

Orthotics and Prosthetics Board of Examiners

45:12B-1. Short title

1. This act shall be known and may be cited as the "Orthotist and Prosthetist Licensing Act."

L.1991,c.512,s.1.

45:12B-2. Findings, declarations

2. The Legislature finds and declares that:

- a. The practice of orthotics and prosthetics may, if unregulated, seriously harm or endanger the health, safety, and well-being of the citizens of this State;

- b. Citizens of this State need, and will benefit from, an assurance of initial and ongoing professional competence among orthotists and prosthetists practicing in this State;

- c. The present unregulated system for dispensing orthotic and prosthetic care does not adequately meet the needs or serve the interests of the public; and

- d. It is necessary for this State to regulate and license the practice of orthotics and prosthetics for the purpose of protecting the citizens of this State from injury or harm caused by ill-prepared, incompetent, unscrupulous, or unauthorized practitioners and to assure the highest degree of professional conduct on the part of orthotists and prosthetists practicing in this State.

L.1991,c.512,s.2; amended L.1992,c.134,s.2.

45:12B-3 Definitions relative to orthotics and prosthetics.

3. As used in this act:

"Board" means the Orthotics and Prosthetics Board of Examiners created by section 4 of this act.

"Chairperson" means the member that is elected yearly by the board.

"Director" means the Director of the Division of Consumer Affairs in the Department of Law and Public Safety.

"Orthotic appliance" means, solely for the purposes of this act, a brace or support but does not include fabric and elastic supports, corsets, arch supports, trusses, elastic hose, canes, crutches, cervical collars, dental appliances or other similar devices carried in stock and sold by drug stores, department stores, corset shops or surgical supply facilities.

"Orthotics" means the science or practice of measuring, designing, constructing, assembling, fitting, adjusting or servicing orthotic appliances for the correction or alleviation of musculoskeletal diseases, injuries, or deformities as permitted by prescriptions from a licensed doctor of medicine, dentist, or podiatrist.

"Licensed orthotist" means any person who practices orthotics and who represents himself to the public by title or by description of services, under any title incorporating such terms as "orthotics," "orthotists," "orthotic," or "L.O." or any similar title or description of services, provided that the individual has met the eligibility requirements contained in section 11 of this act and has been duly licensed under this act.

"Licensed orthotist assistant" means a person who is licensed pursuant to the provisions of this amendatory and supplementary act and who assists a licensed orthotist under his supervision.

"Person" means any individual, corporation, partnership, association, or other organization.

"Prosthetic appliance" means, solely for the purposes of this act, any artificial device that is not surgically implanted and that is used to replace a missing limb, appendage, or any other external human body part including devices such as artificial limbs, hands, fingers, feet and toes, but excluding dental appliances and largely cosmetic devices such as artificial breasts, eyelashes, wigs, or other devices which could not by their use have a significantly detrimental impact upon the musculoskeletal functions of the body.

"Prosthetics" means the science or practice of measuring, designing, constructing, assembling, fitting, adjusting or servicing prosthetic appliances as permitted by prescriptions from a licensed doctor of medicine or podiatric medicine.

"Licensed prosthetist" means a person who practices prosthetics and who represents himself to the public by title or by description of services, under any title incorporating such terms as "prosthetics," "prosthetist," "prosthetic," or "L.P." or any similar title or description of services, provided that the individual has met the eligibility requirements contained in section 11 and has been duly licensed under this act.

"Licensed prosthetist assistant" means a person who is licensed pursuant to the provisions of this amendatory and supplementary act and who assists a licensed prosthetist under his supervision.

"Licensed prosthetist-orthotist" means any person who practices both disciplines of prosthetics and orthotics and who represents himself to the public by title or by description of services, under any title incorporating such terms as "prosthetics-orthotics," "prosthetist-orthotist," "prosthetic-orthotic," or "L.P.O." or any similar title or description of services, provided that the individual has met the eligibility requirements contained in section 11 and has been duly licensed in both disciplines of prosthetics and orthotics under this act.

