

OHIO STATE BOARD of OPTOMETRY - POLICY STATEMENT

**LICENSURE OF
CHEMICALLY IMPAIRED OPTOMETRISTS**

An optometrist licensed by the Ohio State Board of Optometry who suffers from impairment of ability to practice according to acceptable standards of care because of habitual or excessive use or abuse of drugs, alcohol, or other substances that impair ability to practice is in violation of the Ohio Revised Code section 4725.19 (B)(12) and is subject to Board disciplinary action. A “one bite” exception is offered whereby an impaired optometrist may preclude Board intervention, and the optometrist’s colleagues may be excused from reporting the impairment, so long as the optometrist has completed treatment at a facility approved by the Board, maintains uninterrupted sobriety, and enters into a monitoring agreement with the Ohio Physicians Health Program or other Board approved program. In addition, the optometrist must adhere to all other statutory requirements. The “one bite” exception is ONLY available prior to any Board intervention or action.

Optometrists seeking new Ohio licensure, however, have never been granted “one bite”, and are expected to report their status in applying for licensure. The Board will generally require some period of probation as a contingency to licensure if an applicant has been impaired and is unable to document at least five years of uninterrupted sobriety at the time of application.

This policy or position statement is only a guideline and should not be interpreted as being all inclusive or exclusive. The Board will review possible violations of laws and/or rules promulgated hereunder on a case by case basis.