

Board of Registration in Optometry
General Session Minutes
Meeting Held by Phone/Video Conference
DATE: December 17, 2025 TIME: 10:00 a.m.

A public meeting of the Massachusetts Board of Registration in Optometry (“the Board”) was held via Webex.

Board Members Present by Phone/Video:

Everett Sabree, OD
Rhonda Willinger, OD
Michael Hawley
Jeanette Sewell, OD
Julie Hiura, OD

DPH Staff Present by Phone/Video:

Samuel Leadholm, Board Counsel
Thomas Burke, Executive Director
Margaret McKenna, Board Staff

Board Members Not Present by Phone/Video:

None

Administrative Items:

Meeting called to order at 10:06 a.m. by Dr. Sabree.

- Roll Call vote for attendance

Board chair Dr. Sabree established a quorum by conducting a roll call of board members present: Jeanette Sewell, Everett Sabree, Julie Hiura, Rhonda Willinger and Michael Hawley. All members participated by video via Webex.

Board Business:

- Review of general session agenda: December 17, 2025

Counsel advised that the general session agenda be amended to remove notice of the M.G.L. c. 112 §65C session because the Board will not meet in closed session. **Dr. Sewell moved to accept the general session agenda as amended. Dr. Hiura seconded. The motion passed by roll call vote: Dr. Willinger – “yes”; Dr. Sabree – “yes”; Dr. Sewell – “yes”; Mr. Hawley– “abstain”; Dr. Hiura “yes”.**

- Review of general session minutes: November 19, 2025

Dr. Sewell moved to accept the general session minutes for November 19, 2025 as written. Dr. Willinger seconded. The motion passed by roll call vote: Dr. Willinger – “yes”; Dr. Sabree – “yes”; Dr. Sewell – “yes”; Mr. Hawley– “abstain”; Dr. Hiura “yes”.

- Executive director report
 - License renewal update
 - Amended requirements in M.G.L. c. 94C, s. 18(e) that govern safe and effective pain management in prescriber training courses
 - Massachusetts Society of Optometrists (MSO) pain management course

The director reported to the Board the number of completed and pending license renewal applications for the current renewal period. He provided board members a copy of the recent statutory amendment (M.G.L. c. 94C, s. 18(e)) that expands requirements for prescriber training courses and referred them to the Massachusetts Society of Optometrists (MSO) online posting of their prescriber training course for pain management that fulfills the amended requirements.

Discussion:

- New England College of Optometry (NECO) course proposal for optometrists to fulfill prescriber training requirement – VOTE

Following review of the NECO course proposal, Dr. Hiura moved to approve the course for Massachusetts optometrists to fulfill the prescriber training requirement pursuant to M.G.L c. 94C, s. 18(e) retroactive to December 9, 2025. Dr. Sewell seconded. The motion passed by roll call vote: Dr. Willinger – “yes”; Dr. Sabree – “yes”; Dr. Sewell – “yes”; Mr. Hawley– “abstain”; Dr. Hiura “yes”.

Further, the Board directed staff to post an updated list of approved pain management courses on the board website and distribute the information to all licensed optometrists and continuing education entities.

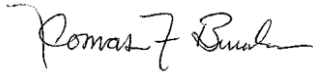
- Optometric procedures within the optometry scope of practice
 - Lacrifill (hyaluronic-acid canalicular filler) placement
 - Canalicular irrigation for diagnostic or therapeutic purposes
 - Insertion of punctal plugs for occlusion of the lacrimal drainage system.
 - Dilation of puncta

After brief discussion, board members agreed that the above-referenced procedures are within the optometrist’s scope of practice and directed staff to respond to the licensee. The Board cannot advise on billing procedures and protocols.

Adjourn:

At 10:44 a.m., Dr. Hiura moved to adjourn the general session meeting. Dr. Willinger seconded. The motion passed on a roll call vote: Dr. Willinger – “yes”; Dr. Sabree – “yes”; Dr. Sewell – “yes”; Dr. Hiura – “yes”; Michael Hawley “yes”.

Respectfully submitted,



Thomas F. Burke, Executive Director

Documents used in the public session meeting:

- General session agenda for December 18, 2025
- General session minutes for November 19, 2025
- M.G.L. c. 94C, s. 18(e)
- Massachusetts Society of Optometrists (MSO) pain management and prescriber training announcement.
- Course proposal offered by the New England College of Optometry (NECO) to fulfill mandatory prescriber training for optometrists.
- Licensee query on optometric procedures that fall within the optometrist’s scope of practice.