"Licensed prosthetist-orthotist assistant" means a person who is licensed pursuant to the provisions of this amendatory and supplementary act and who assists a licensed prosthetist-orthotist under his supervision.

L.1991,c.512,s.3; amended 1999, c.115, s.1; 2005. c.259, s.17.

45:12B-4 Board of Examiners, creation, purpose.

4. There is created within the Division of Consumer Affairs in the Department of Law and Public Safety the Orthotics and Prosthetics Board of Examiners. The board shall be responsible for the licensure of orthotists and prosthetists and persons eligible to be licensed in both disciplines of prosthetics and orthotics as licensed prosthetist-orthotists and for the licensure of orthotist assistants, prosthetist assistants, and prosthetist-orthotist assistants.

L.1991,c.512,s.4; amended 1999, c.115, s.2.

45:12B-5 Membership of the board.

5. The board shall consist of 11 residents of this State, 10 of whom shall be appointed by the Governor with the advice and consent of the Senate, as follows. Two members shall be orthotists who shall fulfill the licensure requirements of this act, and two members shall be prosthetists who shall fulfill the licensure requirements of this act. Two members shall be prosthetist-orthotists who shall fulfill the licensure requirements of this act. One member shall be licensed to practice medicine and surgery in this State pursuant to chapter 9 of Title 45 of the Revised Statutes and one member shall be a doctor of podiatric medicine licensed to practice podiatric medicine pursuant to chapter 5 of Title 45 of the Revised Statutes. Two members shall be public members, one of whom is a prosthetic user and one of whom is an orthotic user. One member shall be a member of the executive branch who shall be appointed by the Governor. Members shall be appointed to affect balanced geographic representation from the central, northern and southern areas of the State. The board shall annually elect from its members a chairperson and a vice-chairperson.

L.1991,c.512,s.5; amended 2005, c.259, s.18.

45:12B-6. Terms of members, vacancies

6. Each member of the board, except the members first appointed, shall serve for a term of three years and shall hold office until the appointment and qualification of his successor. The initial appointments to the board shall be: three members for a term of one year, four members for terms of two years, and four members for terms of three years. No member shall serve more than two terms or for a total of more than six years.

The orthotist, prosthetist and prosthetist-orthotist members of the initial board shall be deemed to be and shall become licensed practicing orthotists, prosthetists and prosthetist-orthotists immediately upon their appointment and qualification as members of the board, provided that these members meet all other requirements for licensure under this act within 18 months of their appointment. Vacancies shall be filled for the unexpired term only.

L.1991,c.512,s.6.

45:12B-7. Oath of members, meetings

7. The members of the board, before entering the discharge of their duties, and within 30 days of their appointment, shall take and subscribe to an oath before an officer authorized to administer oaths in this State for the faithful performance of their duties and shall file the oath with the Secretary of State.

Regular meetings of the board shall be held at such times and places as the chairperson prescribes, and special meetings may be held upon the call of the chairperson or the vice-chairperson in the chairperson's absence. At least one regular meeting shall be held each year.

L.1991,c.512,s.7.

45:12B-8. Reimbursement for expenses

8. The members of the board shall serve without compensation. Members shall be reimbursed by the State Treasurer for their actual expenses arising out of their service on the board. All reimbursements shall be paid from the revenues of the board.

No officer or employee of the State shall be deemed to have forfeited or shall forfeit his office or employment or any benefits or emoluments by reason of his appointment to the board or his appointment as a consultant to the board or his performance of other services for the board.

L.1991,c.512,s.8.

45:12B-9 Duties of the board.

9. The board shall have the following duties:

- a. To establish minimum requirements for orthotist, prosthetist and prosthetist-orthotist licenses and for orthotist assistant, prosthetist assistant and prosthetist-orthotist assistant licenses;
- b. To establish standards, guidelines, and procedures for the completion of clinical internships;
- c. To evaluate the qualifications of all applicants for licensure as orthotists, prosthetists and prosthetist-orthotists and as orthotist assistants, prosthetist assistants and prosthetist-orthotist assistants;
- d. To supervise the examination of applicants;
- e. To establish basic requirements for continuing education; and
- f. To take any actions at the chairperson's request which may be necessary or appropriate to achieve the purposes of this act.

