



## Board of Optometry Regular Meeting Minutes

December 1, 2023

**Location:** Labor & Industries, 7273 Linderson Way S.W., Room S119, Tumwater, WA 98501,  
and Microsoft Teams

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Board members present: Melissa Dacumos, Optometrist  
Theodore Kadet, Optometrist  
Keren Yang, Optometrist, Vice-chairperson  
Riya Paranthan, Optometrist  
Palwinder Kaur, Optometrist  
Barbara Rollinger, General Public

Board members absent: None

Staff members present: Tracie Drake, Executive Director  
Kristina Bell, Program Manager  
Noelle Chung, Assistant Attorney General  
Hyon Yi, Deputy Credentialing Manager  
Brandon Williams, Project Manager  
Bill Kellington, Supervising Staff Attorney

Others present: Brett Bence, Chair, COPE  
Stephanie Cramer, WAEPS  
William Prothero  
Susie Tracy

Notice of this meeting was published on the Board of Optometry profession [website](#) and was sent out through the GovDelivery listserv.

## Open Session:

### Call to Order and Introductions – Keren Yang, OD, Vice-Chair

Ms. Yang called meeting to order at 9:01am

**1. Approval of agenda**

December 1, 2023, meeting agenda was motioned, seconded, and approved.

**2. Approval of minutes**

September 8, 2023, meeting minutes were motioned, seconded, and approved.

**3. Open forum**

Stephanie Cramer:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the BOO meeting today. I would like to make a partial comment on behalf of the Washington Academy of Eye Physicians and Surgeons with regards to the ppt presented at the last BOO meeting.

We are still awaiting information regarding the pharmacologic agents with regards to SSB 5389, so we may comment further once that information comes to light.

With regards to page 5 of the PowerPoint

This talks about "debridement of tissue" in the context of foreign body removal. While we agree with the BOO that SSB 5389 permits removal of tissue to remove foreign bodies, we are concerned that the list of procedures below is interpreting that statement more broadly than intended. We are concerned that the procedures are asking for authority to perform the Superficial keratectomies (removal of entire corneal epithelium with a blade +/- buffing with a diamond burr) in order to perform 1) Calcium chelation and 2) Corneal Crosslinking.

Calcium chelation requires a superficial keratectomy to perform (and in fact the procedure is billed as a superficial keratectomy) and then application of potassium EDTA to the bare surface of Bowmans layer. We do not believe the legislature intended to or gave the authority of a superficial keratectomy in this bill. In addition, EDTA is a drug that is not normally available in most offices. This procedure within ophthalmology is generally done by a corneal subspecialist.

Corneal crosslinking also requires a superficial keratectomy before application of concentrated riboflavin drops. This procedure is generally only performed by a corneal specialist in the OR and rarely in a minor surgery suite. We do not believe that the legislature intended this with the legislation.

The other comment comes with regards to pages 8 and 13 of the ppt.

With regards to eyelid surgery, the bill specifically prohibits eyelid surgery done under general anesthesia, for cosmetic reasons, eyelid surgery requiring suture for closure, and eyelid surgery when malignancy is suspected. These four stipulations significantly limit the scope of eyelid surgeries allowed by the bill.

SSB 5389 will allow eyelid surgery for functional reasons (meaning lesions that are affecting vision or causing pain). If malignancy is suspected and the doctor is worried enough to send it to pathology, then the patient should be referred as this is out of the scope of the bill.

The removal of xanthelasma is exclusively cosmetic. Patients are bothered by their appearance and would like them removed. We do not feel that this falls within the stipulations of the bill. Also, removal of nevi that do not display malignant characteristics would be for cosmetic reasons. We do not believe these falls into the scope of the bill. The same applies for the removal of seborrheic keratosis unless they are so large that they are affecting vision.

We are also concerned that the removal of eyelid cysts usually require suture to close, as the removal often goes down to the orbicularis muscle. Leaving this open and not closing the skin would increase the risk of infection and cause eyelid disfigurement. We do not believe the legislature intended for this procedure in the bill. They did not intend for large surgical defects in the lids to be made by virtue of limiting work with suture.

Thank you for allowing WAEPS to comment. We look forward to working with you and the DOH to make the rules for this bill and enact it in the way it was intended.

#### **4. Reports**

##### **4.1. Keren Yang, OD, Vice-Chair**

No updates at this time.

##### **4.2 Traci Drake, Executive Director Department of Health**

Ms. Drake gave an update on the upcoming legislative meetings and reorganization of the office of credentialing joining the office of health professions.

##### **4.3 Kristina Bell, Program Manager – Department of Health**

The Health Equity rule, substance use disorder rule and the continuing education rule are in the last stage of the CR103 and will hopefully be implemented in the next month.

#### **5. Credentialing Overview Presentation – Hyon Yi, Deputy Credentialing Managers, Department of Health**



Mr. Yi gave an overview of the credentialing process within the Department of Health and gave an update on the current credentialing for Optometry.

**6. COPE Liaison Presentation – Brett Bence, Chair, Council on Optometric Practitioner Education (COPE)**

Mr. Bence provided an overview to the Board and asked if they would like to have a member of COPE serve as a liaison to the Board. The board rescinded their motion to have an official liaison and just have a member of COPE bring information forward if needed.

**7. Legislative Update – SSB 5389 Scope of Optometry – sub-committee Vice-Chair, Melissa Dacumos, OD**

The sub-committee provided an update and discussed SSB 5389. The bill amends RCW 18.53.010 expanding the optometrist scope of practice to include advanced procedures an optometrist may perform with a license endorsement. The bill also adds drug prescribing and administering rights. The sub-committee will be presenting at the Pharmacy Commission meeting this month. The Board discussed interested parties' involvement at future sub-committee meetings and decided that the public will be invited intermittently to the meetings.

**8. Legislation Update HB1724 – Increasing the trained behavioral health workforce – Brandon Williams, Project Manager, Department of Health**

A disciplining authority must waive education, training, experience, and exam requirements for applicants who have been credentialed in another state or states with substantially equivalent standards for at least two years immediately preceding their application with no interruption in licensure lasting longer than 90 days. The Board motioned, seconded and approved to open rules to move the JP exam as a CEU as well as have a Ms. Kaur and Ms. Bell work with Mr. Williams team to review the state equivalencies.

**9. Administrative Items**

1. The board motioned, seconded and approved the by laws with Ms. Rollingers proposed changes.
2. The Board nominated Melissa Dacumos as Chair and Riya Paranthan as Vice- Chair, nominations were motioned, seconded, and approved.
3. ARBO Meeting 2024 is to take place June 16<sup>th</sup>- 18<sup>th</sup> in Nashville, TN. The Board will support sending Ms. Chung, Ms. Dacumos, Program Manager and Executive Director.

**10. HELMS Update – Kristina Bell, Program Manager**



HELMS, the new licensing system was supposed to start April of 2024, but the start date will be pushed back at this point.

**11. Agenda-building**

The board reviewed board business and discuss priority items for the March 1, 2024, agenda.

**Adjournment of Open Session**

*Motion to adjourn the meeting at 10:58 a.m., seconded, passed unanimously.*

**Submitted by:**

Kristina Bell, Program Manager  
Board of Optometry

**Approved by:**

Melissa Dacumos, Chair  
Board of Optometry

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