

OPIOID EDUCATION FOR OPTOMETRISTS CERTIFIED TO PRESCRIBE AND ADMINISTER PHARMACEUTICAL AGENTS AND RENEWALS SUBMITTED AFTER JULY 1, 2017

Section 9.1(a) of ABC-MAP* requires that all prescribers or dispensers, as defined in Section 3 of ABC-MAP, applying for licensure/certification complete at least 4 hours of Board-approved education consisting of 2 hours in pain management or the identification of addiction and 2 hours in the practices of prescribing or dispensing of opioids. Optometrists with certifications to prescribe and administer pharmaceutical agents for therapeutic purposes and for the treatment of certain types of glaucoma (license prefix OEG) or a certification to prescribe and administer pharmaceutical agents for therapeutic purposes (license prefix OET) fall within ABC-MAP's definition of prescribers or dispensers.

The required continuing education must be taken from a Board-approved continuing education provider. To ensure Board approval for Act 124, it should be clear from the title of the CE that the course is instructive on the subjects specified in Act 124; pain management, identification of addiction, and/or the practices of prescribing or dispensing opioids.

The Department is currently under contract to develop additional Act 124 qualifying continuing education courses more specific to optometrists. These courses expect to be available in early 2018. As stated above, the Board will currently accept any course on pain management, identification of addiction, and/or the practices of prescribing or dispensing opioids from any Board approved provider. A list of Board approved providers can be found in Section 23.86 of the Regulations.

[http://www.pacodeandbulletin.gov/Display/pacode?file=/secure/pacode/data/049/chapter23/s23.86.html&d=r
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Requirements for initial applicants and applicants for certification to prescribe and administer pharmaceutical agents for therapeutic purposes

Optometrist applicants seeking initial OEG or OET licensure certifications on or after July 1, 2017, must document, within one year from issuance of the OEG or OET, that they completed the 4 hours of education as part of: the applicant's optometric doctoral educational program; a Board-approved 100-hour course in the prescription and administration of pharmaceutical agents for therapeutic purposes authorized by Section 23.202(b) of the Board's regulations; or continuing education from an optometry continuing education provider listed in Section 23.86(a) of the Board's regulations. The 4 hours of Board-approved education needs to be completed only once.

Where the 4 hours of education is part of the optometric educational program, verification of completion from the program may be included within the *Verification of Graduation*. Where the education is completed as a part of a Board-approved 100-hour course in the prescription and administration of pharmaceutical agents for therapeutic purposes authorized by Section 23.202(b) of the Board's regulations, verification of completion from the program may be included within the *Verification of Completion of 100 Hour Course in Prescription and Administration of Pharmaceutical Agents for Therapeutic Purposes*. Where the education is completed as stand-alone opioid education, verification of completion from an optometry continuing education provider listed in Section 23.86(a) of the Board's regulations may be documented on the Verification of Opioid Education or on a Certificate of Completion that includes the name of the course, the specific number of hours in each of the required content areas and the date completed. The verification forms will be available on the Board's website at <http://www.dos.pa.gov/ProfessionalLicensing/BoardsCommissions/Optometry>

Renewals

In order for optometrists with OEG or OET license classifications to renew their licenses for the next renewal period, Section 9.1(a)(2) of ABC-MAP requires that they complete at least two hours of continuing education in pain management, the identification of addiction or the practices of prescribing or dispensing of opioids. The continuing education requirements of ABC-MAP will count towards the total number of continuing education credits required for renewal; however, they may not be applied toward the 6 hours required to maintain therapeutic certification. This continuing education must be taken from a Board-approved optometry continuing education provider listed in Section 23.86(a) of the Board's regulations and its completion attested to when applying for renewal.

*The Achieving Better Care by Monitoring All Prescriptions Program Act (ABC-MAP)(also known as Act 124 of 2016), 35 P.S. § 872.3, is available on the Legislature's website at:

<http://www.legis.state.pa.us/cfdocs/legis/li/uconsCheck.cfm?yr=2016&sessInd=0&act=124>.

The Optometric Practice and Licensure Act and the Board's regulations are available on the Board's website at:

<http://www.dos.pa.gov/ProfessionalLicensing/BoardsCommissions/Optomety>