



Optometrist Scope of Practice

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Vermont House Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs
May 7, 2026



Agenda

NCSL Overview

Optometrist Licensure and Certification

Optometrist Scope of Practice

- Ophthalmic Procedures
- Prescriptive Authority
- Injectable Authority

Closing & Additional Resources

How NCSL Serves State Legislatures

The National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) is the **bipartisan** organization serving **legislators and legislative staff** in America's 50 states, D.C. and territories.

With a strong belief in the importance of the legislative institution, NCSL knows **when states are strong, our nation is strong.**



Source: NCSL

POLICY RESEARCH

NCSL provides trusted, nonpartisan policy research and analysis

CONNECTIONS

NCSL links legislators and staff with each other and with experts

TRAINING

NCSL delivers training tailored specifically for legislators and staff

STATE VOICE IN D.C.

NCSL represents and advocates on behalf of states on Capitol Hill

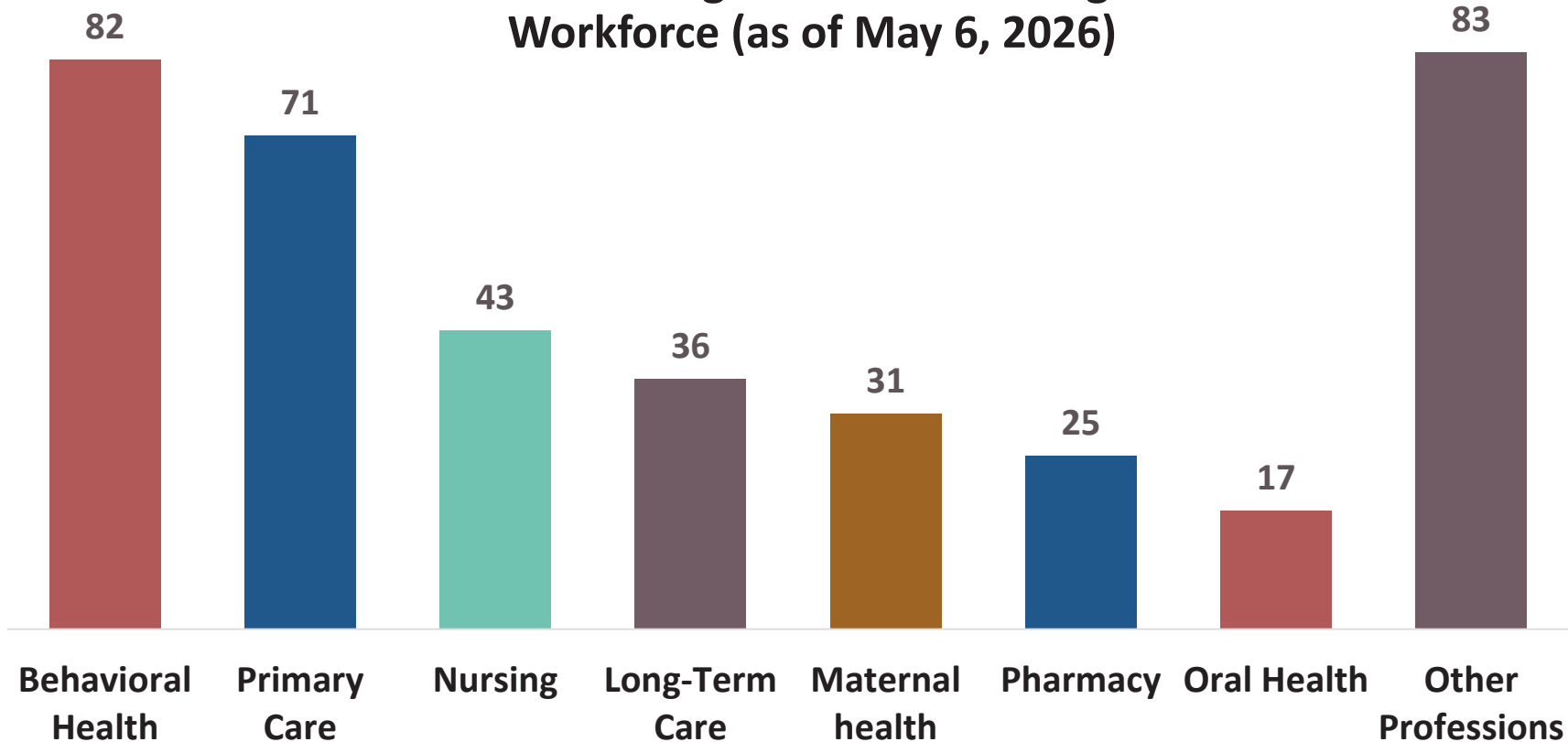
MEETINGS

NCSL meetings facilitate information exchange and policy discussions

Health Workforce Trends: State Legislation

NCSL Resource:
[Health Workforce Legislation Database](#) (Ongoing)

