

NC STATE BOARD OF OPTICIANS

Issued April 22, 2020

Extension of Registrations Set to Expire June 30, 2020

Executive Summary

On April 22, 2020, the North Carolina State Board of Opticians (the "Board") met and evaluated Board-promulgated rules that may be waived to ease regulatory burden during the COVID-19 pandemic. As such, **the Board resolved that it will extend, until August 31, 2020, the deadlines for the submission of registrations for Optical Places of Business, Opticians-in-Charge, Training Establishments, and Apprentices ("Trainees") to the Board, pursuant to 21 NCAC 40 .0202, 21 NCAC 40 .0314 and 21 NCAC 40 .0321.** Any such registrations due to be filed with the Board from April 1 to August 31 will be deemed timely filed if received by the Board before the close of business on August 31, 2020.

Discussion

Emergency situations created by natural disasters, or public-health-related circumstances may necessitate State or local governments to issue Shelter-in-Place or Stay-at-Home Orders; seasonal storms (ice/snow, and violent rainstorms, or hurricanes) or the COVID-19 pandemic are examples of situations that could occur.

During these times, the Board staff monitors communications from the Office of the Governor, State Human Resources, State Department of Health and Human Services, and various other State entities, to balance the economic well-being of North Carolinians with the need to regulate the practice of opticianry for the protection of consumer's health, safety and welfare. In balancing these interests, the Board may waive, by use of its discretionary authority via 21 NCAC 40 .0113 *Waiver*, Board-promulgated rules to ease regulatory burdens.

The Board understands that, during the current COVID-19 pandemic, Businesses, Opticians-in-Charge, Training Establishments and Trainees may be unable – through no fault of their own - to complete the paperwork necessary for the new (FY2021) fiscal year's registrations to be complete by June 30, while complying with social distancing and State/local Orders regarding business operations.