypertension within three years of having been certified for  
48 [~~phase one~~] topical therapeutic pharmaceutical agents.

49 § 8. The subdivision heading of subdivision 6 of section 7101-a of the  
50 education law, as added by chapter 517 of the laws of 1995, is amended  
51 to read as follows:

52 Consultation with use of certain topical therapeutic pharmaceutical  
53 agents for treatment of glaucoma and ocular hypertension.

54 § 9. Subdivision 7 of section 7101-a of the education law, as added by  
55 chapter 517 of the laws of 1995, is amended to read as follows:

1 7. Continuing education. ~~(a)~~ Each optometrist certified to use [~~phase~~  
2 ~~one or phase two~~] topical therapeutic pharmaceutical agents and thera-  
3 peutic pharmaceutical agents for treatment of glaucoma and ocular hyper-  
4 tension, shall complete a minimum of thirty-six hours of continuing  
5 education in the area of ocular disease and pharmacology per triennial  
6 registration period. [~~The education shall be in the area of ocular~~  
7 ~~disease and pharmacology and may include both didactic and clinical~~  
8 ~~components.~~] Each optometrist certified to use oral therapeutic pharma-  
9 ceutical agents shall, in addition to the minimum thirty-six hours of  
10 continuing education provided for in this subdivision, complete an addi-  
11 tional minimum of eighteen hours of continuing education related to  
12 systemic disease and therapeutic treatment per triennial registration  
13 period. Such educational programs may include both didactic and clinical  
14 components and shall be approved in advance by the department [~~and~~  
15 ~~evidence of the completion of this requirement shall be submitted with~~  
16 ~~each application for license renewal as required by section sixty-five~~  
17 ~~hundred two of this chapter~~]. Beginning on January first, two thousand  
18 twenty-three, all sponsors of continuing education courses seeking  
19 advanced approval from the department shall file an application and pay  
20 a fee determined by the department in accordance with the regulations of  
21 the commissioner. An optometrist subject to the provisions of this  
22 subdivision whose first registration date following the effective date  
23 of this section occurs less than three years from such effective date,  
24 but on or after January first, two thousand twenty-three, shall complete  
25 continuing education hours on a prorated basis at the rate of one hour  
26 per month for the period beginning January first, two thousand twenty-  
27 three up to the first registration date thereafter. An optometrist who  
28 has not satisfied the mandatory continuing education requirement pursu-  
29 ant to this subdivision shall not be issued a triennial registration  
30 certificate by the department and shall not practice unless and until a  
31 conditional registration is issued as provided for in paragraph (b) of  
32 this subdivision. Continuing education hours taken during one triennium  
33 may not be transferred to the subsequent triennium.

34 (b) The department, in its discretion, may issue a conditional regis-  
35 tration to an optometrist who fails to meet the continuing education  
36 requirements established in paragraph (a) of this subdivision, but who  
37 agrees to make up any deficiencies and complete any additional education  
38 which the department may require. The fee for such a conditional regis-  
39 tration shall be the same as, and in addition to, the fee for the trien-  
40 ennial registration. The duration of such conditional registration shall  
41 be determined by the department, but shall not exceed one year. Any  
42 optometrist who is notified of the denial of registration for failure to  
43 submit evidence, satisfactory to the department, of required continuing  
44 education and who practices without such registration may be subject to  
45 disciplinary proceedings pursuant to section sixty-five hundred ten of  
46 this title.

47 (c) In accordance with the intent of this section, adjustment to the  
48 mandatory continuing education requirement may be granted by the depart-  
49 ment for reasons of health that are certified by an appropriate health  
50 care professional, for extended active duty with the armed forces of the  
51 United States, or for other good cause acceptable to the department  
52 which may prevent compliance.

53 (d) An optometrist not engaged in practice, as determined by the  
54 department, shall be exempt from the mandatory continuing education  
55 requirement upon the filing of a statement with the department declaring  
56 such status. Any licensee who returns to the practice of optometry

1 during the triennial registration period shall notify the department  
2 prior to reentering the profession and shall meet such continuing educa-  
3 tion requirements as shall be prescribed by regulations of the commis-  
4 sioner.

5 (e) Optometrists subject to the provisions of this subdivision shall  
6 maintain adequate documentation of completion of acceptable continuing  
7 education credits and shall provide such documentation at the request of  
8 the department. Failure to provide such documentation upon the request  
9 of the department shall be an act of misconduct subject to disciplinary  
10 proceedings pursuant to section sixty-five hundred ten of this title.

