

# THE SPECTACLE

The California State Board of Optometry protects the health and safety of California consumers through licensing and regulation of the practices of optometry and opticianry.

### **WELCOME TO SPRING!**

This edition of *The Spectacle* includes information on navigating through the BreEZe portal, continuing education (CE) requirements, new optometry graduates, information on Assembly Bill 2138, and recently noticed CE regulation change proposals, plus introduces the Board's newly appointed Executive Officer Gregory Pruden. Keep reading for the latest happenings at the Board!

### Achieving Professional Excellence Through Continuing Education

A contribution by Dr. Jonathon Ross, O.D., M.S., FAAO Diplomate American Board of Optometry and California State Board of Optometry Board Member

The optometry profession has experienced tremendous growth since its inception. It is likely that previous generations of optometrists might not even recognize the profession as it is practiced today. A discipline that originated by simply providing refractive services has flourished through the scope of practice expansion into one of comprehensive eye health and vision care. How has this remarkable transformation been possible? Through the steadfast dedication of our colleagues to a key pledge from the Optometric Oath, which compels us to "strive continuously to broaden our knowledge and skills so that our patients may benefit from innovative and efficacious means to enhance their vision." Californians have been the direct beneficiaries of this professional commitment.

The continued pursuit of scientific and clinical excellence is not only a shared attribute among the medical disciplines, but also is essential for maintaining licensure in California. Continuing education courses must be completed as a condition of license renewal every two years per Business and Professions Code section 3059 by all active or retired volunteer licensed optometrists. Specific requirements based on license type can be found on the official California State Board of Optometry <u>website</u>. Fortunately, we have a number of traditional and novel methods in California for completing our education. Traditional methods include live lectures (synchronous in-person), interactive webinars (synchronous virtual), and the learner-paced study of pre-recorded webinars or journal articles (asynchronous).

In addition, there are a variety of nontraditional methods for obtaining CEs, including attendance at a Board meeting (up to four CE hours), participation as a subject matter expert in the development of the California Laws and Regulation Examination (one CE hour per hour of workshop attendance, not to exceed eight hours), CPR certification (up to four CE hours), a peerreviewed publication (one CE hour per content page), etc. Compliance with education requirements is not only mandatory for maintaining licensure, but also fundamental for optimizing the care, health, and wellness of our patients.

The Board is charged on behalf of Californians with the responsibility of ensuring that optometrists meet the education criteria outlined in Title 16 of the California Code of Regulations section 1536 for licensure through routine auditing. This independent evaluation is critical for maintaining public trust in the optometric profession—an obligation valued by the Board and our members. Be prepared: The Board is committed to increasing the number of licensees audited annually to ensure that our responsibility to consumer protection and public safety is preserved. Thus, it is critical that optometrists have a reliable system for maintaining organized and accurate records of completed CE.

An electronic filing system proven to be effective is the Association of Regulatory Boards of Optometry (ARBO) OE TRACKER. This service allows optometrists to conveniently upload documentation of CE into a readily accessible cloud database. Upon completion of a CE course, you may upload your certificate to the ARBO <u>OE TRACKER website</u>. OE TRACKER also provides statistical analysis of your current CE status, so you have a clear view of your progress in overall and individual CE categories (e.g., glaucoma, ocular disease, etc.) toward license renewal. In the event of an audit, those with accounts can simply provide the Board with your specific OE TRACKER number.

While those who maintain a hardcopy record are required to submit complete documentation for all CE completed during the license renewal period, it is important to be aware that completing documentation for license renewal via the California Department of Consumer Affairs (DCA) BreEZe website requires your signature on a legal electronic document attesting to your completion of CE. Unfortunately, failure to meet CE requirements following the signing of the documentation would violate a "condition of license renewal" and is viewed as making a false statement under penalty of perjury, which could result in a fine and a public record of the infraction for five years. Practitioners in violation then enter a period of abatement where they are required to complete the missing education hours in a limited time period until they are brought into compliance (while time is accruing toward renewal on their current license). Having a dependable organizational system can significantly reduce the uncertainty that can arise during this necessary process and make an unfortunate situation avoidable.

