

## LICENSURE BY ENDORSEMENT 'MERIT' ARGUMENTS

The issuance of an optometry license by the endorsement process to a competent candidate who already holds a license in one or more jurisdictions is being encouraged by the State Government Relations Center pursuant to an American Optometric Association (AOA) House of Delegates resolution adopted in 1995 supporting this concept. One of the cornerstones of endorsement is the possibility for a competent practitioner to obtain a license in another state **WITHOUT** automatically being required to retake exams designed to evaluate *entry-level* skills. In addition, a second resolution was adopted by the House in 1999 asking state boards to eliminate any requirement that written entry-level examinations (specifically the National Boards) be passed within a certain time frame for the licensure by endorsement process.

### See the following additional points below:

- State boards of optometry do not require ODs who remain within a state throughout their career to retake entry-level exams (either state, regional or national) on a periodic basis to verify continuing competency. This raises the question as to why state boards of optometry require retaking of entry-level exams to verify competency when a competent, licensed OD chooses simply to relocate to another jurisdiction.
- Is protection of the public health a valid argument for selectively requiring **only** out-of-state ODs to retake entry-level examinations to verify continuing competency?
- The National Board of Examiners in Optometry considers passage of the National Boards - passage of the National Boards. In other words, the National Board does not become dated. Consequently, no one is required to retake the exam each time it is modified/improved/expanded [see statement from the National Board of Examiners in Optometry below].

“The National Board of Examiners in Optometry, which develops and administers entry-level examinations for the state boards of optometry, has established policies which allow for the recognition of equivalency of earlier forms of its examinations with current forms of the “National Boards.”

- The licensure by reciprocity process may inadvertently penalize an otherwise competent candidate for licensure in your state if his or her state of original licensure does not have a reciprocal agreement with your state. (Note: to the best of our knowledge no true formal reciprocal agreements actually exist between any state boards of optometry.) On the other hand, the endorsement process only considers the qualifications of an individual applicant and does not take into consideration the applicant's state of residence/current licensure.
- With the scope of practice becoming more "common" among the states - one of the primary psychological barriers for the optometry boards to adopting licensure by endorsement is being eliminated.
- The endorsement process has already been established successfully by legislation or regulation in many states. Many other professions have embraced this process as well.
- In several states the optometry law would appear to already authorize the state licensing board to adopt this process by rule change and permit licensure without retaking entry-level examinations. The licensing boards in these states are encouraged to adopt regulations to implement this process.
- Requirement for a clinical/practical exam or additional coursework **IF** competency is in question on an individual basis is an appropriate tool to verify continuing competency. Boards should maintain the statutory authority to require such an examination or successful completion of additional course work on an 'as needed' basis for candidates that are of some concern; however, these requirements should not be automatically applied to every candidate.