11 (f) The mandatory continuing education fee shall be determined by the  
12 department. Such fee shall be payable on or before the first day of  
13 each triennial registration period, and shall be paid in addition to the  
14 triennial registration fee required by subdivision eight of section  
15 seventy-one hundred four of this article.

16 § 10. The subdivision heading and subparagraph (i) of paragraph (a) of  
17 subdivision 8 of section 7101-a of the education law, as added by chap-  
18 ter 517 of the laws of 1995, are amended to read as follows:

19 Notice to patient with the use or prescription of topical therapeutic  
20 pharmaceutical agents and therapeutic pharmaceutical agents for treat-  
21 ment of glaucoma and ocular hypertension.

22 (i) An optometrist prescribing topical steroids or antiviral medica-  
23 tion shall inform each patient that in the event the condition does not  
24 improve within five days, a physician of the patient's choice will be  
25 notified.

26 § 11. Subdivision 10 of section 7101-a of the education law, as added  
27 by chapter 517 of the laws of 1995, is amended to read as follows:

28 10. Pharmaceutical agents. Optometrists who have been approved and  
29 certified by the department shall be permitted to use the following  
30 drugs:

31 (a) Diagnostic pharmaceuticals.

32 (b) Those optometrists having been certified for [~~phase one~~] topical  
33 therapeutic pharmaceutical agents shall be authorized [(i) to use and  
34 ~~recommend all nonprescription medications appropriate for ocular disease~~  
35 ~~whether intended for topical or oral use, and (ii)]~~ to use and prescribe  
36 all [~~phase one~~] topical therapeutic pharmaceutical agents specified in  
37 paragraph (e) of subdivision one of this section, which are FDA approved  
38 and commercially available for topical use.

39 In the event an optometrist treats a patient with topical antiviral or  
40 steroidal drugs and the patient's condition either fails to improve or  
41 worsens within five days, the optometrist shall notify a physician  
42 designated by the patient or, if none, by the treating optometrist.

43 (c) Those optometrists having been certified for [~~phase two~~] therapeu-  
44 tic pharmaceutical agents for treatment of glaucoma and ocular hyperten-  
45 sion shall be authorized to use and prescribe [~~phase two~~] therapeutic  
46 pharmaceutical agents for treatment of glaucoma and ocular hypertension  
47 specified in paragraph (f) of subdivision one of this section, which are  
48 FDA approved and commercially available.

49 (d) Those optometrists having been certified for oral therapeutic  
50 pharmaceutical agents shall be authorized to use and prescribe oral  
51 therapeutic pharmaceutical agents specified in paragraph (g) of subdivi-  
52 sion one of this section, which are FDA approved and commercially avail-  
53 able and shall comply with all safety information and side-effect and  
54 warning advisories contained in the most current physicians' desk refer-  
55 ence.

1 (e) Those optometrists having been certified for topical therapeutic  
2 pharmaceutical agents, therapeutic pharmaceutical agents for treatment  
3 of glaucoma and ocular hypertension or oral therapeutic pharmaceutical  
4 agents shall be authorized to use and recommend all nonprescription  
5 medications, whether intended for topical or oral use, appropriate for  
6 the treatment of the eye and adnexa.

7 § 12. Subdivision 8 of section 7104 of the education law, as amended  
8 by chapter 517 of the laws of 1995, is amended to read as follows:

9 (8) Fees: pay a fee of two hundred twenty dollars to the department  
10 for admission to a department conducted examination and for an initial  
11 license, a fee of one hundred fifteen dollars for each reexamination, a  
12 fee of one hundred thirty-five dollars for an initial license for  
13 persons not requiring admission to a department conducted examination,  
14 [~~and~~] a fee of two hundred ten dollars for each triennial registration  
15 period, [~~and~~] for additional authorization for the purpose of utilizing  
16 diagnostic pharmaceutical agents, a fee of sixty dollars, and for  
17 certification to use or prescribe oral therapeutic pharmaceutical  
18 agents, a fee of two hundred fifty dollars.

19 § 13. This act shall take effect two years after it shall have become  
20 a law; provided that section nine of this act shall take effect January  
21 1, 2023. Effective immediately, the addition, amendment and/or repeal  
22 of any rule or regulation necessary for the implementation of this act  
23 on its effective date are authorized to be made and completed on or  
24 before such effective date.