

[REPUBLIC ACT NO. 8050, June 07, 1995]

**AN ACT REGULATING THE PRACTICE OF OPTOMETRY,
UPGRADING OPTOMETRIC EDUCATION, INTEGRATING
OPTOMETRISTS, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES**

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the Philippines in Congress assembled:

SECTION 1. *Title.* — This Act shall be known and cited as the "Revised Optometry Law of 1995."

SEC. 2. *Declaration of State Policy.* — The State recognizes the essential role of optometry as a profession in safeguarding and enhancing the health and general physical well-being of the citizenry. Optometric services shall therefore be promoted as a regular component of the primary health care system.

SEC. 3. *Definition of Terms.* — As used in this Act, the following terms shall be defined as follows:

- a. "Optometry" — The science and art of examining the human eye, analyzing the ocular function, prescribing and dispensing ophthalmic lenses, prisms, contact lenses and their accessories and solutions, low vision aids, and similar appliances and devices, conducting ocular exercises, vision training, orthoptics, installing prosthetics, using authorized diagnostic pharmaceutical agents (DPA), and other preventive or corrective measures or procedures for the aid, correction, rehabilitation or relief of the human eye, or to attain maximum vision and comfort.
- b. "Optometrist" — A person who has been certified by the Board of Optometry and registered with the Professional Regulation Commission (PRC) as being qualified to practice optometry in the Philippines.
- c. "Optometrist in good standing" — A registered optometrist who is authorized to practice the profession in the Philippines by virtue of a valid certificate of registration and a valid professional license issued by the PRC for the purpose.
- d. "Diagnostic pharmaceutical agents" — Specific topical drugs used to aid optometrists in their examination of the human eye. Until otherwise specified by the Board of Optometry, upon approval by the Secretary of the Department of Health (DOH) upon the recommendation of the Bureau of Food and Drugs (BFAD), these agents shall be limited to the following:

- (1) Phenyleprine 2.5% ophthalmic drops;
- (2) Tropicamide 0.5% ophthalmic drops;
- (3) Proparacaine 0.5% ophthalmic drops;
- (4) Oxybuprocaine 0.4% ophthalmic drops; and

HCL
(5) Fluorecein
strips.

- e. "Certificate of registration" — A document signed by the Commissioner of the PRC and by all members of the Board of Optometry and bearing its seal, issued to an applicant who has satisfied the requirements for the practice of optometry. It shall serve as proof that the registrant is qualified to practice the profession in the Philippines.
- f. "Professional license" — A renewable card, issued by the PRC to a registered optometrist, indicating that he is competent and authorized to practice optometry in the Philippines. Until the loss of its validity or its expiration, such license shall serve as evidence that its bearer is an optometrist in good standing.
- g. "Code of professional ethics" — A set of standards relating to the conduct, integrity and moral duties of optometrists, as prescribed by the duly integrated and accredited national organization of optometrists and adopted and promulgated by the Board of Optometry upon the approval by the PRC.

THE PRACTICE OF OPTOMETRY

SEC. 4. *Acts Constituting the Practice of Optometry.* — Any of the following acts constitute the practice of optometry:

- a. The examination of the human eye through the employment of subjective and objective procedures, including the use of specific topical diagnostic pharmaceutical agents or drugs and instruments, tools, equipment, implements, visual aids, apparatuses, machines, ocular exercises and related devices, for the purpose of determining the condition and acuity of human vision to correct and improve the same in accordance with subsections (b), (c), and (d) hereof;
- b. The prescription and dispensing of ophthalmic lenses, prisms, contact lenses and their accessories and solutions, frames and their accessories, and supplies for the purpose of correcting and treating defects, deficiencies and abnormalities of vision;
- c. The conduct of ocular exercises and vision training, the provision of orthoptics and other devices and procedures to aid and correct abnormalities of human vision, and the installation of prosthetic devices;
- d. The counselling of patients with regard to vision and eye care and hygiene;
- e. The establishment of offices, clinics, and similar places where optometric services are offered; and
- f. The collection of professional fees for the performance of any of the acts mentioned in paragraphs (a), (b), (c), and (d) of this section.

