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To: Board Members **Date:** November 4, 2016

From: Jessica Sieferman **Telephone:** (916) 575-7184
Executive Officer

Subject: Agenda Item 6 - Update, Discussion and Possible Action Regarding OE Tracker Requirements and Potential Amendments to CCR § 1536 Continuing Optometric Education; Purpose and Requirements

Business and Professions Code (BPC) § [3059](#) states, in part, the following:

“It is the intent of the Legislature that the public health and safety would be served by requiring all holders of licenses to practice optometry granted under this chapter to continue their education after receiving their licenses. The board shall adopt regulations that require, as a condition to the renewal thereof, that all holders of licenses submit proof satisfactory to the board that they have informed themselves of the developments in the practice of optometry occurring since the original issuance of their licenses by pursuing one or more courses of study satisfactory to the board or by other means deemed equivalent by the board.”

California Code of Regulations (CCR) § [1536](#) specifies the continuing education requirements based on the certification level. In addition, as part of the license renewal process, optometrists certify under penalty of perjury that they have met the continuing education requirements. Further, CCR § 1536 states that “[t]he Board may conduct an audit of any licensee’s attendance of a continuing optometric education course as a means of verifying compliance with this section.”

Historically, the Board has audited roughly 5% or less of its licensees. This is an extremely time consuming process, and staff is working on researching more efficient methods to perform CE Audits. The Board currently accepts OE TRACKER certificates for audit verification purposes, (CCR 1536(a)(8)), and staff believes OE TRACKER would be the most efficient way to audit licensees. However, until optometrists are required to use OE TRACKER, staff would not be able to fully implement its auditing capabilities.

As discussed during Agenda Item 5, the Optometric Education (OE) TRACKER captures and stores continuing education attendance data for optometrists. The information is retained in the secure ARBO database and can be accessed online by licensees and the Board. OE TRACKER can save time and reduces paperwork by tracking all CE credits electronically.

In August 2013, the Board heard a presentation on the benefits of OE TRACKER (presentation can be viewed [here](#)). Those benefits include the ability for staff to quickly verify CE attendance and audit 100% of licensees. During the presentation, some members asked the presenters some questions, but the Board did not discuss any further.

After attending the 2016 ARBO meeting, the Executive Officer reached out to the California Optometric Association (COA) to obtain preliminary information on OE Tracker. COA expressed concerns with OE Tracker, citing the fee to use it, technology complications, and the lack of customer service available on the weekends. These concerns were forwarded to ARBO, and they have taken steps to mitigate those concerns (will be further discussed during Agenda Item 5).

States throughout the country use OE Tracker differently. Attached is a breakdown of how all ARBO Member Boards utilize OE Tracker.

Action Requested:

Please consider the presentation by OE Tracker and discuss whether or not the Board should pursue requiring optometrists to register with OE Tracker.

Attachment

1. Detailed Member Board Usage of OE Tracker

Detailed Member Board Usage of *OE TRACKER*

May 2016

- ▶ **Alabama Board of Optometry:** Optometrists renew their license online. CE data is automatically transferred from *OE TRACKER* and licensees with the required number of hours do not get audited. Setting this up required programming by the AL Board of Optometry IT staff.
- ▶ **Arkansas Board of Optometry:** Uses *OE TRACKER* for 100% electronic audit. Licensees are encouraged to use *OE TRACKER* and CE providers are instructed to send their attendance data to *OE TRACKER*.
- ▶ **Arizona Board of Optometry:** Require all licensees to use *OE TRACKER* and will complete 100% audit for the next renewal.
- ▶ **Georgia Board of Optometry:** Requires all licensees to use *OE TRACKER*. CE hours are verified for all licensees using *OE TRACKER*.
- ▶ **Illinois Board of Optometry:** Will be using *OE TRACKER* for future renewals. Licensees with the required number of hours in their *OE TRACKER* account will not be audited.
- ▶ **Kansas Board of Optometry:** Optometrists renew their license online. CE data is automatically transferred from *OE TRACKER* and only licensees with the required number of hours can renew. Setting this up required programming by the KS Board of Optometry IT staff.
- ▶ **Maine Board of Optometry:** Set up automatic data transfer for license renewal online starting in 2014. Setting this up required programming by the ME Board of Optometry IT staff.
- ▶ **Maryland Board of Optometry:** Working towards 100% electronic audit. Licensees are encouraged to use *OE TRACKER* and CE providers are instructed to send their attendance data to *OE TRACKER*.
- ▶ **Massachusetts Board of Optometry:** Working towards using *OE TRACKER* for 100% electronic audit.
- ▶ **Minnesota Board of Optometry:** Optometrists renew their license online. CE data is automatically transferred from *OE TRACKER* and only licensees with the required number of hours can renew. Setting this up required programming by the MN Board of Optometry IT staff.
- ▶ **North Dakota Board of Optometry:** Requires licensees to use *OE TRACKER* and performs 100% electronic audit.
- ▶ **Ohio Board of Optometry:** Uses *OE TRACKER* for auditing. Voluntary for licensees. Require all CE providers to submit attendance data.
- ▶ **College of Optometrists of Ontario:** Requires licensees to use *OE TRACKER* and will perform 100% electronic audit at end of next 3-year renewal cycle.
- ▶ **Tennessee Board of Optometry:** Contract with the state to provide web-based continuing education services. All licensees are required to use *OE TRACKER* and CE providers are required to submit attendance to *OE TRACKER*. ARBO does the audit for TN, sending notices to licensees and reports to the Board. The TN Dept. of Health pays ARBO an additional fee for these services.
- ▶ **West Virginia:** Requires licensees to use *OE TRACKER* and performs 100% electronic audit.
- ▶ **Wyoming Board of Optometry:** Requires licensees to have hours in *OE TRACKER* for renewal.

Member Boards Considering using *OE TRACKER* for Auditing Purposes:

- British Columbia
- California
- Hawaii
- Idaho
- Kentucky
- Washington
- Wisconsin

Other Member Boards That Accept *OE TRACKER* Certificates/Transcripts and Have Used *OE TRACKER* to Verify OR Audit CE Hours

- Louisiana
- Pennsylvania
- South Carolina
- Vermont
- Virginia
- Washington, DC

Member Boards Accepting *OE TRACKER* Certificates and Transcripts

- Alaska
- California
- Colorado
- Idaho
- Indiana
- Iowa
- Kentucky
- Michigan
- Mississippi
- Montana
- Nebraska
- Nevada
- New Hampshire
- New Mexico
- New York
- North Carolina
- Oklahoma
- South Dakota
- Texas
- Washington

Member Boards Paying Their Licensees' *OE TRACKER* Fees:

- Maine
- West Virginia
- North Dakota
- Tennessee
- Ontario

State Associations Paying Their Members' *OE TRACKER* Fees:

- Colorado Optometric Association
- Iowa Optometric Association