

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **Kentucky Board of Optometric Examiners Announces Licensing Review Actions and Regulatory Updates**

**Frankfort, KY — February 5, 2026**

Pursuant to the Opinion issued by the Office of the Attorney General in October 2025, the Kentucky Board of Optometric Examiners (KBOE) has been conducting an investigation of licensing actions dating back to 2020.

After the COVID-19 pandemic travel restrictions were instituted, the Board issued licensing waivers and alternative testing options to applicants. While the Attorney General's Opinion indicated that the Board does have statutory authority to determine what examinations to accept, the appropriate regulatory process was not followed.

In order to comply with the Attorney General's Opinion, the current board has voted to file a new emergency administrative regulation to address this matter. The newly filed emergency administrative regulation will require any Kentucky optometrist licensed under the waivers and alternative testing methods to submit passing examination scores prior to license renewal.

In accordance with its mission to protect the public, the emergency administrative regulation temporarily restricts affected licensees from performing specific laser procedures until passing scores are provided. These measures are being implemented out of an abundance of caution, despite the fact that additional education and credentialing are already required to perform such procedures.

Importantly, individuals who were licensed previously under the waiver and alternative testing methods completed the licensure requirements as communicated to them at the time. Doctors are being unfairly targeted and penalized for following the guidance they were given by the Board. The media has circulated a letter from the National Board of Examiners in Optometry dated May 23, 2025 which includes the names of 21 licensees. During its investigation, KBOE has discovered that some listed individuals have since passed Parts I, II and III of the NBEO, have never failed a part of NBEO, or are not practicing in Kentucky. Until the conclusion of its investigation, the KBOE cautions the public from relying on incomplete or potentially misleading information.

The KBOE continues to investigate each individual situation and will provide clear guidance to all impacted licensees in the weeks ahead. Additionally, once the investigation is completed, the KBOE will notify the Attorney General's Office.

In addition, the Board voted to file an amendment to a current regulation which will affect future license applicants. Beginning in 2027, the OEBC examination option will not be available.

The Board is also reviewing KBOE's internal operating policies and developing formal governance documents to ensure future boards have clear guidance, defined procedures, and appropriate checks and balances.

The Kentucky Board of Optometric Examiners remains committed to protecting the public, maintaining transparency, and ensuring a consistent and accountable licensing process moving forward.

Once the regulations are filed with the Legislative Research Commission, a link to these regulations will be available on the KBOE website.