Involvement in our profession is an effective strategy for ensuring that you remain on the cutting edge of medical advancement and successfully complete all your CE requirements. Membership in professional organizations, including the American Optometric Association and the California Optometric Association, are important for understanding the current issues impacting optometry while also providing opportunities to build your intraprofessional network. Local, state, and national associations are always welcoming new volunteers who are excited to contribute toward the progression of eye care. In addition, postgraduate fellowship and diplomate educational programs through the American Academy of Optometry (AAO) and American Board of Optometry (ABO) provide the opportunity for practitioners to keep their professional commitment to lifelong learning while also increasing their exposure to cutting-edge research further sharpening clinical acumen.

Being active within our profession will not only make your career more fulfilling, but also allows you to easily meet and exceed standard education requirements by simply being involved! Rededicating ourselves to the principles of professional growth will allow our generation of optometrists to leave the profession in a better position than when we inherited it. This commitment will ensure that Californians continue to have access to the highest quality eye care and providers in the United States.

### Board Introduces New Executive Officer

On November 3, 2022, the Board appointed Gregory Pruden as its interim executive officer while a search was conducted for a permanent successor. During the March 17, 2023 Board meeting, Pruden was formally appointed as executive officer and he was officially sworn in to his role on March 27, 2023. He joins the Board having spent the previous six years as legislative manager for DCA's Division of Legislative Affairs. He is married to Kelsey Pruden and they have two daughters, Estelle, 7, and Quinn, 6.

Board Executive Officer Gregory Pruden can be reached at **Gregory.Pruden@dca.ca.gov** or (916) 574-7808.



#### **CALIFORNIA STATE BOARD OF OPTOMETRY**



# **Frequently Asked Questions**

Do you have general questions about your license or registration, your profession, or something else? Check out the FAQs below for the answers!

- Q. WHERE CAN I FIND THE COST OF MY LICENSE RENEWAL?
- A. Fees for all license types, including certificates, can be found on the Board's website at **www.optometry.ca.gov/ optometrist/index.shtml**.
- Q. HOW QUICKLY DOES THE BOARD ANSWER EMAILS ONCE THEY ARE RECEIVED?
- A. The Board's goal is to respond to emails within 1–2 business days of receipt.
- Q. HOW DO I FIND OUT ABOUT THE LAWS AND REGULATIONS THAT GOVERN MY PROFESSION?
- A. The Board strongly recommends becoming familiar with the laws and regulations pertaining to Optometry licensees and Registered Dispensing Opticians at **www.optometry.ca.gov/lawsregs/index.shtml**.
- Q. DO I NEED TO DO ANOTHER LIVE SCAN IF I HAD ALREADY COMPLETED ONE WHEN I APPLIED FOR A PREVIOUS LICENSE TYPE (SLD/CLD) WITHIN THE DISPENSING OPTICIAN PROGRAM?
- A. If you had a Live Scan done during an application with the Board under the Dispensing Optician Program, you do not need to complete the process again when completing another application. However, you must complete another Live Scan if your initial license is canceled. Additionally, if you completed the Live Scan process for a non-Dispensing Optician profession (i.e., cosmetology) or for a job or volunteer position, you must complete the process again. Please get in touch with the Board if you have any questions before completing this process.

Questions regarding the practice of optometry or your optometry license renewal can be sent to **optometrylicensing@dca.ca.gov**. For questions regarding your Optician application or registration can be sent to **opticianlicensing@dca.ca.gov**. Questions about enforcement issues can be sent to **CSBOenforcement@dca.ca.gov**.

### **Spring Is an Exciting Time for Optometry Graduates in California!**

As spring approaches, three classes of California optometry graduates will prepare for licensure and start their professional careers. The Board gets over 200 applications each summer from new graduates. New graduates bring fresh perspectives, the latest training, and inspired energy, making them excellent additions to a practice.

As exciting as it may be to hire a new optometry graduate, you must take the below precautions to ensure you are not hiring a graduate who has not yet been licensed as an optometrist.

### Q. How do you make sure the new graduate interested in working for you is a safe and competent optometrist?

#### A. Check for their license!

Before issuing an optometrist license, the Board verifies that each applicant meets the same minimum training, skills, and knowledge requirements and that they are eligible for licensure (**Business and Professions Code section 480**).

You can verify an applicant's license by contacting the Board directly or using DCA's online license search:

#### https://search.dca.ca.gov.

On DCA's online license search, you can find out when a license was issued, when it expires, what the current status is, what level of license certification the licensee has, if they have an Immunization Certification, and any public actions taken against the license.

