

"Clarification of the 10-hour-in-person, in Maryland Continuing Professional Education Requirement: for June 2024 License Renewal:

- The regulations governing continuing professional education for Maryland Optometrists found in **COMAR 10.28.02.05** are still in effect; During the pandemic, it was permissible to complete all 50 credits online/virtual due to health concerns. *As of July 2023, the health emergency was no longer high alert, and the regulations went back to the way they have been, as stated in COMAR 10.28.02.05.*
- Pursuant to COMAR 10.28.02.05 (B), all **(TPA)** Maryland licensed optometrists are required to complete 10 hours of continuing professional education in person, in Maryland, each 2-year renewal cycle.
- In July 2023, the Board noted the most recent COPE guidelines allow for both synchronous and asynchronous continuing professional education. The Board voted unanimously to change the language of COMAR 10.28.02.05 (B), to remove the 10 hours, in person, in Maryland requirement, and to allow up to 50 of the credits to be earned online, **however, we have to go through the State of Maryland Department of Health's process to change the regulations.**
- The Board's continuing education and legislative committees are working through the regulatory process to implement this change to COMAR 10.28.02.05 (B). Until the regulation is changed all licensees are required to comply with the current regulations. For more information on the regulatory process please go [here](#). The Board will notify licensees of any and all final changes to the rules and regulations affecting their license as required by law.
- **10 credit hours** must occur in person in Maryland, unless there is an "undue hardship" that prevents a licensee from doing so; in that case, a waiver form must be requested from the board, completed and submitted **for approval by the board**. Waiver forms may be requested by emailing the board at mdh.optometry@maryland.gov

- **For the remaining hours**, you may obtain credits in several ways including: Pro Bono (Volunteer optometry services); Clinical Observation, published paper, etc. or you can attend CE in person during conferences, meetings, etc. in or out of Maryland. *(Excerpts from COMAR 10.28.02.05:)*

- (1) Scheduled post-graduate or continuing education courses given by schools or colleges of optometry which have been approved by the Board;
- (2) Courses, either in-person, online, or both, that have received accreditation; however, the Board reserves the right to refuse credit when its established criteria are not met;
- (3) Courses, either in-person, online, or both, on Practice Management directly related to optometric care, up to a maximum of **4 hours** per renewal cycle;
- (4) Courses given by local optometric societies or health-related sponsors, or both, upon prior approval by the Board.
- (5) Courses, seminars, and lectures prepared and given by Maryland licensed optometrists for which credit will be awarded at the rate of **2 hours** for preparation and **1 hour for lecture**, up to a maximum of **16 hours** per renewal cycle;
- (6) Published papers in professional journals, papers approved for publication, or papers that have been peer-reviewed for which credit will be awarded at **2 hours per paper**, up to a maximum of 12 hours per renewal cycle;
- (7) Observation of ophthalmic procedures at sites approved by the Board, up to a maximum of **8 hours** per renewal cycle;
- (8) Courses, either in-person, online, or both, in optometric ethics, Maryland optometric jurisprudence, or both, as approved by the Board, up to a maximum of **4 hours** per renewal cycle;
- (9) Pro Bono Work.

Pro bono work shall earn 1 credit hour for each 3 hours of approved continuing education activity, up to a maximum of 6 credit hours per renewal cycle.

The licensee shall provide to the Board a written application for approval of pro bono work. The application shall include:

- (a) The place where the pro bono will be provided;
- (b) The type of work to be provided;
- (c) The number of hours of actual work provided for which the licensee desires credit hours; and
- (d) A statement guaranteeing that the work provided no financial benefit to the licensee.

(10) Courses, either in-person or online, and certification in cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) up to a maximum of 3 hours per renewal cycle; and

(11) Courses in **cultural competency**, up to a maximum of 4 hours per renewal cycle.

(12) Public Board Meeting Attendance.

(1) Licensees may receive **4** credit hours for attending in its entirety an open session meeting of the Board of Examiners in Optometry.

(2) The Board shall issue to the licensee a certificate of proof of attendance

- 30 of the 50 required hours must be focused on therapeutic topics
- Up to **30 of the 50** required hours may be earned online (synchronous, or asynchronous with post-test or journal article with post-test).
- CPR certification is required every renewal and may count for 3 credit hours.

For DPA licensees:

- 36 total hours of continuing professional education every 2 years.
- 6 of the 36 required hours must be related to diagnostic drugs.
- CPR certification is required for each renewal and may count for 3 credit hours.

License only (no DPA or TPA certification):

- 36 hours of continuing professional education are required each renewal cycle"

The Board may waive continuing education requirements for, but not limited to, licensees who:

- (1) Have applied for licensure within 1 year of graduation from an accredited school or college of optometry; and
- (2) Are renewing their license for the first time.