

CONTINUING EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS FOR MICHIGAN OPTOMETRIST

Authority: Public Act 368 of 1978, as amended

This form is for information only

This brochure has been developed to explain the requirements and the license renewal process for every Optometrist licensed to practice in Michigan.

The Michigan Public Health Code and board administrative rules requires every Optometrist to complete, during the 2-year period prior to the date of renewal of the license, at least 40 hours of continuing education in courses or programs approved by the Board with at least one of those hours in pain management. If an applicant holds certification to administer topical ocular diagnostic pharmaceutical agents or certification to administer and prescribe therapeutic pharmaceutical agents, or both, shall accumulate at least 20 hours of Board-approved continuing education in pharmacological management of ocular conditions. Pursuant to this requirement, the Board of Optometry has promulgated rules to establish specific criteria for the Board's approval of continuing education courses and programs.

REQUIREMENTS FOR RENEWAL

The continuing education requirements apply to every Optometrist renewing a Michigan license that held the license for the 2-year period immediately preceding the date of the license renewal. The requirements apply whether or not the Optometrist is actively engaged in the practice of Optometry. No one is exempt from this requirement.

Each Optometrist is required to complete 40 hours of continuing education in courses or programs approved by the Board. If an optometrist holds certification to administer topical ocular diagnostic pharmaceutical agents or certification to administer and prescribe therapeutic pharmaceutical agents, or both, shall accumulate at least 20 hours of Board-approved continuing education in pharmaceutical management of ocular conditions. An applicant for renewal must complete at least 1 hour in pain and symptom management. Continuing education hours may include, but are not limited to, courses in behavior management, psychology of pain, pharmacology, behavior modification, stress management, clinical applications and drug interactions.

Every Optometrist who is renewing his/her license should retain records documenting the completion of continuing education. Those documents should be retained for a period of 4 years after the renewal of the license.

DO NOT SEND THE CONTINUING EDUCATION DOCUMENTS along with the license renewal application. The Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs, Bureau of Health Professions will conduct an audit, at the conclusion of the renewal period. Optometrists chosen for audit through an automated random selection process will be contacted by letter to submit documented evidence of the completion of 40 hours of continuing education credit.

DO NOT RENEW YOUR LICENSE IF YOU DO NOT HAVE THE REQUIRED 40 HOURS OF CONTINUING EDUCATION CREDITS.

An Optometrist who is unable to provide evidence of completion of the continuing education requirements, when requested, is in violation of the Michigan Public Health Code and subject to one or more of the following possible license sanctions: reprimand, probation, denial, suspension, revocation, limitation, restitution, and fine.

Accredited sponsors are required to provide attendance certificates that indicate name of licensee, program dates and number of designated hours. Further information about programs with accredited sponsorship may be obtained by contacting the accredited sponsor. "Contact hour" is the same as one 50-60 minute or (1) credit hour.

REQUIREMENT FOR RELICENSURE

"Relicensure" means the granting of a license to a person whose license has lapsed for failure to renew the license within 60 days after the expiration date.

Optometrists applying for relicensure pursuant to R338.1257 (1)(b) – **SUBMISSION OF 40 HOURS OF CONTINUING EDUCATION IN PROGRAMS APPROVED BY THE BOARD THAT HAVE BEEN EARNED WITHIN THE 2-YEAR PERIOD IMMEDIATELY PRECEDING THE DATE OF THE APPLICATION.**

R 338.256a - ACCEPTABLE CONTINUING EDUCATION

Rule 6a (1) The Board shall consider any of the following as Board-approved continuing education:

(a) Successful completion of a course or courses offered for credit in an optometry school approved by the Board under R 338.254, without limitation.

If audited, the licensee must submit a transcript showing credit hours of the academic courses related to Optometry.

(b) Successful completion of a continuing education program offered by an optometry school approved by the Board under R338.254, without limitation.

If audited, the licensee must submit a copy of a letter or certificate showing his/her name, school name, hours earned and the date on which the program was held.

(c) Attendance at a continuing education program approved by the Board under R 338.256b, without limitation.

If audited, the licensee must submit a copy of a letter or certificate showing his/her name, accreditation information, hours earned and the date on which the program was held.

(d) One continuing education contact hour may be granted for each 50-60 minutes of program attendance, without limitation, at a continuing education program that has been granted approval by another state board of optometry.

If audited, the licensee must submit a copy of a letter or certificate showing his/her name, accreditation of state board, hours earned and the date on which the program was held.

(e) One hour of continuing education may be earned for each hour involved in the presentation of a continuing education program approved by the Board.

If audited, the licensee must send in a copy of the presentation notice or advertisement showing the date and his/her name listed as a presenter.

(f) A maximum of 8 credit hours per renewal may be earned for programs related to optometric topics approved for category 1 continuing education by the Michigan boards of medicine or osteopathic medicine and surgery.

If audited, the licensee must submit a copy of a letter or certificate showing his/her name, accreditation information, hours earned and the date on which the program was held.

