



Optometrists and Dispensing Opticians Board

Te Poari o ngā Kaimātai Whatu me ngā Kaiwhakarato Mōhiti

CONSULTATION – PROPOSAL TO AMEND OPTICAL DISPENSING SCOPE OF PRACTICE

Released: 4 April 2018

Submissions Due: 7 May 2018

Introduction

- 1 The Optometrists and Dispensing Opticians Board (the Board) is charged under the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003 (the Act) with describing the contents of the profession in terms of one or more scopes of practice.
- 2 Section 11 of the Act sets out that a scope of practice may be described in any way the appointed authority (the Board) thinks fit, including, without limitation, in any one or more of the following ways:
 - by reference to a name or form of words that is commonly understood by persons who work in the health sector;
 - by reference to an area of science or learning;
 - by reference to tasks commonly performed;
 - by reference to illnesses or conditions to be diagnosed, treated, or managed.
- 3 An authority may at any time, by notice in the *New Zealand Gazette*, amend, revoke, or replace a notice issued under section 11 of the Act, describing a scope of practice. Before doing so, however, an authority must consult on such a proposal with:
 - people the Board considers are able to represent the view of health practitioners or of classes of health practitioners registered with the Board;
 - organisations that the Board considers will be affected by the proposal; and
 - organisations whose members the Board considers will be affected by the proposal.

Background

- 4 The current *Scope of Practice for Optical Dispensing* was consulted on and confirmed for the inception of the Act in 2004 and the notice published in the *New Zealand Gazette*

has not been amended, revoked or replaced since. This notice described the scope of practice in the following way:

Scope of Practice for Optical Dispensing (Dispensing Optician)

Optical dispensing describes the practice of the interpreting and dispensing of optical prescriptions by a person with a recognized qualification. This includes the giving of advice and instruction in the dispensing of spectacle lenses, spectacle frames (including their fitting), contact lenses, and any other optical device intended for correction of a defect of sight.

- 5 Over the years, the role of the Dispensing Optician in practice has evolved, in large part due to the evolution of the role of Optometrists, with Dispensing Opticians taking on more and more of a support role to optometrists and performing various auxiliary tasks in the provision of optimal vision care to patients.
- 6 The principle aim of scopes of practice under the Act is to provide a transparent framework so that health professionals and consumers of health and disability services can easily know the parameters a health professional is competent to work within and can be assured of their competence¹. The Board, therefore, believes it is time for the description of the Scope of Practice for Optical Dispensing to more accurately reflect the role that Dispensing Opticians are performing today, to ensure health consumers can more easily know the parameters a Dispensing Optician is competent to work within and can be assured of their competence.

Proposal

- 7 The Board proposes to **amend** the description of the Scope of Practice for Optical Dispensing, as follows (changes highlighted):

Optical dispensing describes the practice of the interpreting and dispensing of optical prescriptions by a person with a recognised qualification. This includes the delivery of advice, assistance and instruction in the dispensing of spectacle lenses, spectacle frames (including their fitting), contact lenses, and any other optical device intended for correction of a defect of sight, and can include the operation of auxiliary tests pertaining to eye care.

- 8 The Board also proposes to **amend** the title of the scope of practice to the '*Dispensing Optician Scope of Practice*' in keeping with the current titles of the scopes of practice for optometrists.

¹ The *Health Professionals Competency Assurance Bill Discussion Paper*, published in September 2000.

Summary

- 9 The Board has provided details above, of amendments it proposes to make to the current *Optical Dispensing Scope of Practice*, including the reasons for these proposed amendments. Stakeholders are now invited to provide submissions on these proposed amendments.

How to have your say

- 10 If you wish to make submissions, please provide them in writing **by 5.00 pm on 7 May 2018**. The Board does not guarantee that submissions received at the Board's offices after that date will be considered.

Submissions can be sent to:

The Registrar
Optometrists and Dispensing Opticians Board
PO Box 9644
Wellington 6141

Email: registrar@odob.health.nz