L.1991,c.512,s.9; amended 1999, c.115, s.3.

45:12B-10. Executive director of board

10. There shall be an Executive Director of the board appointed by the director who shall serve at the director's pleasure. The salary of the Executive Director shall be determined by the director within the limits of available funds. The director shall be empowered within the limits of available funds to hire any assistants as are necessary to administer this act.

L.1991,c.512,s.10.

45:12B-11 Eligibility for license as orthotist, prosthetist; examinations.

11. To be eligible for a license to practice orthotics or prosthetics in this State, an individual shall:

a. (1) Possess a bachelor's degree or its equivalent from a college or university accredited by a regional or national accrediting agency recognized by the United States Secretary of Education;

(2) Complete a clinical internship in the professional area for which a license is sought of not less than 1900 hours under the supervision of a licensed orthotist or prosthetist, as the case may be; and

(3) Pass all written, practical and oral examinations, which shall be approved and required by the board and which shall be administered at least once each year ; or

b. Meet the following requirements within five years after the date procedures are established by the board for applying for licensure:

(1) Complete a clinical practice in the professional area for which a license is sought of not less than 1900 hours under the supervision of a licensed orthotist or prosthetist, as the case may be;

(2) Pass all written, practical and oral examinations, which shall be approved and required by the board and which shall be administered at least once each year; and

(3) Possess an associate's degree in science from a college or university accredited by a regional or national accrediting agency recognized by the United States Secretary of Education with satisfactory completion of course work in biology, anatomy and physiology, physics and chemistry.

The standards and requirements for licensure established by the board shall be substantially equal to or in excess of standards commonly accepted in the fields of orthotics and prosthetics.

L.1991,c.512,s.11; amended 1999, c.115, s.4.

45:12B-11.1 Requirements for licensure as assistant; examinations.

10. To be eligible for licensure as an orthotist assistant, prosthetist assistant or prosthetist-orthotist assistant, an individual shall submit satisfactory evidence to the board that he:

- a. Is at least 18 years of age;
- b. Is of good moral character;
- c. Possesses a high school diploma or its equivalent;
- d. Has completed not less than 40 hours of a formal training program in orthotics or prosthetics in the case of an individual seeking licensure as an orthotist assistant or prosthetist assistant, as the case may be, or not less than 80 hours of a formal training program in the case of an individual seeking licensure as a prosthetist-orthotist assistant;
- e. Has completed 1900 hours of clinical practice in the professional area in which a license is sought under the supervision of a licensed orthotist or prosthetist, as the case may be; and
- f. Has passed all written, practical and oral examinations, which shall be approved and required by the board for the examination of assistants and which shall be administered at least once each year.

L.1999,c.115,s.10.

45:12B-12 License based on experience prior to May 21, 1999.

12. Any person who practiced full-time for three years prior to the effective date of this amendatory and supplementary act in an established prosthetic-orthotic facility as an orthotist, prosthetist, or prosthetist-orthotist may file an application with the board within 180 days after the date procedures are established by the board for applying for licensure to continue to practice orthotics or prosthetics under the provisions of this act. The applicant may obtain a license to practice orthotics or prosthetics under the provisions of this act without satisfying the requirements of subsection a. or b. of section 11 of P.L.1991, c.512 (C.45:12B-11), upon receipt of payment of the licensing fee required pursuant to section 21 of this act and after the board has completed an investigation into the applicant's work history. The board shall complete its investigation for the purposes of this section within six months of the date of receipt of the application and make a final determination regarding license approval.

L.1991,c.512,s.12; amended 1999, c.115, s.5.

45:12B-13 Licenses, duration, practice.

13. The board shall issue a license to practice orthotics or prosthetics or act as an orthotist assistant, prosthetist assistant or prosthetist-orthotist assistant to all applicants who meet the qualifications established pursuant to this act. Licenses shall be effective for a two-year period and may be renewed biennially.

