



**WEST VIRGINIA SECRETARY OF STATE**

**MAC WARNER**

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW DIVISION**

**eFILED**

5/11/2023 10:26:50 AM

Office of West Virginia  
Secretary Of State

**NOTICE OF FINAL FILING AND ADOPTION OF A LEGISLATIVE RULE AUTHORIZED  
BY THE WEST VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE**

AGENCY: Optometry

TITLE-SERIES: 14-12

RULE TYPE: Legislative Amendment to Existing Rule: No Repeal of existing rule: No

RULE NAME: Optometric Telehealth Practice

CITE STATUTORY AUTHORITY: WV Code, 30-1-26, 30-8A-1, et. seq. and 30-8-1, et. seq.

The above rule has been authorized by the West Virginia Legislature.

Authorization is cited in (house or senate bill number) S B 361

Section §64-9-11 Passed On 3/11/2023 12:00:00 AM

This rule is filed with the Secretary of State. This rule becomes effective on the following date:

May 11, 2023

This rule shall terminate and have no further force or effect from the following date:

August 01, 2028

**BY CHOOSING 'YES', I ATTEST THAT THE PREVIOUS STATEMENT IS TRUE AND CORRECT.**

**Yes**

**Pamela P Carper -- By my signature, I certify that I am the person authorized to file legislative rules, in accordance with West Virginia Code §29A-3-11 and §39A-3-2.**

TITLE 14  
LEGISLATIVE RULE  
WEST VIRGINIA BOARD OF OPTOMETRY  
  
SERIES 12  
OPTOMETRIC TELEHEALTH PRACTICE

**§14-12-1. General.**

1.1. Scope -- This legislative rule establishes requirements for telehealth registration and telehealth practice.

1.2. Authority -- W. Va. Code §30-8-1, *et seq.*, W. Va. Code, §30-8a-1, *et. seq.* and W Va. Code 30-1-26.

1.3. Filing Date -- May 11, 2023

1.4. Effective Date -- May 11, 2023

1.5. Sunset Provision: This rule shall terminate and have no further force or effect on August 1, 2028.

**§14-12-2. Definitions.**

2.1. “Board” means the West Virginia Board of Optometry.

2.2. “Established patient” means a patient who has received professional services, face-to-face, from the optometrist, or optometrist of the exact same specialty and subspecialty who belongs to the same group practice, within the past three years.

2.3. “Interstate telehealth services” means the provision of telehealth services to a patient located in West Virginia by a health care practitioner located in any other state or commonwealth of the United States.

2.4. “Optometrist” means an individual licensed to practice optometry in West Virginia under §30-8-1, *et seq.* or in any other state or commonwealth of the United States.

2.5. “Registration” means an authorization to practice optometry regulated by §30-8-1 *et. seq.* of this code and this rule for the limited purpose of providing interstate telehealth services within the registrant’s scope of practice.

2.6. “Registrant” means an individual who holds a valid telehealth registration from the Board.

2.7. “Store-and-forward technologies” means the asynchronous computer-based communication of medical data or images from an originating location in West Virginia to a registered optometrist at another site for diagnostic purposes.

2.8. “Telehealth services” means the use of synchronous or asynchronous telecommunications technology or audio-only telephone call by a health care practitioner to provide health care services, including, but not limited to, assessment, diagnosis, consultation, treatment, and monitoring of a patient; transfer of medical data; patient and professional health-related education; public health services; and health administration. The term does not include internet questionnaires, e-mail messages, or facsimile transmissions.

**§14-12-3. Requirements for Optometric Telemedicine.**

3.1. The practice of optometry occurs where the patient is located at the time the telehealth services are provided.

3.2. The optometrist who registers to practice interstate telehealth shall be:

3.2.1. Licensed in good standing in all states in which he or she is licensed and not currently under investigation or subject to an administrative complaint; and

3.2.2. Registered as an interstate telehealth practitioner with the West Virginia Board of Optometry holding a valid registration.

