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SENATE BILL NO. 315

Senate Amendments in [] — January 22, 2018

A BILL to amend and reenact §§ 54.1-1500 and 54.1-1501 of the Code of Virginia, relating to hearing aid specialists [~~and opticians~~] ; exemptions for the sale of hearing aids.

Patron Prior to Engrossment—Senator Ruff

Referred to Committee on Education and Health

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That §§ 54.1-1500 and 54.1-1501 of the Code of Virginia are amended and reenacted as follows:

§ 54.1-1500. Definitions.

As used in this chapter, unless the context requires a different meaning:

"Audiologist" means the same as that term is defined in § 54.1-2600.

"Board" means the Board for Hearing Aid Specialists and Opticians.

"Hearing aid" means any wearable instrument or device designed or offered to aid or compensate for impaired human hearing and any parts, attachments, or accessories, including earmolds, but excluding batteries and cords.

"Licensed hearing aid specialist" means any person who is the holder of a hearing aid specialist license issued by the Board for Hearing Aid Specialists and Opticians.

"Licensed optician" means any person who is the holder of an optician license issued by the Board for Hearing Aid Specialists and Opticians.

"Licensed optometrist" means any person authorized by Virginia law to practice optometry.

"Licensed physician" means any person licensed by the Board of Medicine to practice medicine and surgery.

"Optician" means any person not exempted by § 54.1-1506 who prepares or dispenses eyeglasses, spectacles, lenses, or related appurtenances, for the intended wearers or users, on prescriptions from licensed physicians or licensed optometrists, or as duplications or reproductions of previously prepared eyeglasses, spectacles, lenses, or related appurtenances; or who, in accordance with such prescriptions, duplications or reproductions, measures, adapts, fits, and adjusts eyeglasses, spectacles, lenses, or appurtenances, to the human face.

"Practice of audiology" means the same as that term is defined in § 54.1-2600.

"Practice of fitting or dealing in hearing aids" means (i) the measurement of human hearing by means of an audiometer or by any other means solely for the purpose of making selections, adaptations or sale of hearing aids, (ii) the sale of hearing aids, or (iii) the making of impressions for earmolds. A practitioner, at the request of a physician or a member of a related profession, may make audiograms for the professional's use in consultation with the hard-of-hearing.

"Sell" or "sale" means any transfer of title or of the right to use by lease, bailment, or any other contract, excluding wholesale transactions with distributors or practitioners.

"Temporary permit" means a permit issued while an applicant is in training to become a licensed hearing aid specialist.

§ 54.1-1501. Exemptions; sale of hearing aids by corporations, etc., measuring hearing.

A. Physicians licensed to practice in Virginia and certified by the American Board of Otolaryngology or eligible for such certification shall not be required to pass an examination as a prerequisite to obtaining a license under this chapter.

B. Nothing in this chapter shall prohibit a corporation, partnership, trust, association or other like organization maintaining an established business address from engaging in the business of selling or offering for sale hearing aids at retail without a license, provided that it employs only licensed practitioners in the direct sale and fitting of such products.

C. Nothing in this chapter shall prohibit any person who does not sell hearing aids or accessories or who is not employed by an organization which sells hearing aids or accessories from engaging in the practice of measuring human hearing for the purpose of selection of hearing aids.

D. Audiologists licensed to practice in Virginia who have earned a doctoral degree in audiology shall not be required to pass an examination as a prerequisite to obtaining a license under this chapter.

ENGROSSED

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