

**STORAGE NAME:** h0315.hr.doc  
**DATE:** March 13, 2001

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
COMMITTEE ON  
HEALTH REGULATION  
ANALYSIS**

**BILL #:** HB 315  
**RELATING TO:** Opticianry/Violations & Penalties  
**SPONSOR(S):** Representative Kottkamp  
**TIED BILL(S):** None.

**ORIGINATING COMMITTEE(S)/COUNCIL(S)/COMMITTEE(S) OF REFERENCE:**

- (1) HEALTH REGULATION
  - (2) CRIME PREVENTION, CORRECTIONS & SAFETY
  - (3) JUDICIAL OVERSIGHT
  - (4) COUNCIL FOR HEALTHY COMMUNITIES
  - (5)
- 

I. SUMMARY:

This bill clarifies existing language in s. 484.013, Florida Statutes, that the dispensing of cosmetic or medical contact lenses is unlawful without a prescription. HB 315 increases the penalty for a person that dispenses contact lenses from a misdemeanor of the second degree to a felony of the third degree.

HB 315 allows the Department of Health to inspect any facility that lenses, spectacles, eyeglasses, contact lenses, and any other optical devices are prepared or dispensed, regardless if the department licenses the establishment.

Practicing Opticianry without a license is placed on the Offense Severity Ranking Chart at Level 7 thereby making the offender subject to paying civil, administrative, and criminal penalties that may include a one-year prison sentence.

The bill provides for an effective date of October 1, 2001.

The Department of Health does not anticipate needing any additional resources to implement this bill. The Criminal Justice Estimating Conference has not determined the impact this bill will have on the state prison system.

II. SUBSTANTIVE ANALYSIS:

A. DOES THE BILL SUPPORT THE FOLLOWING PRINCIPLES:

- |                                   |   |  |   |
|-----------------------------------|---|--|---|
| 1. <u>Less Government</u>         | Yes <input type="checkbox"/>            | No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | N/A <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| 2. <u>Lower Taxes</u>             | Yes <input type="checkbox"/>            | No <input type="checkbox"/>            | N/A <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. <u>Individual Freedom</u>      | Yes <input type="checkbox"/>            | No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | N/A <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| 4. <u>Personal Responsibility</u> | Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/>            | N/A <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| 5. <u>Family Empowerment</u>      | Yes <input type="checkbox"/>            | No <input type="checkbox"/>            | N/A <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

For any principle that received a "no" above, please explain:

This bill will encourage prosecutors to enforce the prohibition against the unlicensed activity by a person not properly educated and trained to provide such health care service.

B. PRESENT SITUATION:

Florida law requires persons wishing to provide health care services to patients in Florida to prove that they have the requisite education, training, and knowledge to practice that profession. Florida law provides avenues for licensure by examination or by endorsement if the health care practitioner was licensed in another jurisdiction. The purpose of licensure and regulation is to protect the public health, safety, and welfare from unsafe and incompetent practitioners.

The Florida Legislature has recognized in passing laws setting forth practice parameters that the practice of medicine and other health care professions is potentially dangerous. The primary legislative purpose in enacting the medical and health care practice acts is to ensure that every health care practitioner who wishes to practice in Florida meets minimum requirements for safe practice.

The Legislature has set forth certain acts that constitute criminal violations. Among the prohibited acts is practicing medicine without a license, a felony of the third degree. If a person is found guilty of practicing medicine in Florida without a license, criminal penalties may be imposed, including incarceration.

Section 484.001, Florida Statutes, stipulates that the Legislature finds that the practice of Opticianry by unskilled and incompetent practitioners presents a danger to the public health and safety. The Legislature finds further that it is difficult for the public to make an informed choice about opticians and that the consequences of a wrong choice could seriously endanger their health and safety. The only way to protect the public from the incompetent practice of Opticianry is through the establishment of minimum qualifications for entry into the profession and through swift and effective discipline for those practitioners who violate the law.

“Opticianry” means the preparation and dispensing of lenses, spectacles, eyeglasses, contact lenses, and other optical devices to the intended user or agent thereof, upon the written prescription of a medical doctor or optometrist who is duly licensed to practice or upon presentation of a duplicate prescription. The selection of frame designs, the actual sales transaction, and the transfer of physical possession of lenses, spectacles, eyeglasses, contact lenses, and other optical devices subsequent to performance of all services of the optician shall not be considered the practice of Opticianry; however, such physical possession shall not be transferred until the optician has completed the fitting of the optical device upon the customer. The practice of Opticianry also includes the duplication of lenses accurately as to power, without prescription. A board-certified optician qualified and operating under rules established by the board may fill, fit, adapt, or dispense any soft contact lens prescription. Such optician may fill, fit, adapt, or dispense any extended wear or hard contact lens prescription to the extent authorized to do so by the prescribing medical doctor or optometrist.

