

SB 129 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Senate Committee On Health Care

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Meeting Dates: 1/28

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Allows licensed optometrists to engage in the practice of telemedicine under specified conditions. Defines "telemedicine" and "eye examination." Allows Oregon Board of Optometry, in consultation with the Oregon Medical Board, to adopt rules related to the practice of telemedicine. Declares emergency, effective on passage.

REVENUE: May have revenue impact, but no statement yet issued.

FISCAL: May have fiscal impact, but no statement yet issued.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

No amendment.

BACKGROUND:

The World Health Organization (WHO) has broadly defined telemedicine as, "The delivery of health care services, where distance is a critical factor, by all health care professionals using information and communication technologies for the exchange of valid information for diagnosis, treatment and prevention of disease and injuries, research and evaluation, and for the continuing education of health care providers, all in the interests of advancing the health of individuals and their communities." Initially popular in the field of radiology, telemedicine has recently spread to other fields, particularly as means to increase access to services. In Oregon, the practice of optometry is defined as the "use of any means other than invasive or laser surgery, or the prescription of Schedule I and II drugs or pharmaceutical agents that are not on the optometric nontopical formulary, for diagnosis and treatment in the human eye, for the measurement or assistance of the powers or range of human vision or the determination of the accommodative and refractive states of the human eye or the scope of its functions in general or the adaptation of lenses or frames for the aid thereof" (ORS 683.010(3)).

Senate Bill 129 allows optometrists in Oregon to engage in the practice of telemedicine in specified circumstances.