#### Q. What can you do if your new optometrist's application for licensure is still pending?

#### A. Be patient!

The graduation season can mean longer than normal processing times for applications. After graduation, it can take a month or more for the Board to receive school transcripts, exam scores, and fingerprint results. An application is not considered complete and submitted for review until all items have been received.

#### Q. Can your new graduate start working while you wait?

**A.** Until an Optometrist license is issued, a new graduate cannot do any work within the scope of practice for a licensed optometrist (**Business and Professions Code section 3041**).

#### Q. Can I lose my license if an unlicensed person practices optometry in a practice I own?

**A.** It is a violation of the law to employ an unlicensed person for the practice of optometry and to aid or abet the unlicensed practice of optometry. Doing so will result in disciplinary action being taken against your license (**Business and Professions Code section 3040**).

### **The More You Know** *New Graduates: Read This!*

As many optometry students are getting ready to graduate, Board staff is gearing up to process hundreds of applications from new graduates.

The Board uses an online platform called **BreEZe** for all licensing applications, forms, and license renewals. Please review and follow the below steps to ensure you are correctly applying for your California optometry license.

- 1. Navigate to the **BreEZe website** (a link can also be found on the homepage of the Board's website).
- 2. Create an account.
- After creating an account, you will be asked to start an application. Please select Optometrist—Law Exam Request Application Part 1.
- **4.** Please make sure to add your email address and phone number. Without this information, the application process could be extended.
- After you have completed and paid for Part 1 of the application, Psychological Services Incorporated (PSI)—the testing vendor—will contact you to register for the California Laws and Regulations Examination (CLRE).
- Upon successful completion of the CLRE, you will go back into your BreEZe account and click Manage My Application. Here you will find Part 2 of the application. You will be required to pay \$85 for your TLG specialization certificate.

After completing Part 2 of the application process, the Board must receive the following documents to complete the processing:

- 1. Transcripts. You are required to submit your transcripts to the California State Board of Optometry after you graduate from an accredited optometry program. A list of accredited optometry degree programs can be found **here**.
- 2. National Board of Examiners in Optometry (NBEO) scores. NBEO scores must be released to California. Please contact NBEO to confirm that this option was selected. The scores will be released after you graduate. Please include your OE TRACKER number in your application. Staff can use this information to access NBEO scores once you've authorized NBEO to release them to us.
- 3. Fingerprints. Fingerprints must be submitted on the Board's Live Scan form. You can email **optometry@dca.ca.gov** and request a Live Scan packet, which will include directions and the required form. If you are applying while living outside of California, you will submit your fingerprints by physical or "hard" cards. You can email **optometry@dca.ca.gov**, provide a mailing address, and request hard cards be mailed to you.

#### I JUST GRADUATED—WHEN WILL I GET MY LICENSE?

It can take four to six weeks from your graduation date for the Board to receive your transcripts and NBEO scores. The application processing timeline does not start until those items are received. You can find current processing times for complete applications on the Board's website (https://optometry.ca.gov/optometrist/ index.shtml#apptime0). Please remember that processing times won't start until your transcripts, NBEO scores, and fingerprint results are received and the application is fully complete.

### Important Information About Your Address of Record

The law requires you to notify the Board of each address at which you practice optometry. If you are practicing at one location, this will be the Address of Record for your optometrist license.

If you are practicing optometry at more than one location, you must apply for and obtain a **Statement of Licensure (SOL)** for each additional practice location. Under the law, an optometrist may have up to 11 practice locations. Your Address of Record on your optometrist license should be your primary place of practice.

You can change the address of record for your Optometrist license from your BreEZe dashboard; however, you **cannot** change the address of a practice location for which you have obtained an SOL. You must apply for a new SOL for each new practice location.

If you are no longer working at a location for which you have an SOL, you can submit a written request for the cancellation of the SOL to **optometrylicensing@dca.ca.gov**. Please be sure to include your SOL license number.

Still unsure? We can help! Send us an email at **optometrylicensing@dca.ca.gov**.

### **Do You Need a Fictitious Name Permit? What You Should Know**

Did you know the Board has over 1,400 active Fictitious Name Permits (FNP)? Here's how to stay compliant with your FNP.