SEC. 5. *Prohibition Against the Unauthorized Practice of Optometry.* — No person shall practice optometry as defined in Section 3 of this Act nor perform any of the acts constituting the practice of optometry as set forth in Section 4 hereof, without having been first admitted to the practice of this profession under the provisions of this Act and its implementing rules and regulations: *Provided*, That this prohibition shall not apply to regularly licensed and duly registered physicians who have received postgraduate training in the diagnosis and treatment of eye diseases: *Provided, however*, That the examination of the human eye by duly registered physicians in connection with the physical examination of patients shall not be

considered as practice of optometry: *Provided, further,* That public health workers trained and involved in the government's blindness prevention program may conduct only visual acuity test and visual screening.

SEC. 6. *Disclosure of Authority to Practice.* — An optometrist shall be required to indicate his professional license number and the date of its expiration in the documents he issues or signs in connection with the practice of his profession. He shall also display his certificate of registration in a conspicuous area of his clinic or office.

THE BOARD OF OPTOMETRY

SEC. 7. *The Board of Optometry.* — There is hereby created a Board of Optometry, hereinafter referred to as the Board, composed of five (5) members who shall be appointed by the President of the Philippines, upon the recommendation of the PRC, from a list of ten (10) nominees submitted by the duly integrated and accredited national organization of optometrists.

SEC. 8. *Minimum Qualifications of Board Members.* — Only persons possessed with the following qualifications may be nominated and appointed to the Board:

- a. A natural-born citizen of the Philippines;
- b. A duly registered optometrist of good standing;
- c. At least thirty-five (35) years of age at the time of his appointment;
- d. Of good moral character; and
- e. In active practice of the profession for at least ten (10) years prior to his appointment: *Provided,* That a person who is a member of the faculty, whether full time, part time or lecturer of any school, college or university where a regular course in optometry is taught, or who has any pecuniary interest, directly or indirectly, in such an institution must forego his membership in said faculty or relinquish his interests in said institution before or upon taking his oath as a member of the Board: *Provided, further,* That an officer of any optometric association is disqualified from being appointed to or serving in the Board.

SEC. 9. *Term of Office.* — The members of the Board shall hold office for a non-renewable term of five (5) years, starting on the date of appointment and until their successors shall have been appointed: *Provided, however,* That the first appointees to the Board, who may include the incumbent members of the existing Optometry Board, shall hold office as follows: the chairperson for five (5) years and the four (4) other members for fixed terms of four (4), three (3), two (2) and one (1) year/s, such that the term of one member shall be due to expire every year. Thereafter, one member shall be appointed for the full term every year and such member, in the last year of his term, shall automatically become the chairperson of the Board. Vacancies brought about by reasons other than expiration of term shall be filled for the unexpired portion of the term only.

SEC. 10. *Removal or Suspension of Board Members.* — Any member of the Board, after having been given the opportunity to defend himself in a proper administrative investigation conducted by the PRC, may be removed by the President of the Philippines for neglect of duty, incompetence, malpractice, or unprofessional, unethical, immoral or dishonorable conduct. During the process of investigation, the

President of the Philippines may suspend such member under investigation for a period of not more than sixty (60) days and appoint a temporary member in his place.

SEC. 11. *Compensation of Board Members.* — The members of the Board shall each receive compensation in accordance with the rules and regulations of the Professional Regulatory Commission.