Enacted State Legislation Addressing Health Workforce (as of May 6, 2026)



Source: NCSL (2026)

Types of interventions:

- Licensure and certification (128 bills)
- Scope of practice (102 bills)
- Recruitment and retention (74 bills)
- Education and training (44 bills)

Eye Care Professions

OPTICIAN

- **Responsibilities:** Fit customers for eyeglasses and contact lenses and help them select which frames and lenses to buy.
- **Practice Settings:** Offices or optical goods stores.
- **Education:** High school diploma and on-the-job training.

OPTOMETRIST

- **Responsibilities:** Diagnose, manage and treat conditions and diseases of the human eye and visual system, including examining eyes and prescribing corrective lenses.
- **Practice Settings:** Offices or optical goods stores.
- **Education:** Doctor of optometry degree.

OPHTHALMOLOGIST

- **Responsibilities:** Diagnose and perform surgery to treat and help prevent disorders and diseases of the eye.
- **Practice Settings:** Offices, hospitals or other health facilities.
- **Education:** Doctor of medicine or osteopathy degree, clinical internship and ophthalmology



Optometrist Licensure and Certification





All 50 states require optometrists to complete a doctor of optometry (O.D.) degree.

Clinical residency training categories and emphasis areas:

- Primary eye care
- Pediatric
- Family practice
- Community health
- Geriatric
- Cornea and contact lenses
- Ocular disease
- Refractive and ocular surgery
- Anterior segment
- Glaucoma
- Retina
- Neuro-optometry
- Vision rehabilitation
- Vision therapy
- Brain injury

Source: [Association of Schools and Colleges of Optometry \(2026\)](#)

Optometrist Education and Training Requirements

Education and Clinical Training Requirements

STATE	HOURS	DETAIL
Arkansas	100 hours	Clinical training under the supervision of an ophthalmologist.
California	10 hours	Experience with an ophthalmologist.
Colorado	60 hours	Supervised clinical training.
Connecticut	110 hours	96 classroom hours, 14 clinical hours.
Delaware	1000 hours	6-month internship under a temporary license.
Florida	110 hours	At least 1 year of supervised experience.
Hawaii	100 hours	Preceptorship under the supervision of an ophthalmologist.
Maine	125 hours	100 instruction hours; 25 supervised clinical hours.
Massachusetts	120 hours	90 instruction hours; 30 supervised clinical hours.
New York	300 hours	Clinical training.
Ohio	87 hours	Course study at a post-secondary institution.
Pennsylvania	100 hours	Training in drug prescription and administration.
Tennessee	40 hours	Clinical experience.

Source: [Knee Regulatory Research Center, West Virginia University](#) (Accessed May 6, 2026)

Optometrist Examination Requirements

Administered by the National Board of Examiners in Optometry (NBEO).



NBEO PART I, II AND III

- Part I: Applied Basic Science
- Part II: Patient Assessment and Management
- Part III: Patient Encounters and Performance Skills

TMOD, ISE, LSP, ACOMO

- Treatment and Management of Ocular Disease
- Injection Skill Examination
- Laser and Surgical Procedures
- Advanced Competence in Medical Optometry

JURISPRUDENCE

- Generally administered by states or through NBEO.

Optometrist Continuing Education Requirements

Source: [Knee Regulatory Research Center, West Virginia University](#) (Accessed May 6, 2026)

VERMONT

40 hours every two years.

MISSISSIPPI

20 hours every two years, including 6 hours on primary eye care procedures and 2 hours on prescribing and diversion of narcotics.

ALASKA

40 hours every two years with at least 24 hours in ocular pathology or pharmacology.

PENNSYLVANIA

30 hours every two years with courses in child abuse recognition and reporting and in therapeutic courses.

FLORIDA

26 hours annually, including 2 hours on medical errors, Florida laws and prescribing controlled substances.

RHODE ISLAND

20 hours annually with at least 10 hours in pharmacology.

Scope of Practice Policy

This resource provides nonpartisan, unbiased and objective policy information about the scope of practice laws in the 50 states, District of Columbia and territories.