3.3. No person shall deliver optometric telehealth services unless a bona fide optometrist-patient relationship is established. A bona fide optometrist-patient relationship shall exist if the optometrist has:

3.3.1. obtained or caused to be obtained and reviewed a health and ocular history of the patient;

3.3.2. performed or caused to be performed and reviewed appropriate examination of the patient, either physically through use of instrumentation and diagnostic equipment by which digital scans, photographs, images and records able to be transmitted electronically, or through use of face-to-face interactive two-way real-time communications services, store-and-forward technologies, or through audio only calls or conversations that occur in real time;

3.3.3. provided information to the patient about the services to be performed; and

3.3.4. initiated additional diagnostic tests or referrals as needed.

3.3.5. In cases in which an optometrist is providing telehealth, the examination required by section 3.3.2 of this rule shall not be required if the patient has been examined in person by an optometrist licensed by the Board within the 12 months prior to the initiation of telehealth and the patient's records of such examination have been reviewed by the optometrist providing telehealth.

3.4. The standard of care for providing optometric care in the State of West Virginia via telehealth services by a registrant or licensed optometrist shall be the same as for in-person care.

3.5. A telehealth provider's selection of telemedicine technologies for a patient encounter must permit the provider to meet the standard of care for the patient's particular health issue and presentation. Treatment, including issuing a prescription, based solely on an online questionnaire, does not conform to the standard of care.

3.6. Nothing in this rule requires a practitioner to use telemedicine technologies to treat a patient if the practitioner, in his or her discretion determines that an in-person encounter is required.

3.7. A registrant shall not prescribe any controlled substance listed in Schedule II of the Uniform Controlled Substance Act via interstate telehealth services.

3.8. A provider of telehealth services shall ensure that the patient or patient's guardian is aware of the provider's identity, location, and license or registration number.

3.9. The provider of telehealth services shall provide to the patient or guardian a clear mechanism to:

3.9.1. access, supplement, and amend contact information and health information;

3.9.2. register complaints with the Board; and

3.9.3. provide consent for the use of telehealth.

3.10. All consent and required notification shall occur prior to initiating any services.

3.11. Patient medical records must meet the same requirements as in-person records including, but not limited to:

3.10.1. record retention;

3.10.2. informed consent;

3.10.3. accessibility to both the licensee or registrant and the patient or legal guardian; and

3.10.4. be consistent with all established laws and administrative regulations governing patient healthcare records, but not limited to, HIPAA.

#### **§14-12-4. Registration and Renewal.**

4.1. To provide optometric care in the State of West Virginia via interstate telehealth services, an individual not otherwise licensed by the Board must first apply for and obtain registration with the Board using the application materials provided by the Board and paying fees equal to the initial in-state optometry license application and annual licensing fees. The annual renewal fees for a registrant shall be equal to the annual renewal fees for an in-state optometry license renewal as set forth by the Board's rules and fees established by the Board. The annual renewal and expiration dates shall equal the annual renewal and expiration dates of in-state licenses as set forth by the Board.

4.2. By registering to provide interstate telehealth services to patients in this state, a registrant is subject to all laws, rules, and regulations regarding the practice of optometry in this state, including the state judicial system and all professional conduct rules and standards incorporated into the Optometry Practice Act, W. Va. Code, §30-8-1, *et. seq.*, and all legislative rules and jurisdiction of the West Virginia Board of Optometry including the Board's complaint, investigation, and hearing process.

4.3. To obtain registration with the Board, an individual must be a licensed optometrist in good standing in all other states in which he or she is licensed and not currently under investigation or subject to an administrative complaint.

4.4. A registrant shall immediately notify the Board of any restrictions placed on the individual's license to practice in any state or jurisdiction.

4.5. A registration with the Board does not authorize an optometrist to practice from a physical location within the State of West Virginia without first obtaining appropriate licensure.

4.6. A person currently licensed to practice optometry in this state is not subject to registration but shall practice telehealth in accordance with the provisions of W.Va. Code, §30-1-26, W.Va. Code, §30-8-1, *et. seq.* and the rules promulgated thereunder.

**§14-12-5. Restrictions.**

5.1. Nothing in this section shall be construed to invalidate §30-8A-3 or to permit use of any automated refractor or other automated or remote testing device to generate refractive data.