

ALABAMA BOARD OF OPTOMETRY
April 1, 2020
Teleconference as Allowed by Governor's Proclamation of March 18, 2020

Members present:

Bill Tillman, O.D.	Norman Johnson, O.D.
Doug Clark, O.D.	Tim Nichols, O.D.
Ashley Williams, O.D.	Rob Svensen, O.D.

Members absent:

Mazen Sahawneh, O.D.

Others present:

Fred Wallace, O.D., Executive Director
Three members of the public joined the teleconference

The Alabama Board of Optometry is statutorily created by the Alabama legislature and delegated with the authority to regulate the optometry profession in the interest of protecting the health, safety, and welfare of the public. With necessary oversight by the government, the board enforces standards and criteria set forth in statute and adds specificity through the promulgation of regulations. An administrative regulatory system provides consumers with an assurance of the qualifications of licensees along with a means of enforcement for the benefit of the public.

The board met via teleconference at 1:07 PM on April 1, 2020, as allowed by Governor Ivey's proclamation of March 18, 2020. Prior notice of this special meeting was given in accordance with the Alabama Open Meetings Act. All persons participating in the meeting could hear one another at the same time. President Tillman called roll, noted that all members were present, and called the special meeting of the Alabama Board of Optometry to order. He reminded the board members that all deliberations or actions taken during the meeting would be limited to matters within the board's statutory authority necessary to respond to COVID-19 or necessary to perform essential minimum functions of the board.

A discussion was held concerning recent recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), and mandates from the Governor and the State Health Office. A motion to publish an advisory for safe practice was made by Dr. Clark, seconded by Dr. Johnson. President Tillman proceeded with a roll call vote and received unanimous approval of the motion by those present. The Executive Director was instructed to publish the advisory on the board's website.

A discussion was held concerning the previously scheduled Annual Meeting for Nominees to be presented to the governor for appointment to the board. A motion to postpone the meeting until a satisfactory date could be established was made by Dr. Nichols, seconded by Dr. Clark. President Tillman proceeded with a roll call vote and received unanimous approval of the motion by those present. The Executive Director was instructed to immediately notify all licensees of this decision by email.

A discussion was held concerning the present requirement allowing three (3) "distance based" (online) hours continuing education (CE) per annual license renewal period. Realizing that COVID-19 has already caused cancellation of many continuing education events, a motion was made by Dr. Svensen, and seconded by Dr. Nichols to temporarily suspend the three (3) hour online CE limit and allow all CE hours for the upcoming license renewal period (10/1/2020 through 12/31/2020) to be earned online. Non-therapeutic licensed doctors must complete a minimum of fourteen (14) hours per renewal, and therapeutic licensed doctors must complete a minimum of twenty (20) hours (at least ten (10) in diagnosis and treatment of diseases of the eye and adjacent structures, and no more than three (3) in practice management). President Tillman proceeded with a roll call vote and received unanimous approval of the motion. The Executive Director was instructed to immediately notify all licensees of this decision by email.

President Tillman advised the Executive Director to pursue the possibility of administering the Written Examination for Licensure (scheduled for July 18, 2020) online.

President Tillman reminded the Executive Director that, per Governor Ivey's proclamation, a summary recounting these deliberations must be posted on the board's website within twelve (12) hours.

There being no further business the special meeting was adjourned at 1:32 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Fred Wallace, O. D.
Executive Director

Bill Tillman, O.D.
President