

**SENATE . . . . . No.**

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**The Commonwealth of Massachusetts**

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PRESENTED BY:

***Sal N. DiDomenico***

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*To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in General Court assembled:*

The undersigned legislators and/or citizens respectfully petition for the adoption of the accompanying bill:

An Act ensuring consumer choice and equal access to eye care.

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PETITION OF:

NAME:

*Sal N. DiDomenico*

DISTRICT/ADDRESS:

*Middlesex and Suffolk*

**SENATE . . . . . No.**

[Pin Slip]

**The Commonwealth of Massachusetts**

**In the One Hundred and Ninety-First General Court  
(2019-2020)**

An Act ensuring consumer choice and equal access to eye care.

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:*

1 SECTION 1. Chapter 112 of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2016 Official Edition,  
2 is hereby amended by striking out section 66, and inserting in place thereof the following  
3 section:-

4 Section 66. As used in this chapter, “practice of optometry” shall mean the diagnosis,  
5 prevention, correction, management or treatment of optical deficiencies, optical deformities,  
6 visual anomalies, muscular anomalies, ocular diseases and ocular abnormalities of the human eye  
7 and adjacent tissue, including removal of superficial foreign bodies and misaligned eyelashes, by  
8 utilization of pharmaceutical agents, by the prescription, adaption and application of ophthalmic  
9 lenses, devices containing lenses, prisms, contact lenses, orthoptics, vision therapy, prosthetic  
10 devices and other optical aids and the utilization of corrective procedures to preserve, restore or  
11 improve vision, consistent with sections 66A, 66B and 66C.

12 SECTION 2. Section 66B of said chapter 112, as so appearing, is hereby amended by  
13 striking out, in line 31, the following words:- , except glaucoma.

14 SECTION 3. Said chapter 112 is hereby further amended by inserting after section 66B  
15 the following section:-

16 Section 66C. (a) A registered optometrist who is qualified by an examination for practice  
17 under section 68, certified under section 68C and registered to issue written prescriptions  
18 pursuant to subsection (h) of section 7 of chapter 94C, may: (i) use and prescribe topical and oral  
19 therapeutic pharmaceutical agents, as defined in section 66B, that are used in the practice of  
20 optometry, including those placed in schedules III, IV, V and VI pursuant to section 2 of said  
21 chapter 94C, for the purpose of diagnosing, preventing, correcting, managing or treating  
22 glaucoma and other ocular abnormalities of the human eye and adjacent tissue; and (ii) prescribe  
23 all necessary eye-related medications, including oral anti-infective medications; provided,  
24 however, that a registered optometrist shall not use or prescribe: (1) therapeutic pharmaceutical  
25 agents for the treatment of systemic diseases; (2) invasive surgical procedures; (3)  
26 pharmaceutical agents administered by subdermal injection, intramuscular injection, intravenous  
27 injection, subcutaneous injection, intraocular injection or retrobulbar injection; or (4) an opioid  
28 substance or drug product.

29 (b) If an optometrist, while examining or treating a patient with the aid of a diagnostic or  
30 therapeutic pharmaceutical agent and exercising professional judgment and the degree of  
31 expertise, care and knowledge ordinarily possessed and exercised by optometrists under like  
32 circumstances, encounters a sign of a previously unevaluated disease that would require  
33 treatment not included in the scope of the practice of optometry, the optometrist shall refer the  
34 patient to a licensed physician or other qualified health care practitioner.

35 (c) If an optometrist diagnoses a patient with congenital glaucoma or if, during the course  
36 of examining, managing or treating a patient with glaucoma, the optometrist determines that  
37 surgical treatment is indicated, the optometrist shall refer the patient to a qualified health care  
38 provider for treatment.

39 (d) An optometrist licensed under this chapter shall participate in any relevant state or  
40 federal report or data collection effort relative to patient safety and medical error reduction  
41 coordinated by the Betsy Lehman center for patient safety and medical error reduction  
42 established in section 15 of chapter 12C.

43 SECTION 4. Said chapter 112 is hereby further amended by inserting after section 68B  
44 the following section:-

45 Section 68C. (a) The board of registration in optometry shall administer an examination  
46 to permit the use and prescription of therapeutic pharmaceutical agents as authorized in section  
47 66C. The examination shall: (i) be held in conjunction with examinations provided for in  
48 sections 68, 68A and 68B; and (ii) include any portion of the examination administered by the  
49 National Board of Examiners in Optometry or other appropriate examination covering the  
50 subject matter of therapeutic pharmaceutical agents as authorized in said section 66C. The board  
51 may administer a single examination to measure the qualifications necessary under said sections  
52 68, 68A, 68B and this section. The board shall qualify optometrists to use and prescribe  
53 therapeutic pharmaceutical agents in accordance with said sections 68, 68A, 68B and this  
54 section.

