

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2024 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
First Reader

House Bill 1292 (Delegate Stonko, *et al.*)
Health and Government Operations

Optometrists - Prescriptions for Glasses and Contact Lenses - Pupillary Distance
Measurement

This bill requires an optometrist, in each prescription for glasses or contact lenses provided to a patient, to include the patient's pupillary distance measurement at no additional cost to the patient.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: To the extent the State Board of Examiners in Optometry must alter or adopt regulations to implement the bill, the board can do so with existing resources. Otherwise, the bill has no effect on State operations or finances.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: Minimal.

Analysis

Current Law: The State Board of Examiners in Optometry is responsible for licensing individuals to practice optometry in the State, regulating the practice of optometry, investigating alleged violations of the Maryland Optometry Act, and taking disciplinary actions where warranted. The board comprises seven members: five licensed optometrists; and two consumers.

Under current law, a minimum optometric examination includes reviewing a patient's history, past prescriptions and specifications when available, visual analysis, ophthalmoscopy of internal eye, tonometry without anesthetic when indicated for a patient

over age 40, muscle balance examination, writing of lens formula and other prescription data when needed, as well as specific instructions for future care and subsequent progress evaluation when indicated. A licensed optometrist must maintain a through record of all testing, procedures, results, and case dispositions. A licensed optometrist must have on hand all instrumentation and equipment, in good working condition, required to carry out the procedures for a minimum examination.

Small Business Effect: To the extent a small business optometry practice charges for pupillary distance measurements, they will be unable to do so under the bill.

Additional Comments: Pupillary distance is the distance in millimeters between the center of one pupil to the center of the other. Having a correct pupillary distance measurement on a prescription ensures that a patient is looking through the correct spot in their lenses.

Additional Information

Recent Prior Introductions: Similar legislation has not been introduced within the last three years.

Designated Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Maryland Department of Health; Department of Legislative Services

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