

CHAPTER 692

(Senate Bill 559)

AN ACT to add new Section 379A to Article 43 of the Annotated Code of Maryland (1971 Replacement Volume), title "Health," subtitle "Optometry," to follow immediately after Section 379 thereof, to require continuing education for optometrists and relating generally to optometrists and their qualifications.

SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND, That new Section 379A be and it is hereby added to Article 43 of the Annotated Code of Maryland (1971 Replacement Volume), title "Health," subtitle "Optometry," to follow immediately after Section 379 thereof, and to read as follows:

379A.

ALL REGISTERED OPTOMETRISTS LICENSED IN THE STATE OF MARYLAND ARE REQUIRED TO TAKE ANNUAL COURSES OF STUDY IN SUBJECTS RELATING TO THE PRACTICE OF THE PROFESSION OF OPTOMETRY, TO THE END THAT UTILIZATION AND APPLICATION OF NEW TECHNIQUES, SCIENTIFIC AND CLINICAL ADVANCES, AND THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF RESEARCH WILL ASSURE EXPANSIVE AND COMPREHENSIVE CARE TO THE PUBLIC. THE LENGTH OF STUDY SHALL BE PRESCRIBED BY THE BOARD OF EXAMINERS OF OPTOMETRY BUT SHALL NOT EXCEED TWENTY-FIVE (25) HOURS IN ANY CALENDAR YEAR. ATTENDANCE MUST BE AT A COURSE OR COURSES APPROVED BY THE BOARD. ATTENDANCE AT ANY COURSE OR COURSES OF STUDY IS TO BE CERTIFIED TO THE BOARD UPON A FORM PROVIDED BY THE BOARD AND SHALL BE SUBMITTED BY EACH REGISTERED OPTOMETRIST AT THE TIME HE MAKES APPLICATION TO THE BOARD FOR THE RENEWAL OF HIS LICENSE AND PAYMENT OF HIS RENEWAL FEE. THE BOARD MAY REFUSE TO RENEW THE LICENSE OF ANY REGISTERED OPTOMETRIST WHO HAS FAILED TO CERTIFY HIS ATTENDANCE, OR HAS FAILED TO ATTEND THE COURSE OR COURSES. THE BOARD MAY USE UP TO ONE-HALF OF ITS ANNUAL RENEWAL FEES FOR THE PURPOSES OF CONTRACTING WITH INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER LEARNING, PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS, OR QUALIFIED INDIVIDUALS FOR THE PROVIDING OF EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS THAT MEET THIS REQUIREMENT. THE BOARD MAY TREAT FUNDS SET ASIDE FOR THE PURPOSE OF CONTINUING EDUCATION AS STATE FUNDS FOR THE PURPOSE OF ACCEPTING ANY FUNDS MADE AVAILABLE UNDER FEDERAL LAW ON A MATCHING BASIS FOR THE PROMULGATION AND MAINTENANCE OF PROGRAMS OF CONTINUING EDUCATION. IN NO INSTANCE MAY THE BOARD REQUIRE A GREATER NUMBER OF HOURS OF STUDY THAN ARE AVAILABLE AT APPROVED COURSES HELD WITHIN THE STATE, AND THE BOARD MAY WAIVE THIS REQUIREMENT IN CASES OF CERTIFIED ILLNESS OR UNDUE HARDSHIP.

SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect July 1, 1973.