Who Needs a FNP? Pursuant to Business and Professions Code section 3078, an FNP is required when an optometrist wishes to run their practice under another name other than their legal name. The fictitious name must include the words "optometry" or "optometric."

**How do I apply for an FNP?** You may apply for a FNP through BreEZe, the Board's online portal and renewal payment system.

When do I apply for an FNP? If you intend to practice under a fictitious name (any name other than your legal name), you must first apply for and obtain an FNP from the Board before utilizing that name. This applies to your principal place of practice and/

or any additional office locations where you would like to use a fictitious name.

What is the cost of an FNP? The application and renewal fee are \$50 each, and FNPs expire annually on January 31. If the FNP is not renewed by January 31, there is a \$25 delinquent fee.

What else should I know? FNP holders wishing to advertise their practice must always use the approved fictitious name on advertising of any nature, including all signs, cards, envelopes, billheads, and letterheads.

The Board encourages FNP holders to keep up with renewal dates and advertising regulations to stay compliant. For any questions or concerns, please get in touch with the Board at (916) 575-7170 or **optometrylicensing@dca.ca.gov**.

### Board Releases Complaint Form in Spanish and Simplified Chinese

To better serve all Californians, the Board has translated its complaint form into two other common languages: **Spanish** and **Simplified Chinese**. These materials were distributed over the Board's social media channels and via email, utilizing posts in those languages to help spread awareness that the Board is working to better serve its customers.



### Are You Applying for Licensure with a Conviction or Past Disciplinary Action? Here's What You Need to Know (Assembly Bill 2138)

In 2018, the Legislature enacted **Assembly Bill 2138**. A reform bill, AB 2138 restricts the discretion of boards and bureaus within DCA in using prior criminal history as grounds for licensing determinations and established new prohibitions relating to the denial, suspension, and revocation of licensure. AB 2138 prevents programs from using acts involving dishonesty, fraud, or deceit that did not result in a conviction as a basis for the denial of a license, and included the adoption of a seven-year limitation on convictions eligible for licensure denial, subject to specific exemptions. The bill also instituted a ban on requiring applicants to self-disclose prior convictions unless the application is made for a license type that does not require a fingerprint background check. The purpose of the bill was to address recidivism rates by removing barriers to licensure and provide greater opportunities for employment.

In late 2022, a coalition of organizations that support formerly incarcerated and systems-impacted people contacted DCA regarding a review of publicly posted information on board and bureau websites related to AB 2138. Those organizations noted examples of boards and bureaus they felt had inaccurate information posted on their websites, and they asked the Department to ensure that the boards and bureaus displayed accurate and substantive information about AB 2138 on their websites. While the the California State Board of Optometry was not referenced, staff undertook a review of our website and noted an opportunity existed to produce information for licensees, applicants, and the public. A "CSBO—Conviction or Past Disciplinary Action FAQ" document was created, reviewed, and approved by legal counsel. The FAQ has been posted to the Board's **website** and distributed via email.

### **Helpful Hints for Using BreEZe**

Are you trying to renew your license or update your address and cannot find the right pathway once in BrEZe? Do you have more questions than answers when using BreEZe? Review these helpful tips to find the answers!

#### Q. HOW MANY FAILED LOG IN ATTEMPTS DO I GET BEFORE I AM LOCKED OUT OF BREEZE?

A. You have six attempts to log in.

#### Q. ARE MY USER NAME AND PASSWORD CASE SENSITIVE?

**A.** Your user name is not case sensitive but your password is. Note: The new password must meet the following criteria:

- 1. A minimum of eight characters.
- 2. Must not be the same as your user ID.
- 3. Must not be a variation of your user ID.
- 4. Must contain at least one uppercase alphabetic character.
- 5. Must contain at least one lowercase alphabetic character.
- 6. Must contain at least one numeric character.
- 7. Must contain at least one special character.

#### Q. WHAT SHOULD YOU DO IF YOU ARE IN BREEZE AND CANNOT FIGURE OUT HOW TO RENEW YOUR LICENSE/ REGISTRATION, CHANGE YOUR ADDRESS, OR UPDATE YOUR FICTITOUS NAME PERMIT?

**A.** When logged into BreEZe, you will find topic-specific FAQs located at the start of the topic pages labeled as "Quick Answers to Quick Questions."

