

**WEST VIRGINIA
SECRETARY OF STATE**

KEN HECHLER

ADMINISTRATIVE LAW DIVISION

Form #5

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FILED
Nov 27 10 30 AM '00
OFFICE OF WEST VIRGINIA
SECRETARY OF STATE

**NOTICE OF AGENCY ADOPTION OF A PROCEDURAL OR INTERPRETIVE RULE
OR A LEGISLATIVE RULE EXEMPT FROM LEGISLATIVE REVIEW**

AGENCY: WEST VIRGINIA BOARD OF OPTOMETRY TITLE NUMBER: 14

CITE AUTHORITY: HB 207

RULE TYPE: PROCEDURAL INTERPRETIVE _____

EXEMPT LEGISLATIVE RULE HB 207
CITE STATUTE(S) GRANTING EXEMPTION FROM LEGISLATIVE REVIEW

AMENDMENT TO AN EXISTING RULE: YES____, NO

IF YES, SERIES NUMBER OF RULE BEING AMENDED: _____

TITLE OF RULE BEING AMENDED: _____

IF NO, SERIES NUMBER OF NEW RULE BEING ADOPTED: 4

TITLE OF RULE BEING ADOPTED: DISCIPLINARY & COMPLAINT PROCEDURES
FOR OPTOMETRISTS

THE ABOVE RULE IS HEREBY ADOPTED AND FILED WITH THE SECRETARY OF STATE. THE
EFFECTIVE DATE OF THIS RULE IS Dec. 28, 2000

E. Clifton Hays, O.D.

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(Plus all the volunteer
help we can get)

Memo

Date: November 20, 2000
Subject: HB 207

HB 207, passed on November 14, 2000, during a special session of the Legislature, was signed into law on November 18, 2000 by the Governor. This bill allows all Boards that are licensed under Chapter 30 of the West Virginia Code to change to procedural and final file rules that had originally been filed as legislative. This applies to rules that relate **ONLY** to complaint procedures or contested case hearing procedures.

The Boards must final file their rules no later than January 31, 2001.

**TITLE 14
PROCEDURAL RULE
BOARD OF OPTOMETRY
SERIES 4
DISCIPLINARY AND COMPLAINT PROCEDURES FOR OPTOMETRISTS**

FILED

Nov 27 10 30 AM '00

OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL
SECRETARY OF STATE

§14-4-1. General.

1.1. Scope. -- This rule specifies a procedure for the investigation and resolution of complaints against optometrists.

1.2. Authority. -- W. Va. Code §§30-8-1 et seq. and 30-1-1 et seq.

1.3. Filing Date. --

1.4. Effective Date. --

§14-4-2. Application.

This rule applies to all licensed optometrists.

§14-4-3. Definitions.

The following words and phrases as used in this rule have the following meanings, unless the context otherwise requires:

3.1 "Applicant" means any person making application for an original or renewal license or a temporary permit pursuant to W. Va. Code §30-8-1 et seq.

3.2. "Board" means the West Virginia Board of Optometry.

3.3. "License" means a license issued by the Board pursuant to W. Va. Code §30-8-1 et seq.

3.4. "Optometrist" means a person who practices optometry as defined in W. Va. Code §30-8-2.

3.5. "Ethics investigator" means a person licensed to practice optometry in this state, and who is hired by the Board for the purpose of reviewing complaints against optometrists.

§14-4-4. Causes for Denial, Probation, Limitation, Discipline, Suspension or Revocation of Licenses of Optometrists.

The Board may deny an application for license, place a licensee on probation, limit or restrict a license, suspend a license or revoke any license issued by the Board, upon satisfactory proof that a licensee has been convicted of a felony or is, in his or her professional capacity, engaged in conduct, practices or acts constituting professional

negligence or a willful departure from accepted standards of professional conduct in violation of W. Va. Code §30-8-1 et seq. or the rules of the Board.

§ 14-4-5. Disposition of Complaints.

5.1. Any person, firm, corporation, member of the Board, or public officer may make a complaint to the Board which charges an optometrist with a violation of W. Va. Code §30-8-1 et seq. or of the rules of the Board. The Board may provide a form for that purpose, but a complaint may be filed in any written form. In addition to describing the alleged violation which prompted the complaint, the complaint should contain the following:

5.1.1. The name and address of the optometrist against whom the complaint is lodged;

5.1.2. The date of care;

5.1.3. The name of any person who may have treated the patient after the alleged incident; and,

5.1.4. The name of any health care institution in which the patient was an inpatient or outpatient after or during the alleged incident.

