

The Florida Senate  
**HOUSE MESSAGE SUMMARY**

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Prepared By: The Professional Staff of the Committee on Health Policy

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[2023s00230.hms.hp]

BILL: CS/CS/SB 230

INTRODUCER: Rules Committee; Health Policy Committee; and Senator Harrell

SUBJECT: Health Care Practitioner Titles and Designations

DATE: May 3, 2023

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### I. Amendments Contained in Message:

**House Amendment 1 — 699797** (body)

### II. Summary of Amendments Contained in Message:

**House amendment 699797** creates an additional exception to the bill’s restrictions on titles and designations that health care practitioners may use to describe themselves and their practice. The amendment provides that a licensed optometrist may use the terms “doctor of optometry” and “optometric physician,” in addition to other titles or abbreviations authorized under his or her practice act, which is found in ch. 463, F.S.

Optometrists are already authorized by their practice act to use “doctor of optometry,”<sup>1</sup> and the bill does not restrict the use of the term “doctor,” which makes that portion of the House amendment unnecessary.

Regarding “optometric physician,” the House amendment seeks to introduce into the bill authority for a health care practitioner to use the term “physician” or a variation thereof that does not already exist in current law. That is, the optometry practice act does not authorize an optometrist to use the term “physician” or “optometric physician.”<sup>2, 3</sup>

The bill’s other exceptions for use of the term “physician” or a variation thereof apply only to practitioners already authorized under current law to use such terminology, namely chiropractic physicians<sup>4</sup> and podiatric physicians.<sup>5</sup> The bill, as passed by the Senate, does not contain an exception for optometrists because there is no such authorization in the optometry practice act.

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<sup>1</sup> Section 463.015(2)(a), F.S.

<sup>2</sup> The term “optometric physician” does not appear in the optometry practice act. All references to individual physicians in the optometry practice act are specific to allopathic physicians licensed under ch. 458, F.S., or osteopathic physicians licensed ch. 459, F.S., either directly or by implication. *See* ch. 463, F.S.

<sup>3</sup> On March 10, 2023, the Board of Optometry published a notice in the Florida Administrative Register of its intent to amend Rule 64B13-3.009 to require licensed optometrists, when promulgating an advertisement, to use at least one “acceptable term, title, or abbreviation” from a list of such terms being added to the rule. The board’s amended rule would include the title “optometric physician” in the rule’s list, despite the lack of legislative authority within the optometry practice act. *See*: [https://www.flrules.org/gateway/notice\\_Files.asp?ID=26913055](https://www.flrules.org/gateway/notice_Files.asp?ID=26913055) (last visited May 3, 2023).

<sup>4</sup> Section 460.403(5), F.S.

<sup>5</sup> Section 461.003(4), F.S.