For BreEZe technical assistance on any of the issues mentioned above, please call the BreEZe help line at (855) 227-9633.



## Have You Been Randomly Selected for a CE Audit?

### **Here's What to Expect**

The intent of the California Legislature is to ensure that consumers are better served by requiring all optometry license holders receive CE after becoming licensed. CE contributes to the advancement and skill in the practice of optometry which is paramount in ensuring the safety of the public.

The California State Legislature enacted statutes regarding CE to ensure that consumers are better served by requiring all optometry license holders to receive CE after becoming licensed. CE contributes to the advancement and skill in optometry practice, which is paramount in ensuring the public's safety.

As a condition of licensure renewal, the completion of CE coursework is required for each renewal cycle. Pursuant to **California Code of Regulations title 16 section 1536(k)**, the Board may conduct an audit of any licensee's attendance of a continuing optometric education course as a means of verifying compliance with the CE requirement for your previous renewal period.

If you are selected for an audit, Board staff will review any CE courses documented in your ARBO **OE TRACKER**. You will then receive a notification from Board staff providing information about the audit, including the renewal period being audited and the cursory audit findings. If you have utilized ARBO's OE TRACKER and all courses have been confirmed, you will be notified of audit compliance. If Board staff is not able to confirm your completion of CEs via ARBO's OE TRACKER, you will receive an audit notification and request to submit completion certificates for all courses taken during the renewal cycle being audited. Saving a copy of your completion certificates will be beneficial to you should you be selected for an audit.

In addition to total CE hours, your CE requirement may include specific types of classes. If you are not certified in Therapeutic Pharmaceutical Agents (TPA), you are required to complete 40 CE hours. If you are TPA certified, you are required to complete 50 CE hours, of which 35 hours are specific to the diagnosis, treatment, and management of ocular disease. If you have a glaucoma certification, 10 hours of the 35 must be specific to glaucoma.

Please click **here** to find more specific information about CE requirements on the Board's website.

### **Recently Noticed CE Regulation Revision Proposal**

On April 14, 2023, the Board's proposed revisions to its CE regulations were noticed and published by the Office of Administrative Law. This began a 45-day comment period that will end on May 31, 2023, during which interested stakeholders can submit comments on the proposal. A copy of the proposed regulations can be viewed **here**.



#### **CALIFORNIA STATE BOARD OF OPTOMETRY**



### **Recent Disciplinary Actions Taken by the Board**

For the most current list of citations issued and disciplinary actions, please visit **https://www.optometry.ca.gov/consumers/disciplinary.shtml**.

The Board provides information<sup>\*</sup> regarding administrative disciplinary actions for immediate access and convenience of interested persons. You can also access the "**Online License Verification**" to verify if a licensed optometrist has had any disciplinary action taken against their license or to verify the current status of a license.

("While the Board believes the information to be reliable, human or technical error remains a possibility, as does a possible delay in posting or updating information.)

#### **CITE AND FINE**

#### Brown, Mitchell Charles (OPT 8934)—Coronado

On March 2, 2023, a \$1,300 citation was issued to Mitchell Brown (OPT 8934) for failing to meet the continuing optometric education requirements within the 2020-2022 renewal cycle and certifying under penalty of perjury on his license renewal that the CE requirements were met (BPC §§ 3059(e), 3110(a)(i)(j) and CCR, tit. 16, §1536, subd. (b)).

### Click here to obtain a copy of the action or to view the doctor's profile.

#### Moline, David Charles (OPT 7528)—Tracy

On March 2, 2023, a \$900 citation was issued to David Moline (OPT 7528) for failing to meet the continuing optometric education requirements within the 2020-2022 renewal cycle and certifying under penalty of perjury on his license renewal that the CE requirements were met (BPC §§ 3059(e), 3110(a)(i)(j) and CCR, tit. 16, §1536, subd. (b)(l)).

### Click here to obtain a copy of the action or to view the doctor's profile.

#### **PENDING ACCUSATIONS**

#### Chuong, Thomas Hoa (SLD 40971)—Rosemead

On February 10, 2023, an Accusation was filed against the registration of Thomas Hoa Chuong (SLD 40971), with an address of record in Rosemead, CA, for Conviction of Substantially Related Crimes and Dangerous Use of Alcohol (BPC §§ 490, 2555.1, 2555.5(a), (k), 2557.1 and CCR, tit. 16, § 1399.270).

