

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

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North to the Future

Senator Cathy Giessel Senate District N

Sponsor Statement SB 36 Optometry & Optometrists

SB 36 modernizes and updates the Alaska Optometry Statute, as the language is antiquated, with some language over 50 years old.

This bill allows the optometry board the authority to regulate its practice the same as the other prescribing health professions such as dentistry, medicine and nursing.

It allows the board to continue to adopt regulations, updated to current practice, and moves the continuing education (CE) requirements back into regulation.

Continuing education is still required by current statute, but the hours and subjects will be determined by the board as with other professions. This change allows the board flexibility to control CE requirements and is recommended by the Dept. of Commerce, Community and Economic Development. The current regulations require more CE hours than the statute subsection deleted by this bill.

SB 36 allows the board to determine prescribed drug schedules, including standards and limitations on practice determined by the board.

The bill ensures that no licensee may perform any procedure beyond the scope of the licensee's education, training, and experience as established by the board. This allows for future new and improved diagnostic and therapeutic procedures as determined by the board, while not having to return to the legislature for every new technological advance, which is currently the case and unnecessarily burdensome.

The optometry definition in this bill is updated to reflect current and modern-day practice.

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