



PENNSYLVANIA STATE BOARD OF OPTOMETRY



Secretary Carol Aichele

www.dos.state.pa.us

March 2012

[Disciplinary Actions](#)

Pennsylvania Health Alert Network (PA-HAN) February 1, 2012

Medical Reporting to PennDOT

The Pennsylvania Health Alert Network (PA-HAN) is one of the major ways the Pennsylvania Department of Health (PADOH) rapidly distributes information on emerging public health issues (e.g. disease outbreaks) to health care providers, hospitals, emergency management officials, and other public health agencies. In a typical year, PADOH distributes 20-25 HAN messages to providers via email, fax, or cell phone, depending on user preference. PADOH feels it is important that all health care providers have access to HAN messages directly or through their health care facility in order to receive critical public health messages. This assures that public health is protected and allows Pennsylvania's health care providers to give the best care to your patients and community.

Background and Purpose

- Medical reporting provides a highly effective mechanism for removing medically impaired drivers from the roads.
- Medical reporting assists PennDOT in determining whether an individual applying for or holding a driver's license is medically fit to be operating a motor vehicle.
- Other states have statutory requirements of self reporting, however there is an extremely high rate of noncompliance.

In mid-2011, PADOH switched to a new software vendor to support and improve the PA-HAN. The updated system was completed in July and the new version of the PA-HAN can be found at the following link <https://han.pa.gov/>. During the conversion process, some users were removed from the system and cannot be reinstated to the user list without re-registering. PADOH therefore requests that any previous user who is not currently receiving HAN messages register as a Health Alert recipient in the new system. In addition, any provider who would like to receive HAN messages for the first time should also register in the new system.

Laws and Regulations Regarding Medical Reporting in Pennsylvania

Who Must Report?

-"Physicians, chiropractors, certified registered nurse practitioners and physician assistants conducting physical examinations of applicants for learner's permit and driver's licenses, and by physicians and other persons authorized to diagnose and treat disorders." 75 Pa.C.S. § 1518(b); 67 Pa. Code § 83.1. Optometrists would be included because the Optometry Practice Act (Act) at 63 P.S. § 244.2, includes in the definition of the "Practice of Optometry" the following provision: "the use of any and all means or methods for the examination, diagnosis and treatment of conditions of the human visual system...."

To access the new PA-HAN Registration Site, click on the following link: <https://han.pa.gov/> . Under the second paragraph there is a gray 'Register Now' button. This option will walk the user through the registration process. If you have any questions about the HAN system or the registration requirements, please ask for Stacey Kalinoski in the PADOH at 717-265-8890 or skalinoski@pa.gov.

Duty to Report

-Those mentioned above must report to PennDOT any person over the age of 15 years having been diagnosed as having any specified disorder or disability within ten days in writing with the patient's full name, date of birth and address. 75 Pa.C.S. §1518(b); 67 Pa. Code § 83.6.

[Contact Us](#)

[Report Unethical Activity](#)

[Renew Your License](#)

[Meet the Board](#)

[PHMP](#)

Liability

-Those who report are immune from any civil or criminal liability. 75 Pa.C.S. § 1518(f).

-If a required person does NOT report, there is a possibility the individual could be held responsible as a proximate cause of a crash resulting in death, injury or property loss caused by the individual's patient.

-Not reporting may result in a conviction of a criminal summary offense (see http://www.dmv.state.pa.us/pdotforms/fact_sheets/fs-pub7212.pdf.)

Helpful Links

-For more helpful information on medical reporting to PennDOT please refer to their "Medical Reporting Fact Sheet" at: http://www.dmv.state.pa.us/pdotforms/fact_sheets/fs-pub7212.pdf.

Continuing Education Update

Janet Schwartz, O.D.

As the biennial license renewal period approaches, the Board would like to remind you of the options available for fulfilling your continuing education requirements. Although the continuing education requirements for licensure have not changed, the variety of educational opportunities and delivery systems has expanded over the last few years.

Webinars are considered correspondence courses and can account for up to 25% of your 30 biennial credits, with the limit on nontraditional courses set at 50%. These limitations are addressed at section 23.86 (f) (2) of our Regulations (49 Pa. Code, Chapter 23). Other sources of non-traditional courses include clinical rounds at acceptable clinical hospitals, medical centers, and school and colleges, taped study programs, and other individual study programs. As for correspondence programs, taped study programs, and other individual study programs, you must be able to prove to the satisfaction of the Board that the program meets the

provisions of section 23.85 of the Regulations (relating to standards for providers) in order to receive credit.

Other continuing education courses that have been approved over the last few years include those that relate to systemic diseases which have significant eye health and vision ramifications. For instance, if your local hospital is offering a course on diabetes, it may be possible for you to receive credit for attending the course. 49 Pa. Code, section 23.86 (b) states: "Courses which are provided by providers not indicated in subsection (a) will count as continuing education hours provided that the provider and subject matter are approved by the Board prior to implementation of the course. In addition, credits may be obtained on an individual basis for attendance at programs which have not had prior approval of the Board so long as the individual submits proper application for program approval and supporting documentation and verification of attendance; however, in this instance, the licensee cannot guarantee himself proper credit from the Board unless the Board finds such course to be in compliance with the subject matter and the provider to be qualified."

You may also receive up to 25% of your required 30 credits for teaching or writing related to the practice of optometry. 49 Pa. Code, section 23.86 (e) speaks to this, specifically, as follows: "Credit hours will be credited for service as a teacher, preceptor, lecturer, or speaker and for publications, articles, books and research relating to the practice of optometry. Application should be made prior to the service to assure that approval will be given by the Board to the program. Otherwise, the licensee will be required to secure retroactive approval as set forth in subsection (b)."

An individual or continuing education provider seeking credit approval for a nontraditional program that has not been previously approved by the State Board of Optometry may apply for approval from the Board by using the application form available on the Board's website under "Board Applications".

As you review your education credits required for the upcoming renewal in the Fall, consider the broad array of courses given throughout the community and use the Application referred to above if you wish to go outside the pre-approved providers listed at 49 Pa. Code,

section 23.86 (a). These pre-approved providers are “the American Optometric Association, the Pennsylvania Optometric Association, all Board-accredited schools and colleges of optometry, the College of Optometrists in Vision Development (COVD), the Council on Optometric Practitioner Education (COPE), eye and vision related continuing education courses offered by accredited medical colleges..., the Optometric Extension Program, the American Academy of Optometry and its state affiliates, the American Academy of Ophthalmology and its state affiliates, and eye and vision-related courses offered by the American Medical Association and its state affiliates.”

Lastly, keep in mind that courses on office management and practice building are not acceptable for continuing education credits. The Optometric Practice and Licensure Act (63 P.S., Section 244.5 (b)) states, in pertinent part: “No credit shall be given for any course in office management and practice building.”

Newest board member



Gregory J Bittner O.D. was appointed to the board of Optometry by Governor Tom Corbett. He is a 1981 graduate of the Pennsylvania College of Optometry and was the recipient of the clinical excellence award at graduation. Dr Bittner was voted Optometrist of the Year by the Western Pennsylvania Optometric Society in 2012. Dr Bittner maintains a large group practice in Allison Park, Pennsylvania. His practice provides all general optometric services with a concentration in primary eye care. He hopes to bring his 30 years of private practice experience to help guide and promote the profession of optometry.