

## IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT

As you likely have already heard, Am. Sub. H.B. 49, signed into law on June 30, 2017, creates the State Vision Professionals Board, effective January 21, 2018. Under this new law, both ODB and OPT will be abolished and combined to create VPB.

As this date nears, I am writing to share information with licensees about upcoming changes related to the Ohio Optical Dispensers Board (ODB) and the Ohio State Board of Optometry (OPT).

### **What will change?**

Effective January 21, 2018, the responsibilities and staff of the two Boards will merge and will be renamed the State Vision Professionals Board. The law specifies that the new board will consist of four optometrists, two opticians, and one public member, appointed by the Governor.

### **What's the impact?**

- (1) Each Board has been working over the past five months to complete this transition by the effective date of January 21, 2018. I expect a seamless merger of both entities into a new single licensing agency that regulates all groups of licensees.
- (2) The new law does not change the underlying licensing standards for each professional group. In other words, ocularists and opticians are still licensed under Chapter 4725 of the Ohio Revised Code and Chapter 4726 of the Ohio Administrative Code, and optometrists remain licensed under Chapter 4725 of the Ohio Revised and Administrative Codes.
- (3) There should be no immediately noticeable changes. Most of the changes will be back office and administrative in nature.

### **What the new law doesn't do:**

- 1) The new law does not eliminate or change educational, examination, licensing, or continuing education requirements for any group regulated by either Board. Optometrist education, examination, licensing, and continuing education requirements remain the same as they are today. Similarly, the new law does not change or in any way eliminate any education, examination, licensing, or continuing education requirements for opticians or ocularists.
- 2) The new law does not change license renewal dates. Licensees must renew their licenses by December 31 of each year and apprentices must renew by June 30 of each year.**

As both Boards work together to complete this transition, I will continue to provide you with information you need to know to successfully and conveniently conduct business with us. Please periodically visit our websites for new information at [www.optical.ohio.gov](http://www.optical.ohio.gov) and

[www.optometry.ohio.gov](http://www.optometry.ohio.gov). The website for the new Vision Professionals Board will be [www.vision.ohio.gov](http://www.vision.ohio.gov).

Because we use email as a cost-saving, efficient way to communicate, please be sure that we have your email address in our records. You can update your email address and contact information by registering and/or logging in to your user account via the new eLicense Ohio system at [www.elicense.ohio.gov/OH\\_HomePage](http://www.elicense.ohio.gov/OH_HomePage).

The Boards look forward to working together to continue to serve you and the citizens of Ohio.

Sincerely,

Katie Eagan  
Executive Director, Optical Dispensers Board  
Transition Lead, Vision Professionals Board