



# South Carolina Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation



## Board of Examiners in Optometry

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### Board of Examiners in Optometry Recommendation: COVID-19

The South Carolina Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation is working closely with state officials regarding the recent travel restrictions and state closures. At this time the SC Board of Examiners in Optometry is operating within normal business hours with all non-essential meetings being cancelled through March 31, 2020. If any member of the public or licensee requires assistance, they are encouraged to contact the Board office at 803-896-4679 or email to [contact.optometry@llr.sc.gov](mailto:contact.optometry@llr.sc.gov).

The Board will be reviewing the effects of cancelled continuing education courses and renewals at the next scheduled Board Meeting on May 6, 2020. Information regarding the Board's decision will be posted following the meeting.

While the official position for South Carolina is the risk of COVID-19 remains low, like other healthcare professions, optometrists and staff are at higher risk of transmission. It is the recommendation of the Board that licensees assist in reducing the risk of patient and staff exposure to COVID-19. As an integral part of the medical community, licensees are encouraged to reschedule all non-emergent care through March 31, 2020. Licensees are encouraged to assess staffing and inventory so as to be properly staffed and allow access to necessary and emergency optometric services to the citizens of South Carolina and assist in reducing the demand on hospitals and ERs.

The Board supports continued optometric services through any method of practice within your scope of practice that complies with the applicable standard of care, including telehealth for the period of State of Emergency as declared by the Governor of the State of South Carolina. If you elect to utilize telehealth, the Board suggests that you review the AOA's recommendations.

The recommendations outlined above from the Board are recommendations only and not a mandate. Licensees and optometric offices maintain responsibility for appointment management, staffing and patient safety. For this reason, the Board, is urging licensees to review the most current recommendations from [SC Department of Health and Environmental Control \(DHEC\) Guidance for Healthcare Facilities](#) and adhere to the [CDC Guidelines for Infection Control](#).

The Board will continue to monitor the situation and will communicate updates via email and Board website. Over the next few weeks, the Board encourages both the public and licensees to remain calm and take appropriate action to decrease the transmission of COVID-19.

Sincerely,

South Carolina Board of Examiners in Optometry