Related Topic: **HEALTH**

Scope of Practice Policy Home

[Behavioral Health Providers](#)

[Advanced Practice Registered Nurses](#)

[Optometrists](#)

[Oral Health Providers](#)

[Pharmacists](#)

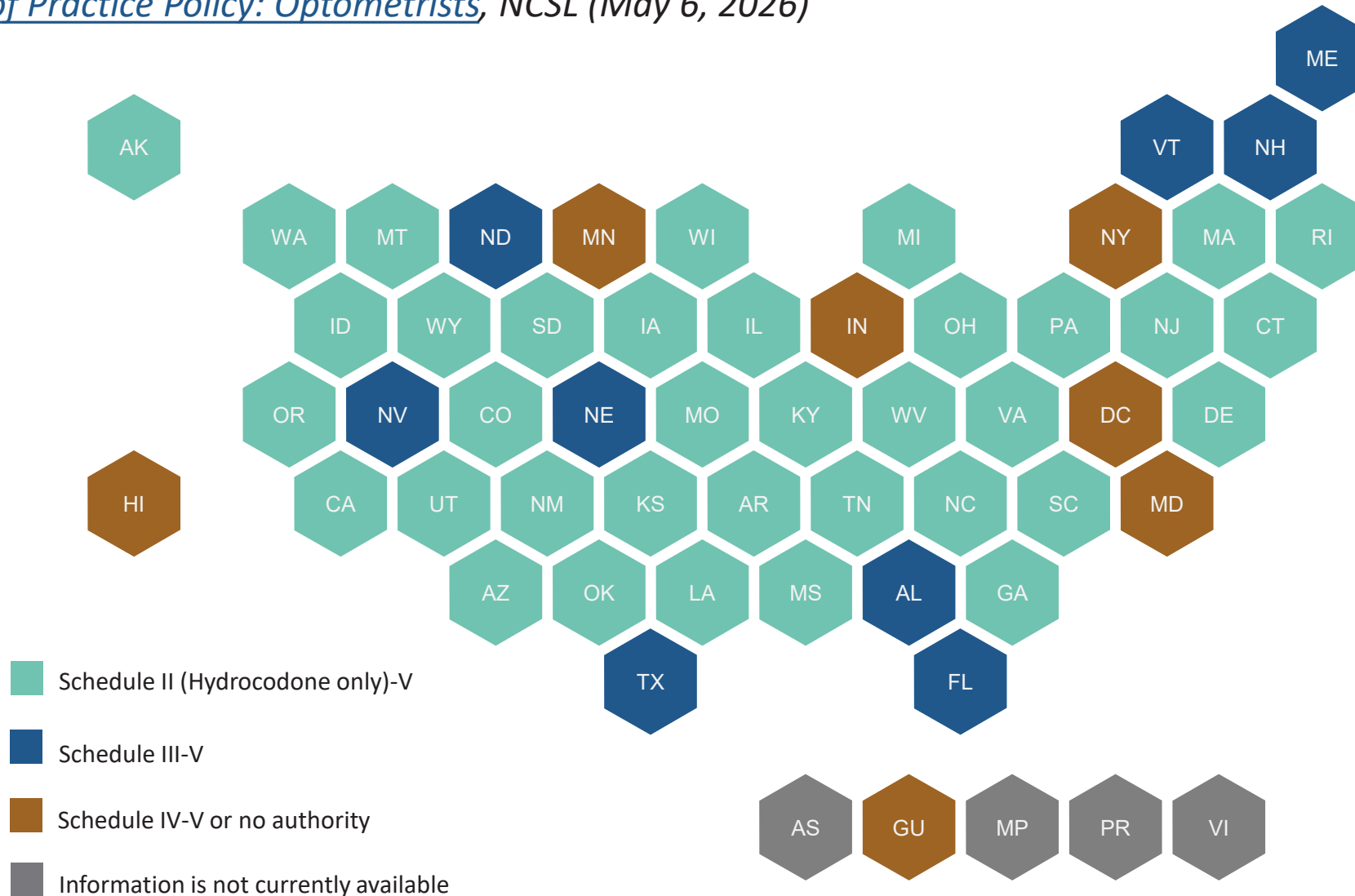
[Physician Assistants](#)

This resource was designed by the National Conference of State Legislatures to educate state policymakers about scope of practice issues related to a range of non-physician health care practitioners who provide important services and can enhance access to care.