Licensure shall be granted independently in orthotics or prosthetics. An individual may be licensed in both disciplines if that person meets the standards set forth by the board.

L.1991,c.512,s.13; amended 1999, c.115, s.6.

45:12B-14. Temporary licenses

14. The board may issue a temporary license to:

a. Any individual who presents bona fide proof that he was actively engaged in the full-time practice of orthotics, prosthetics, or both, in this State for two of the last five years immediately preceding the date of enactment of this act; or

b. Any individual who has recently become a resident of this State, who has applied for licensure as an orthotist, prosthetist, or both, and who has been licensed by the state of his former residence.

A temporary license shall expire in one year. A temporary license may be renewed for up to one year if an applicant presents sufficient evidence of good cause for renewal.

L.1991,c.512,s.14.

45:12B-15. Student registrations

15. The board may issue a student registration to any person who has received a bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university approved by the Department of Higher Education and who is working toward fulfillment of the requirements for licensure as an orthotist, prosthetist or prosthetist-orthotist. A student registrant shall work only under the direct and immediate supervision of a licensed orthotist, prosthetist or prosthetist-orthotist, who shall be responsible for the actions of the registrant. Student registrations shall be in effect for a period of two years and may be renewed once for an additional two years.

L.1991,c.512,s.15.

45:12B-16. Reciprocal license

16. The board may accept in lieu of a written examination proof that an applicant for licensure holds a current license in a state which has standards essentially equivalent to those of this State.

L.1991,c.512,s.16.

45:12B-17 License required to practice.

17. No person shall practice, attempt to practice, or hold himself or itself out as being able to practice orthotics or prosthetics or act as an orthotist assistant, prosthetist assistant or prosthetist-orthotist assistant in this State unless that person is licensed in accordance with the provisions of this act.

L.1991,c.512,s.17; amended 1999, c.115, s.7.

45:12B-18 Inapplicability of act.

18. The provisions of this act shall not apply to:

a. The activities and services of any person who is licensed to practice medicine and surgery, dentistry or podiatric medicine by this State;

b. The activities and services of a student, fellow, or trainee in orthotics or prosthetics pursuing a course of study at an accredited college or university, or working in a recognized training center or research facility, if these activities and services constitute a part of his course of study under a supervisor licensed pursuant to this act;

c. The design, modification, fabrication and application of upper extremity adaptive equipment, finger splints and hand splints by an occupational therapist or a licensed physical therapist;

d. The provision of corsets and soft cervical collars by licensed physical therapists;

e. The provision of lower extremity orthotics made of fabric, canvas, neoprene or elastic with or without metal or plastic insertable or removable hinges or stays by licensed physical therapists;

f. The provision by a licensed physical therapist of any lower extremity, low temperature splint or ankle foot orthotic when such bracing is for the evaluation or treatment of an adult patient for less than three months or a pediatric patient for less than one year without the consultation of a licensed orthotist and when the braces do not become the patient's property;

g. The provision of any off-the-shelf ankle foot orthosis made of fabric, canvas, neoprene, elastic with or without metal or plastic inserts and any low temperature posterior leaf ankle foot orthosis by a licensed physical therapist;

h. The provision of any high temperature posterior leaf ankle foot orthosis by a licensed physical therapist conducting research at a college or university accredited by a regional or national accrediting agency recognized by the United States Secretary of Education in accordance with standard protocols;

i. The management of lower extremity prosthetic volumetric changes by a licensed physical therapist. Any non-reversible changes shall be addressed by the treating licensed physical therapist only after direct consultation with the treating prosthetist; or

j. The activities and services of a certified pedorthist; except that this subsection shall not prevent any certified pedorthist from applying for and obtaining a license under the provisions of P.L.1991, c.512 (C.45:12B-1 et seq.) limiting that person's practice of orthotics and prosthetics to the ankle and below. As used in this subsection: "certified pedorthist" means a person certified by the American Board for Certification in Pedorthics, or its successor, in the design, manufacture, fit and modification of shoes and related foot appliances from the ankle and below as prescribed by a licensed doctor of medicine or podiatric medicine for the amelioration of painful or disabling conditions of the foot; and "foot appliances" includes, but is not limited to, prosthetic fillers and orthotic appliances for use from the ankle and below.