In the Unlicensed Activity Office Statewide Annual Report for Calendar Year 2000, it is reported that the Unlicensed Activity Office received 39 Opticianry complaints of unlicensed activity.

In section 484.013, Florida Statutes, the language is not clear whether the distribution of cosmetic contact lens is considered part of licensed activity. Unlicensed activity is currently a misdemeanor of the second degree. Currently, inspectors have no authority to enter an establishment not licensed by the Department of Health where lenses and other optical devices are prepared or dispensed.

**C. EFFECT OF PROPOSED CHANGES:**

The bill allows for inspection of any type of establishment where there is dispensing of cosmetic or plano contact lenses. It adds the activity of dispensing for medical or cosmetic purposes without being furnished with a prescription as a violation of law, punishable as a felony of the third degree. This bill strengthens the unlicensed activity violation and permits investigations to stop unlawful activity that is occurring outside of licensed establishments in regards to the selling of these types of lenses.

Practicing Opticianry without a license is placed on the Offense Severity Ranking Chart at Level 7 thereby making the offender subject to paying civil, administrative, and criminal penalties that may include a one-year prison sentence.

**D. SECTION-BY-SECTION ANALYSIS:**

**Section 1.** Amends section 484.013, Florida Statutes, clarifying that it is unlawful to dispense contact lenses whether for medical or cosmetic purposes, without first being furnished a prescription as provided for in section 484.012, F.S. In addition, the penalty for such unlawful acts is increased from a misdemeanor of the second degree to a felony of the third degree.

**Section 2.** Amends section 484.015, Florida Statutes, authorizing the department to inspect any establishment that prepares or dispenses contact lenses.

**Section 3.** Amends paragraph (g) of subsection (3) of section 921.0022, Florida Statutes to include the penalty for practicing Opticianry without a license as a third degree felony in the Offense Severity Ranking Chart.

**Section 4.** Provides for an effective date of October 1, 2001.

III. FISCAL ANALYSIS & ECONOMIC IMPACT STATEMENT:

A. FISCAL IMPACT ON STATE GOVERNMENT:

1. Revenues:

None.

2. Expenditures:

None.

B. FISCAL IMPACT ON LOCAL GOVERNMENTS:

1. Revenues:

None.

2. Expenditures:

None.

C. DIRECT ECONOMIC IMPACT ON PRIVATE SECTOR:

The only persons affected by this bill are persons who violate the law and convicted of dispensing contact lenses without a license. Those persons, if charged and convicted, may be subject to paying civil, administrative, and criminal penalties that may include a one-year prison sentence.

D. FISCAL COMMENTS:

The Department of Health reports there is no fiscal impact of this bill to the department.

The Criminal Justice Estimating Conference has not determined what the impact of this bill will be on the state prison system.

IV. CONSEQUENCES OF ARTICLE VII, SECTION 18 OF THE FLORIDA CONSTITUTION:

A. APPLICABILITY OF THE MANDATES PROVISION:

Pursuant to Article VII, section 18, Florida Constitution, criminal laws are exempt from the requirements of section 18.

B. REDUCTION OF REVENUE RAISING AUTHORITY:

This bill does not reduce the authority that municipalities or counties have to raise revenues in the aggregate.

C. REDUCTION OF STATE TAX SHARED WITH COUNTIES AND MUNICIPALITIES:

This bill does not reduce the percentage of state tax shared with counties or municipalities.

V. COMMENTS:

A. CONSTITUTIONAL ISSUES:

None.

B. RULE-MAKING AUTHORITY:

None.

C. OTHER COMMENTS:

According to the Department of Health, "it is believed that optical devices sold by uninspected establishments for cosmetic purposes are causing corneal damage".

VI. AMENDMENTS OR COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE CHANGES:

None.

VII. SIGNATURES:

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH REGULATION:

Prepared by:

Staff Director:

---

Lisa Rawlins Maurer, Legislative Analyst

---

Lucretia Shaw Collins