

NEW YORK STATE BOARD FOR OPTOMETRY

New York State Board for Optometry
Monday May 18, 2026 9:30am
1411 Broadway, 10th Floor
MMMM Room
New York, NY 10018

Members Present: Dana Salgado, Jeffrey Calhoun, Obinna Akano, Stephanie Su, Daniella Rutner

Extended Members: Wayne Gabel, Frank Pirozzolo

Members Absent: Richard Soden, James Coney

SED Staff: Steven Calderon, Azriel Paris

Guests: Thomas “TJ” Côté -NYSOA

Welcome: Dr. Salgado welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 9:38 a.m.

Minutes: Minutes of the January 26, 2026 meeting were approved as corrected. (Rutner/Salgado).

Executive Secretary’s Report

Dr. Calderon started his report by thanking the Board members for their continued dedication and professionalism in their service to the Board and the citizens of New York. He stated that the amendment to Commissioner of Education Regulation §66.2 is scheduled for adoption on May 19, 2026. After adoption the regulation will become effective on June 3, 2026. He discussed the expiration of the memorandum of understanding between NYSED and the SUNY College of Optometry to offer the oral therapeutic certification course and examination. The memorandum of understanding is set to expire on January 1, 2028. Dr. Calderon concluded his report by stating that the updates to the CE provider application process are still currently with OP’s legal office for review and approval. An update on the status of this item is expected by the end of the summer season.

Chair Report.

Dr. Salgado started her report by discussing her interest in Dr. Akano’s upcoming travel to the ARBO Annual meeting from June 13-14, 2026 in Phoenix, Arizona. She discussed a virtual ARBO meeting that she attended in February. The meeting focused on how to properly take state board meeting minutes. Dr. Salgado concluded her report by discussing ARBO’s new State Board Portal system.

Legislative Update

Mr. Coté discussed Assembly Bill A.2202 which would allow optometrists to use all appropriate topical agents for the diagnosis and treatment of patients' eye conditions. He then discussed Assembly Bill A.6615 which would prohibit insurance carriers and vision care plans from restricting sources and suppliers of services or materials, or directing the use of optical labs related to the treatment of patients' eye conditions. Mr. Coté also discussed Assembly Bill A.2558-A would allow physicians who wish to jointly own healthcare practices with other health and mental health service providers to do so.

Mr. Coté discussed the expiration of the 5-year memorandum of understanding between the SUNY College of Optometry and NYSED. The NYSOA is aware of the issue but will not be lobbying on it during the current legislative session. The NYSOA has asked the AAO to help broadcast that memorandum of understanding is ending and that any optometrists, who graduated from a NYS licensure qualifying or AOACOE accredited college of optometry before January 1, 2022, that is seeking to practice in NYS and would like oral prescribing certification to register to take the oral therapeutic certification course and examination from the SUNY College of Optometry. The NYSOA had asked the SUNY College of Optometry to offer the course and examination at a greater frequency before memorandum of understanding expires.

Old Business

Discussion on which COPE course categories can be counted toward an optometrist's oral therapeutic continuing education requirement for registration renewal-

The COPE categories of Systemic disease (SD) and Neuro Optometry (NO) will continue to be considered automatically acceptable toward an optometrist's oral therapeutic continuing education requirement. The Board will create a list of common course topics for Board staff to utilize when reviewing courses for acceptability.

New Business

Discussion on the use of artificial intelligence in the practice of Optometry

The Board discussed the use of artificial intelligence (AI) in the practice of optometry. The Board stated that if an optometrist chooses to use AI in their practice that are still ultimately responsible for any errors resulting from its use. The Board also stated that a licensed professional should be present at any site where examinations are taking place, and that any optometrist employing the use of AI in telepractice must practice with the telehealth guidelines for optometrists that have been issued by the Department.

Discussion on drugs fitting within statute

The Board discussed whether certain drugs fit within the statutory definition of pharmaceuticals certified for optometrists to prescribe.

Next Meeting: The next Board Meeting will be tentatively held on Monday, September 28, 2026 9:30am.

Executive Session: There were no disciplinary cases to be reviewed.

ADJOURNMENT: Motion was approved for Adjournment at 10:58 a.m. (Rutner/Salgado).