(g) A maximum of 8 credit hours per renewal may be earned for programs related to optometric pharmacological topics approved for continuing education by the board of pharmacy.

If audited, the licensee must submit a copy of a letter or certificate showing his/her name, accreditation information, hours earned and the date on which the program was held.

(2) The Board shall consider requests for approval of continuing education programs by sponsors who submit applications on a form provided by the department. The Board may evaluate applications for approval based upon all of the following:

- (a) Program content as it relates to the practice of optometry.
- (b) Instructor credentials for conducting the specific program.
- (c) The number of lecture hours of the program, with a minimum of 1 hour being submitted for consideration.
- (d) Attendance monitoring plan.

(3) A total maximum of 29 hours may be granted in board-approved programs in either of the following areas:

- (a) A maximum of 9 hours relating to practice management.
- (b) A maximum of 20 hours relating to self- evaluation journal tests and multimedia education, including online continuing education.

If audited, the licensee must submit a copy of a letter or certificate showing his/her name, hours earned and the date on which the program was held.

Completion of the required continuing education activities must be independently verified by an official source other than the licensee.

RENEWAL PROCEDURES

Optometry licenses expire every 2 years on June 30. Submission of the renewal application certifies that the requirements are met. If the renewal requirements have not been completed, the renewal application should not be submitted. Licenses can be renewed during the sixty-day grace period after completion of continuing education requirements, with the renewal fee and the additional \$20.00 late fee. If a licensee would like to apply for a waiver of education requirements an application should be made after the licensee receives the renewal application in early May, but before the license expires on June 30. Licensees who have not been granted waivers should allow their licenses to expire. Application for relicensure may be made upon completion of the 40 hour requirement within the 2-year period immediately preceding the date of the application for relicensure if license has been expired for no more than 3 years.

Information, forms and instructions for obtaining board approval can be obtained from the Continuing Education Section of the Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs, Bureau of Health Professions.

CONTINUING EDUCATION WAIVERS

The Michigan Public Health Code authorizes the Board of Optometry to waive the continuing education requirements for a license renewal applicant if, upon written application, the Board finds the failure of the licensee to attend the required Board-approved courses or programs was due to the licensee's disability, military service, absence from the continental United States, or a circumstance beyond the control of the licensee which the Board considers good and sufficient. Pursuant to this authority, the Board has promulgated guidelines that set forth the policy that the Board will follow in granting a waiver. The guidelines provide for the following:

DISABILITY: The licensee's disability shall have been temporary in nature and the licensee's physician shall attest on the application that the disability no longer prevents the licensee from attending educational programs and engaging in the practice of Optometry without limitation.

MILITARY SERVICE: The licensee shall have been practicing Optometry while in active service of the United States, shall have been licensed at the time of induction or entering into service, and shall have requested that his or her license be placed in military status to continue in effect without payment of the license renewal fee pursuant to Section 16196 of the Public Health Code.

ABSENCE FROM THE CONTINENTAL UNITED STATES: The licensee shall establish that Board-approved educational programs were not available within a reasonable distance from which the licensee was located and the licensee shall provide evidence of attendance at educational programs that substantially meet the requirements for approval by the Board.

OTHER CIRCUMSTANCES BEYOND LICENSEE'S CONTROL: For circumstances, other than disability, military service, or absence from the continental United States, the licensee shall submit compelling evidence that the circumstances were good and sufficient for a waiver of the requirements.

If the Board finds that any of the conditions for waiving the requirements have been met, the number of hours waived shall be proportional to the length of time the licensee was temporarily disabled, in active military service, outside the continental United States, or involved in circumstances beyond the licensee's control. The Board will not waive the requirements prospectively, nor will the requirements be waived for a licensee whose circumstances changed in time to reasonably allow the licensee to complete all or part of the requirements before license renewal.

To summarize:

- * All Michigan licensed Optometrists must complete 40 hours of Board approved continuing education, with at least one hour in pain and symptom management, within the 2 years prior to the date of renewal of the license. If an applicant has certification to administer topical ocular diagnostic pharmaceutical agents and/or certification to administer and prescribe therapeutic pharmaceutical agents, he/she, shall accumulate a minimum of 20 hours in pharmacological management.
- * Submission of the renewal application and fee is considered a statement that the CE requirement has been met.
- * Failure to complete the CE requirement is considered a violation of the Public Health Code.

The Bureau of Health Professions will not discriminate against any individual or group because of race, sex, religion, age, national origin, color, marital status, disability or political beliefs. If you need assistance with reading, writing, hearing, etc., under the American's with Disabilities Act, you may make your needs known to this agency.

PLEASE NOTE:

EFFECTIVE WITH THE RENEWAL PERIOD OF JULY 1, 2003 TO JUNE 30, 2005, ALL OPTOMETRISTS MUST COMPLETE 40 HOURS OF CONTINUING EDUCATION. FOR THOSE OPTOMETRISTS HOLDING TPA CERTIFICATION, AT LEAST 20 HOURS MUST BE IN THE MANAGEMENT OF OCULAR CONDITIONS.