L.1991,c.512,s.18; amended 1992, c.134, s.1; 1999, c.115, s.8; 2005, c.259, s.19.

45:12B-19. Continuing education requirement

19. All applicants for license renewal shall submit to the board evidence of satisfactory completion of the continuing education requirements established and published by the board.

The board shall notify each licensed individual of any failure to comply with this requirement, and shall further notify such a person that upon continued failure to comply within three months of the date of the notice, the board may take any action authorized by section 23 of this act, concerning the suspension or revocation of a license.

L.1991,c.512,s.19.

45:12B-20 In State office, address requirement; publication.

20. a. Every licensed practitioner of orthotics, prosthetics, or both, shall maintain an office in this State.

b. Every licensed practitioner of orthotics, prosthetics, or both, and every licensed orthotist assistant, prosthetist assistant, and prosthetist-orthotist assistant in this State shall notify the board of the practitioner's or assistant's office address. Every practitioner and assistant shall promptly notify the board of any change of office address. The board shall annually publish complete lists of the names and office addresses of all orthotists, prosthetists and prosthetist-orthotists, and all orthotist assistants, prosthetist assistants and prosthetist-orthotist assistants, licensed and practicing or assisting licensed practitioners in this State.

L.1991,c.512,s.20; amended 1999, c.115, s.9.

45:12B-21. Fees of board

21. All applicants for licenses, temporary licenses, student registrations, or renewals under this act shall pay a fee for the issuance or renewal. Fees shall be determined by the board. The revenue generated from these fees shall not exceed the operating costs incurred by the board under this act.

L.1991,c.512,s.21.

45:12B-22. Costs of act to be sustained by revenue from act

22. All fees and fines imposed by the board shall be forwarded to the State Treasurer for deposit in the General Fund. Any expenditure deemed necessary to carry out the provisions of this act shall be paid by the State Treasurer from the funds collected and forwarded by the board. The expenditures made pursuant to this act shall not exceed the revenues from the operation of this act during any fiscal year.

L.1991,c.512,s.22.

45:12B-23. Suspension, revocation, etc. of licenses, grounds

23. The board may, upon notice and opportunity for a hearing, revoke, suspend, or refuse to renew any license, temporary license, or student registration issued pursuant to this act, upon a finding:

a. That the license or student registration was obtained by means of fraud, misrepresentation, or concealment of material facts;

b. Of fraud or deceit in connection with services rendered;

c. Of unprofessional or unethical conduct;

d. Of gross negligence or malpractice; or

e. That any provision of this act, or any rule or regulation promulgated pursuant to this act, has been violated.

L.1991,c.512,s.23.

45:12B-24. Restoration of licenses

24. A license or student registration may be restored after one year from the date of its revocation by the board on whatever conditional terms the board deems necessary.

L.1991,c.512,s.24.

45:12B-25. Violations, penalties

25. A person who violates any provision of this act shall be subject to a penalty of \$200 for the first offense and \$500 for each subsequent offense, to be sued for and recovered by and in the name of the board pursuant to the provisions of "the penalty enforcement law" (N.J.S.2A:58-1 et seq.).

If any person practices or attempts to practice orthotics or prosthetics or holds himself or herself out as being able to practice orthotics or prosthetics in violation of section 17 of this act, each day during which the violation continues shall constitute an additional, separate, and distinct offense for the purposes of this section.

L.1991,c.512,s.25.

45:12B-26. Rules, regulations

26. The board shall adopt, amend, or repeal any regulation as the board deems necessary or desirable to protect the public interest, provided that any regulation adopted, amended, or repealed shall be consistent with the purposes of this act, with the provisions of the "Administrative Procedure Act," P.L.1968, c.410 (C.52:14B-1 et seq.), and with any other federal or State statute, rule, or regulation concerning the use or distribution of orthotic and prosthetic appliances, except that the initial rules and regulations shall be promulgated by the director.

L.1991,c.512,s.26.