5.2. A complaint against an optometrist shall allege that such person has been convicted of a felony or is, in his or her professional capacity, engaging in conduct, practices or acts constituting professional negligence or a willful departure from accepted standards of professional conduct in violation of W. Va. Code §30-8-1 et seq. or the rules of the Board.

5.3. Complainants are immune from liability for the allegations contained in their complaints filed with the Board unless the complaint is filed in bad faith or for a malicious purpose.

5.4. The Board shall maintain a complaint log which records the receipt of each complaint, its nature and its disposition.

5.5. The Board shall maintain a separate file on each complaint received, and each file shall have a number assigned to it.

5.6. Upon receipt of a complaint, the Board shall issue one of the following acknowledgments to the complainant:

5.6.1. That the matter will be reviewed by the Board;

5.6.2. That the complaint is outside the jurisdiction of the Board, with suggestions as to how the complainant might best obtain a resolution of his or her problem; or,

5.6.3. That more information will be required in order to adequately review the individual complaint.

5.7. The Board shall send a copy of the complaint, including any supporting documentation, by certified mail to the licensee or applicant in question for his or her written comment, and he or she shall submit a written response to the Board within thirty (30) days of the date of such correspondence, or waive the right to do so.

5.8. Requests for comment on complaints sent to licensees, or applicants shall be considered properly served when sent to their last known address. It is the responsibility of the licensee or applicants to keep the Board informed of his or her current address.

5.9. Upon receipt of a licensee's or applicant's comments in response to a complaint, the Board shall promptly send a copy of the same, including any supporting documentation, to the complainant.

5.10. After receipt and review of a complaint, unless the complaint is determined to fall within the provisions of subdivision 5.6.2 of this rule, the Board shall cause to be conducted any reasonable inquiry or investigation it considers necessary to determine the truth and the validity of the allegations set forth in the complaint. The review of complaints and any view or investigation thereof may, at the discretion of the Board, be assigned to a committee of the Board.

5.11. At any point in its investigation of a complaint the Board may, at its discretion, assign the matter to an ethics investigator for review and investigation.

5.12. Upon receipt of a complaint the ethics investigator shall, within sixty (60) days, review and investigate the same and provide the Board with a report. The report shall contain a statement of the allegations, a statement of facts, and an analysis of the complaint including a description of the care provided, the records reviewed and a statement of the ethics investigator's findings and recommendations. The ethics investigator shall, upon request, be afforded an opportunity to have an investigation interview with the licensee, or applicant in question or other involved parties, a report of which shall be placed in the investigation file.

5.13. To facilitate the disposition of a complaint, the Board or the committee may request any person to attend an informal conference, or to appear at a regular meeting of the Board, at any time prior to the Board entering any order with respect to the complaint. The Board or the committee shall give notice of the conference, which notice shall include a statement of issues to be informally discussed. Statements made at a conference may not be introduced at any subsequent hearing on the merits without the consent of all parties to the hearing. No prejudice shall attach for failure to attend a conference pursuant to a request.

5.14. The Board, its president, the investigating committee or chairperson may issue subpoenas and subpoenas duces tecum to complete the Board's investigation and to determine the truth or validity of complaints. The ethics investigator may request the Board or its president to issue a subpoena or subpoena duces tecum. Any such

request shall be accompanied by a brief statement specifying the necessity for the same.

5.15. At any point in the course of an investigation or inquiry into a complaint, the Board may determine that there is not and will not be sufficient evidence to warrant further proceedings, or that the complaint fails to allege misconduct for which an optometrist may be sanctioned by the Board: Provided, that in the event the review and investigation of a complaint is assigned to the committee or an ethics investigator, the committee or ethics investigator shall make their respective findings and recommendations to the Board prior to the Board dismissing the complaint.

§14-4-6. Contested Case Hearings.

6.1. The Board may refuse to renew a license or suspend a license if it determines there is probable cause to believe that the optometrist's conduct, practices or acts constitute an immediate danger to the public.

§14-4-7. Appeals.

7.1. Any applicant who has had his or her application for a license denied by order of the Board may appeal the order within thirty (30) days of that action in accordance with the contested case hearing procedures set forth in W. Va. Code §29A-6-1 et seq. and the rules of the Board: Provided, that the appeal shall not include cases in which the Board denies a license or certificate after an examination to test the knowledge or the ability of the applicant where the controversy concerns whether the examination was fair or whether the applicant passed the examination.