**§ 90-123.1. Continuing education courses required.**

All registered optometrists now or hereafter licensed in the State of North Carolina are and shall be required to take annual courses of study in subjects relating to the practice of the profession of optometry to the end that the utilization and application of new techniques, scientific and clinical advances, and the achievements of research will assure expansive and comprehensive care to the public. The length of study shall be prescribed by the Board but shall not exceed 25 hours in any calendar year. Attendance must be at a course or courses approved by the Board. Attendance at any course or courses of study are to be certified to the Board upon a form approved by the Board and shall be submitted by each registered optometrist at the time he makes application to the Board for the renewal of his license and payment of his renewal fee. The Board is authorized to use up to one half of its annual renewal fees for the purposes of contracting with institutions of higher learning, professional organizations, or qualified individuals for the providing of educational programs that meet this requirement. The Board is further authorized to treat funds set aside for the purpose of continuing education as State funds for the purpose of accepting any funds made available under federal law on a matching basis for the promulgation and maintenance of programs of continuing education. In no instance may the Board require a greater number of hours of study than are available at approved courses held within the State, and shall be allowed to waive this requirement in cases of certified illness or undue hardship. (1969, c. 354; 1981, c. 811, s. 3.)