55 (b) Examination for the use and prescription of therapeutic pharmaceutical agents placed  
56 in schedules III, IV, V and VI under section 2 of chapter 94C and defined in section 66C shall,

57 upon application, be open to an optometrist registered under section 68, 68A or 68B and to any  
58 person who meets the qualifications for examination under said sections 68, 68A and 68B. An  
59 applicant registered as an optometrist under said section 68, 68A or 68B shall: (i) be registered  
60 pursuant to paragraph (h) of section 7 to use or prescribe pharmaceutical agents for the purpose  
61 of diagnosing or treating glaucoma and other ocular abnormalities of the human eye and adjacent  
62 tissue; and (ii) furnish to the board of registration in optometry evidence of the satisfactory  
63 completion of 40 hours of didactic education and 20 hours of supervised clinical education  
64 relating to the use and prescription of therapeutic pharmaceutical agents under section 66C;  
65 provided, however, that such education shall: (1) be administered by the Massachusetts Society  
66 of Optometrists, Inc.; (2) be accredited by a college of optometry or medicine; and (3) meet the  
67 guidelines and requirements of the board of registration in optometry. The board of registration  
68 in optometry shall provide to each successful applicant a certificate of qualification in the use  
69 and prescription of all therapeutic pharmaceutical agents as authorized under said section 66C  
70 and shall forward to the department of public health notice of such certification for each  
71 successful applicant.

72 (c) An optometrist licensed in another jurisdiction shall be deemed an applicant under  
73 this section by the board of registration in optometry. An optometrist licensed in another  
74 jurisdiction may submit evidence to the board of registration in optometry of practice equivalent  
75 to that required in section 68, 68A or 68B and the board, in its discretion, may accept the  
76 evidence in order to satisfy any of the requirements of this section. An optometrist in another  
77 jurisdiction licensed to utilize and prescribe therapeutic pharmaceutical agents for treating  
78 glaucoma and other ocular abnormalities of the human eye and adjacent tissue may submit  
79 evidence to the board of registration in optometry of equivalent didactic and supervised clinical

80 education, and the board, in its discretion, may accept the evidence in order to satisfy any of the  
81 requirements of this section.

82 (d) A licensed optometrist who has completed a postgraduate residency program  
83 approved by the Accreditation Council on Optometric Education of the American Optometric  
84 Association may submit an affidavit to the board of registration in optometry from the licensed  
85 optometrist's residency supervisor or the director of residencies at the affiliated college of  
86 optometry attesting that the optometrist has completed an equivalent level of instruction and  
87 supervision and the board, in its discretion, may accept the evidence in order to satisfy any of the  
88 requirements of this section.

89 (e) As a condition of license renewal, an optometrist licensed under this section shall  
90 submit to the board of registration in optometry evidence attesting to the completion of 3 hours  
91 of continuing education specific to glaucoma and the board, in its discretion, may accept the  
92 evidence to satisfy this condition for license renewal.

93 SECTION 5. The department shall designate hospitals pursuant to section 51M of chapter  
94 111 of the General Laws not later than 180 days after the effective date of this act.

95 SECTION 6. The department shall establish protocols pursuant to section 51N of chapter  
96 111 of the General Laws not later than 90 days after the effective date of this act. SECTION 202.  
97 The department shall establish the data oversight process pursuant to section 51O of chapter 111  
98 of the General Laws not later than 180 days after the effective date of this act. SECTION 203.  
99 Section 66C of chapter 112 of the General Laws shall apply to registered optometrists who are  
100 qualified by an examination for practice under section 68 of said chapter 112 after January 1,  
101 2013.

102           SECTION 7. An applicant for examination to permit the use and prescription of  
103 therapeutic agents pursuant to section 68C of chapter 112 of the General Laws who presents  
104 satisfactory evidence of graduation from a school or college of optometry approved by the board  
105 after January 1, 2013 shall be deemed to have satisfied sections 68 to 68B, inclusive, of said  
106 chapter 112.

107           SECTION 8. Subsection (d) of section 68C of chapter 112 of the General Laws shall  
108 apply to licensed optometrists who have completed a postgraduate residency program approved  
109 by the Accreditation Council on Optometric Education of the American Optometric Association  
110 after July 31, 1997.