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HOUSE BILL NO. 564

Offered January 13, 2016

Prefiled January 11, 2016

A BILL to amend and reenact § 54.1-3219 of the Code of Virginia, relating to optometrists; continuing education requirements.

Patron—Robinson

Referred to Committee on Health, Welfare and Institutions

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That § 54.1-3219 of the Code of Virginia is amended and reenacted as follows:

§ 54.1-3219. Continuing education.

A. As a prerequisite to renewal of a license or reinstatement of a license, each optometrist shall be required to ~~take~~ ~~annual~~ ~~courses~~ *complete 20 hours of continuing education* relating to optometry, as approved by the Board, *each year. A licensee who completes more than 20 hours of continuing education in a year shall be allowed to carry forward up to 10 hours of continuing education for the next annual renewal cycle.* The courses ~~may~~ *shall* include, but need not be limited to, the utilization and application of new techniques, scientific and clinical advances, and new achievements of research. The Board shall prescribe criteria for approval of courses of study ~~and~~ ~~credit~~ ~~hour~~ ~~requirements~~. ~~However,~~ ~~the~~ ~~required~~ ~~number~~ ~~of~~ ~~credit~~ ~~hours~~ ~~shall~~ ~~not~~ ~~exceed~~ ~~sixteen~~ ~~in~~ ~~any~~ ~~one~~ ~~calendar~~ ~~year~~. The Board may approve alternative courses upon timely application of any licensee. Fulfillment of education requirements shall be certified to the Board upon a form provided by the Board and shall be submitted by each licensed optometrist at the time he applies to the Board for the renewal of his license. The Board may waive individual requirements in cases of certified illness or undue hardship.

B. Of the 20 hours of continuing education relating to optometry required pursuant to subsection A:

1. At least 10 hours shall be obtained through real-time, interactive activities, including in-person or electronic presentations, provided that during the course of the presentation, the licensee and the lecturer may both view and verbally confer with one another;

2. At least two hours may consist of courses related to recordkeeping, including coding for diagnostic and treatment devices and procedures or the management of an optometry practice, provided that such courses are not primarily for the purpose of augmenting the licensee's income or promoting the sale of specific instruments or products; and

3. For TPA-certified optometrists, at least 10 hours shall be in the areas of ocular and general pharmacology, diagnosis and treatment of the human eye and its adnexa, including treatment with new pharmaceutical agents, or new or advanced clinical devices, techniques, modalities, or procedures.

C. Nothing in this subsection shall prevent or limit the authority of the Board to require additional hours or types of continuing education as part or in lieu of disciplinary action.