



Mississippi State Board of Optometry 2028 – 2032

Comprehensive Mission Statement

The Mississippi State Board of Optometry's mission is to regulate the practice of optometry, namely to:

- protect the public from risks to public health and safety;
- ensure sufficient education and professional competence of new applicants;
- safeguard continuation of practice through renewal procedures requiring continuing education of therapeutic subjects directly related to optometry;
- provide the public with health-related information and access to quality healthcare necessary to increase the length and quality of life; and
- ensure the integrity of the practice of optometry.

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 while using the least restrictive regulation necessary to protect consumers from present, significant and substantiated harms that threaten public health and safety.

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 optometrists.

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 number 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. The Board continues to vet applicants through the application process and obtains additional information from the court of jurisdiction as required. Should an issue arise, as cited in Miss. Code Ann. § 73-19-23 (2), that may affect the health, welfare and safety of the public, a Board hearing will be held to provide the applicant with the opportunity to address the charges utilizing the protocol established by the Board.

Rule revisions were cleared by the Occupational Licensing Review Board and implemented February 28, 2026, which will provide clearer interpretation of the statute while providing the least restrictive regulation necessary to protect consumers from present, significant and substantiated harms that threaten public health and safety while increasing economic opportunities for all of its citizens.

Applicants for licensure in the State are required to pass a jurisprudence examination which includes statutory requirements for the practice of optometry and subsequent rules and regulations. The names are withheld until which time the applicant has taken and passed the examination and only revealed to the Board members during the interviews conducted after meeting all requirements for licensure.

The Board will move forward in its research to find the most effective and efficient method to offer this exam. It is currently offered twice a year, on the second Saturdays 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 and the investigative protocol adopted in FY26. The Board will implement additional

random inspections to ensure compliance with the statute and the rules and regulations.

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 comprised of five (5) licensed Optometrists representing each congressional district, one (1) serving as President, one (1) as Secretary, and three (3) members. The Board meets a minimum of four (4) 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 ten (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 website 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 online.

The Mississippi State Board of Optometry has a legal service contract with the Attorney General's office. The Board is authorized to appoint an executive director for a term of four (4) years with the advice and consent of the Senate, and consistent with the provisions of Section 7-1-35, Mississippi Code of 1972.

Agency Goals, Objectives, Strategies and Measures by Program for FY 2028 through FY 2032

FY 2028-2032

Program 1: Licensure and Registration

GOAL A: § 73-19-9. Officers and members of the 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 data reporting requirements due upon renewal every year.

Outcome: Reduced complaints

Outcome: Reduced number of fines

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 to the laws and regulations.

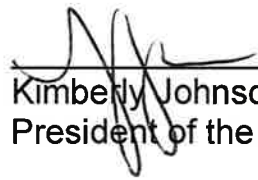
Output: Number of licenses

Output: Number of applicants reviewed

Efficiency: Number of applications approved (percentage)

The Mississippi State Board of Optometry continues to provide the least restrictive measures to ensure public health and safety and will continue to do so going forward.

Respectfully,



Kimberly Johnson Ragan, O.D.
President of the Board



Yvonne Laird
Executive Director