

Mississippi State Board of Optometry 2023 - 2027

Comprehensive Mission Statement

The Mission of the Mississippi State Board of Optometry is to appropriately license and renew licenses of Optometrists in the State and to regulate the practice of Optometry by concentrating on enforcing the Practice Act and the Rules and Regulations to protect the citizens of Mississippi. A new set of complete Rules and Regulations were filed with the Office of Secretary of State on July 1, 2021.

Philosophy

The Mississippi State Board of Optometry is committed to the continued safeguarding of the practice of Optometry in the State of Mississippi. The Mississippi State Board is charged with ensuring that the licensed optometrists maintain the highest standards of professionalism.

Relevant Statewide Goals and Benchmarks

Statewide Goal #1: To protect Mississippians from risks to public health and to provide them with the health-related information and access to quality healthcare necessary to increase the length and quality of their lives.

After having received legislative authority in 2020 to expand the Optometric scope of practice in Mississippi to include Advanced Ophthalmic Surgical Procedures, the Board designed the most thorough credentialing process for Primary Eyecare Procedures in the country. Mississippi is the 5th state in the nation to have accomplished this and has implemented that credentialing process more quickly and efficiently than any other state in the Nation.

Relevant Benchmarks #1.:

- Number of licensed optometrists in the State.
- Number of complaints sent to the Board regarding optometrist.

Overview of the Agency 5-Year Strategic Plan:

The Mississippi State Board of Optometry will continue to ensure the integrity of optometrists with sustained oversight and regulation. The Board will issue licenses after ensuring that the applicant meets the Mississippi

standards for issuing new licenses or that the applicant and is in good standing in other jurisdictions. It will continue to research the most proficient approach to achieve this.

The Board requested and received statutory authority to conduct background checks on new Optometry applicants. To implement this process, the Board Director has obtained an ORI # from the Federal Bureau of Investigation, purchased a scanner and necessary software and had a VPN established by ITS to communicate with the Department of Public Safety.

Applicants for licensure in the State are required to pass a Rules and Regulations examination which has recently been updated to reflect the new Rules. The Board will continue to research the most effective and efficient method to offer this exam. It is currently offered twice a year, on the second Saturday of January and July per Section §73-19-19.

The Board will continue to investigate complaints brought against optometrists fully and completely and take disciplinary action as needed to maintain the integrity of the profession and to safeguard public health. The procedure for these investigations is implemented according to Section §73-19-33.

Agency's External/Internal Assessment

- The number of optometrists seeking licensure may increase or decrease.
- The number of optometrists currently licensed may decrease.
- The number of complaints or fines may increase, affecting the time needed to investigate these complaints.
- There may be changes in the scope of practice or education requirements.

The Mississippi State Board of Optometry is made up of five licensed Optometrists representing each congressional district, one serving as President, one as Secretary, and three members. The Board meets a minimum of four times a year to conduct necessary business. The Board may call additional meetings at such times and places as the Board shall determine, said meetings shall not exceed 10 meeting days annually, pursuant to 73-10-9. Board members work to correct any problems or deficiencies that impair or prohibit them from performing the duties entrusted to them by the Governor, their peers and the citizens of the State of Mississippi.

The Board also has a web site to provide the public with easy access to copies of the Rules and Regulations, complaint forms, applications for licensure, a list of the names and phone numbers of the current members on the Board, and a searchable database for Optometric License verification. The State Board of Optometry now offers license renewal on-line.

The Mississippi State Board of Optometry has a legal service contract with the Attorney General's office and has employed Beverly Limbaugh, Executive Director, for over twenty years.

Agency Goals, Objectives, Strategies and Measures by Program for FY 2025 through FY 2027:

FY 2025-2027

Program 1: Licensure and Registration

GOAL A: § 73-19-9. Officers and members of board shall make such rules and regulations as may be necessary to carry out the provisions of this chapter; provided, however, that it shall require the concurrence of a majority of the members of the board to grant or revoke a license.

OBJECTIVE A.1: Effectively license and regulate the optometrists in the State of Mississippi for adherence to the laws and regulations. Included in the PEP certification are new outcomes date reporting requirements due upon renewal every year.

Outcome: Reduced complaints (New)

Outcome: Reduced number of fines (New)

STRATEGY A.1.1: Give written exam to new applicants

Output: Number of exams administered

Efficiency: Cost per applicant to compile and give exam (New)

STRATEGY A.1.2: License new applicants adhering the laws and regulations.

Output: Number of licenses

Output: Number of applicants reviewed

Efficiency: Number of applications approved (percentage)