NOTICE

This notice is given by Mesheca C. Bunyon, O.D., President of the Maryland State Board of Examiners in Optometry (the “Board”), acting pursuant to the Proclamation of Governor Lawrence J. Hogan, Jr. (the “Governor”) dated March 5, 2020 proclaiming a state of emergency and a catastrophic health emergency related to COVID-19, as it may be amended or renewed from time to time, and the Order of the Governor dated March 12, 2020 entitled “Extending Certain Licenses, Permits, Registrations, and Other Governmental Authorizations, and Authorizing Suspension of Legal Time Requirements” as it may be amended from time to time, after finding that the actions described herein will not endanger the public health, welfare, or safety.

Maryland Code Annotated, Health Occupations Article, § 11-404.2, effective March 1, 2020, authorizes therapeutically certified optometrists to administer certain topical therapeutic pharmaceutical agents, administer certain oral pharmaceutical agents, and remove superficial foreign bodies from the human eye, provided that before July 1, 2020, a therapeutically certified optometrist demonstrates successful completion of a 10-hour course in advanced pharmacology with emphasis on the use of oral pharmaceutical agents in treating ocular diseases. The Board will suspend the “downgrading” of the licenses of current therapeutically certified optometrists who did not complete the 10-hour course by July 1, 2020 to “diagnostically certified optometrist” until 30 days after the state of emergency has been terminated and the proclamation of the catastrophic health emergency has been lifted.

As clarification, a licensed optometrist is not authorized to perform the procedures that were added to the scope of practice of a therapeutically certified optometrist as of March 1, 2020 until the licensed optometrist has demonstrated to the Board successful completion of the 10-hour course.

Any effect of Title 11 of the Health Occupations Article and the implementing regulations in COMAR 10.28 that is inconsistent with the foregoing is temporarily suspended.

This Notice is effective immediately and shall remain in effect until 30 days after the state of emergency has been terminated and the proclamation of the catastrophic health emergency has been rescinded.

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Date       Mesheca C. Bunyon, O.D.

Mesheca C. Bunyon, O.D.
President
Maryland State Board of Examiners in Optometry