

To: Pennsylvania Licensed Optometrists

From: Pennsylvania State Board of Optometry

Re: Board Certification Position – May 2015

This memo is intended to replace the Pennsylvania State Board of Optometry (Board) memo dated December 2009 as it relates to the issue of board certification and your Pennsylvania licensure.

As stated in the Board's prior memo, the American Optometric Association (AOA) House of Delegates voted in 2009 to create the American Board of Optometry (ABO) for the purpose of developing "a process for board certification and maintenance of certification as a means of demonstrating ongoing clinical competence." In addition, a subsequent Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was entered into by the American Academy of Optometry (AAO), the Association of Schools and Colleges of Optometry (ASCO), and the American Optometric Student Association (AOSA). While initially part of the core group, the American Regulatory Boards of Optometry (ARBO), which represents the collective interests of the nation's regulatory boards, declined to sign the MOU and is no longer participating in the governance of ABO. Moreover, ARBO withdrew its support of the AOA/ABO board certification proposal.

Since the Board's original memo, the National Board of Examiners in Optometry (NBEO) has also introduced a board certification program. Therefore, the Board determined that an update was necessary.

While the Board is not issuing a rule or formal policy regarding the board certification process, the Board provides the following information on this issue:

- Neither the ABO nor the NBEO or any other entity other than the Board can or will determine what type of continuing education (CE) credits and how many CE credits will be required for maintaining licensure.
- ABO, NBEO, and other similar types of board certifications will not have any bearing or impact on the licensure process in Pennsylvania.
- The Board will continue to verify to any appropriate entity (including third party payers, managed care organizations, and government agencies) the current status of licenses, scope of prescriptive authority, maintenance of competency, and other similar practice issues.