Click here to obtain a copy of the action or view the registrant's profile.

#### Trevino, Rogelio (SLD 40960)—Temecula

On February 10, 2023, an Accusation was filed against the registration of Rogelio Trevino (SLD 40960), with an address of record in Temecula, CA, for Criminal Conviction for Child Abuse (BPC §§ 490, 2555.1, 2555.5(k)). **Click here to obtain a copy of the action or to view the registrant's profile**.

#### **PROBATION**

#### Mirza, Haris (OPT 35065)—Porter Ranch

Effective February 23, 2023, the Optometrist license application for Haris Mirza (OPT 35065), with an address of record in Porter Ranch, CA, was approved, the license issued and immediately revoked, the revocation was stayed, and the license placed on probation for one year (BPC §§2540, 3040(a), 3109(a), and 3110(s)). **Click here to obtain a copy of the action or to view the doctor's profile.** 

#### Summers, Brianna (SLD 41814)—Burbank

Effective February 23, 2023, the Spectacle Lens Dispenser registration of Brianna Summers (SLD 41814) with an address of record in Burbank, CA, was revoked, the revocation stayed, and the registration placed on probation for three (3) years for Conviction of a Substantially Related Crime and Dangerous Use of Alcoholic Beverages (BPC §§490, 2555.5(k), (I), and CCR, tit. 16, § 1399.270). **Click here to obtain a copy of the action or view the registrant's profile.** 

#### **REVOKED**

#### Cahoon, Benjamin Paul (OPT 33877)—Lancaster

Effective February 23, 2023, the license of Benjamin Paul Cahoon (OPT 33877), with an address of record in Lancaster, CA, was

revoked for multiple violations of BPC section 3110, Unprofessional Conduct, Sexual Misconduct with a Patient including inappropriate sexual comments, exposing himself, touching of an intimate part of a person, unlawful restraint, Disciplinary Action by a Foreign Jurisdiction; Grounds for Disciplinary Action by State Licensing Board, Issuance of a License by Mistake or Procuring a License by Misrepresentation, Acts Which Would have Warranted Denial of a License, and Misrepresentation/Commission of an Act Involving Dishonesty (BPC §§ 141, 790.6, 3090.5, 3110, 3110(e), (f), (i), (m)(1), (m)(2), by reference to PC § 243.4, and CCR, tit. 16, § 1517). **Click here to obtain a copy of the action or to view the doctor's profile.** 

#### **STATEMENT OF ISSUES (APPLICANTS ONLY)**

#### Nantes, Florentino (SLD and CLD Applicant)

On February 16, 2023, a Statement of Issues was filed against Florentino Nantes (SLD and CLD applicant) following the denial of his applications for Registered Spectacle Lens Dispenser and Contact Lens Dispenser registrations. The basis for the denial was Substantially Related Serious Felony Conviction (BPC §§ 480(a)(1), 2559.2(b), and 2561, by reference to Penal Code section 1192.7). **Click here to obtain a copy of the action**.

### **Your First Renewal After License Issuance**

Your new Optometrist license will expire on the last day of the 24th month after issuance, and, if you renew, every 24 months thereafter.

You can renew your Optometrist license from your BreEZe dashboard by submitting the renewal application and fees. You will be asked to self-certify that you are in compliance with any CE requirements, disclose any new convictions or disciplinary actions, and have the opportunity to update your address of record or legal name.

If your license was issued within one year of your graduation date, you are **exempt** from completing CE for your first renewal. When you complete your renewal application, you can answer that **yes**, you are in compliance with the CE requirement.

# Ask an Analyst Is Here!

### Do you have a general question?

Submit your questions to optometry@dca.ca.gov and look for the answer in the next edition of the *The Spectacle*! Be sure to include *The Spectacle* in the subject line.

# Coming Up in the Summer 2023 Edition of The Spectacle

- The Do's and Don'ts of Advertising
- U.C. Berkeley's Centennial Celebration
- Enforcement Actions Taken

# **How Are We Doing?**

The California State Board of Optometry strives to provide the best possible customer service. Please help us by taking a few minutes to complete our brief customer service satisfaction survey here. Your participation is greatly appreciated.



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www.optometry.ca.gov

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