SEC. 12. *Functions and Powers of the Board.* — The Board is hereby vested with authority to:

- a. Promulgate the rules and regulations for the practice of optometry, subject to the approval of the PRC and in accordance with the provisions of this Act;
- b. Administer and enforce the rules and regulations specified in the preceding subsection;
- c. Determine and prepare the contents of licensure examinations, adopt measures to ensure its integrity, check and rate the examination papers and submit the results thereof to the PRC;
- d. Formulate and oversee, in consultation and coordination with the PRC, guidelines for the proper conduct of licensure examinations and the registration of optometrists;
- e. Issue, suspend, revoke and reissue certificates of registration to qualified optometrists and renew their professional licenses;
- f. Impose reasonable requirements and conditions, such as attendance in continuing education activities and programs, for the renewal of an optometrist's license to practice and for the purpose of upgrading the professional competence of optometrists;
- g. Maintain a registry of optometrists in good standing;
- h. Adopt, promulgate and disseminate the Code of Ethics for the practice of optometry in the Philippines;
- i. Administer oaths in connection with the implementation of this Act;
- j. Conduct hearings and investigations to resolve complaints against practitioners of optometry for malpractice, unethical and unprofessional conduct, and violations of this Act or its implementing rules and regulations, and in connection therewith, issue *subpoena ad testificandum* and *subpoena duces tecum* and punish with contempt persons obstructing, impeding and/ or otherwise interfering with the conduct of such proceedings;
- k. Conduct ocular inspections of establishments and/ or premises where optometric services are offered to ascertain that professional standards are complied with;
- l. (l) Upon application, to issue an order enjoining or abating the illegal practice of optometry by unqualified persons;
- m. Impose fines and penalties, after due process and in accordance with the provision of this Act, for causes provided for by law or by the rules and regulations promulgated therefor;
- n. Evaluate periodically the status of optometric education and recommend and/ or adopt measures to upgrade and maintain its high standards;
- o. Update the list of topical diagnostic pharmaceutical agents, specifically mydriatics, cycloplegics, miotics, anesthetics and diagnostic dyes, that may be used by optometrists, subject to the approval of the Department of Health and the Bureau of Food and Drugs; and

- p. Study the conditions affecting the practice of optometry in all parts of the Philippines, and, whenever necessary, adopt such measures as may be deemed proper for the maintenance of good ethics and high professional standards of optometric practice.

SEC. 13. *Quorum in Board Meetings.* — The attendance of three (3) members shall constitute a quorum for the Board to officially transact business.

SEC. 14. *Votes Required in Administrative Cases.* — To render a decision in an administrative case for unethical practice, malpractice, immorality, dishonesty, and related charges affecting the professional fitness and integrity of an optometrist, the vote of three (3) members must be obtained: *Provided,* That in case members are disqualified to vote by virtue of their relation to or interest in any of the parties or voluntarily inhibits themselves from participating in the proceedings, the Board shall designate, with the approval of the Commission, an optometrist in good standing who is respected in the optometric community for their probity and integrity to sit in the Board, participate in the proceedings and vote on the case.

SEC. 15. *Supervision of the Board and Custody of its Records.* — The members of the Board shall be under the general supervision of the PRC. All records, including examination papers, examination results, minutes of deliberations, records of administrative cases and investigation of the Board shall be kept by the said Commission.

SEC. 16. *Annual Report.* — The Board shall, at the end of each calendar year, submit to the Commission an annual report of its activities and proceedings during the year. Other information or data may be requested by the Commission as often as may be necessary and practicable.

THE OPTOMETRIC BOARD EXAMINATION

SEC. 17. *Licensure Examination.* — Every applicant seeking to be registered as an optometrist shall undergo an examination as provided in this Act. Examinations for the practice of optometry in the Philippines shall be given by the Board at least once every year in such places and dates as the PRC may designate.

SEC. 18. *Scope of Examination.* — The Board of Optometry shall prescribe the scope and prepare the contents of the licensure examination. In the discharge of this function, the Board shall take into account recent developments in optometry as well as the academic standards imposed by the Commission on Higher Education on educational institutions which offer a course in optometry.

SEC. 19. *Requirements for Examination of Applicants.* — To be eligible to take the licensure examination in optometry, the applicant must be:

- a. A Filipino citizen;
- b. Of good moral character;
- c. A holder of a degree of Doctor of Optometry (O.D.) obtained from a school, college, university or institution duly accredited by the government after passing at least a six-year course offering the following minimum basic subjects: mathematics, general and organic chemistry, practical and mechanical optics, psychology, physics, physiological optics, pharmacology,