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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

ORIGINAL DATE 1/13/16
LAST UPDATED 1/20/16 **HB** 21

SPONSOR Hall

SHORT TITLE Optometrist Qualification of Legally Blind **SB** _____

ANALYST Chilton

APPROPRIATION (dollars in thousands)

Appropriation		Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
FY16	FY17		
	NFI	Recurring	General Fund

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

Responses Received From

Regulation and Licensing Department (RLD)

Medical Board (MB)

Commission for the Blind (CB)

SUMMARY

Synopsis of Bill

Currently, the determination that a person is legally blind can be made only by an ophthalmologist. The purpose of this bill is to allow optometrists to make the same determination. Responses from the RLD and the MB express no concerns with this change. However, CB indicates that the current statute needs to be more completely rewritten to comport with federal regulations and has proposed language to do so. The CB has no objections to the addition of optometrists to the ophthalmologists who are named in the current law.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no apparent fiscal implications.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

None identified.

RELATIONSHIP

HB 102 would refer all scope of practice issues, such as this one, to a committee made up of legislators, for consideration during the interim between sessions.

ALTERNATIVES

More complete rewrite of Section 28-7-19 NMSA 1978, as recommended by the Commission for the Blind.

WHAT WILL BE THE CONSEQUENCES OF NOT ENACTING THIS BILL

Ophthalmologists would continue to be the only persons able to certify an individual as legally blind.

LAC/jo