Non-physician health care practitioners are increasingly being used to render services in rural and underserved areas to make up for provider shortages. A practitioner's scope of practice refers to what a health professional can and cannot do to or for a patient, and is defined by state professional regulatory boards — typically with the guidance or instruction of the state's legislature. State legislators and other policymakers consider a broad range of issues related to scope of practice, including supervision requirements, prescriptive authority and other requirements for practice.

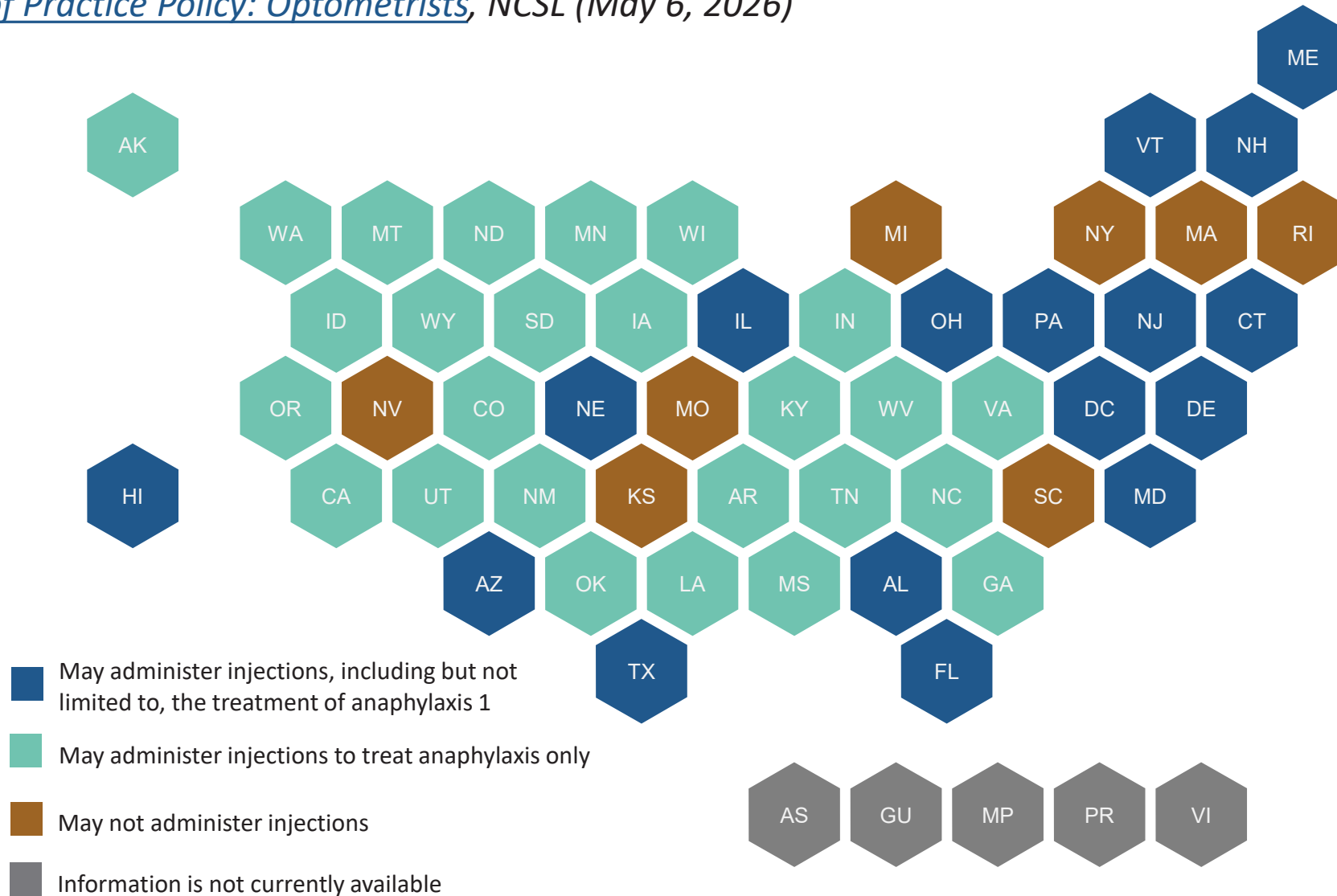
Optometrist Authority to Prescribe Controlled Substances

Source: [Scope of Practice Policy: Optometrists](#), NCSL (May 6, 2026)



Optometrist Authority to Provide Injections

Source: [Scope of Practice Policy: Optometrists](#), NCSL (May 6, 2026)



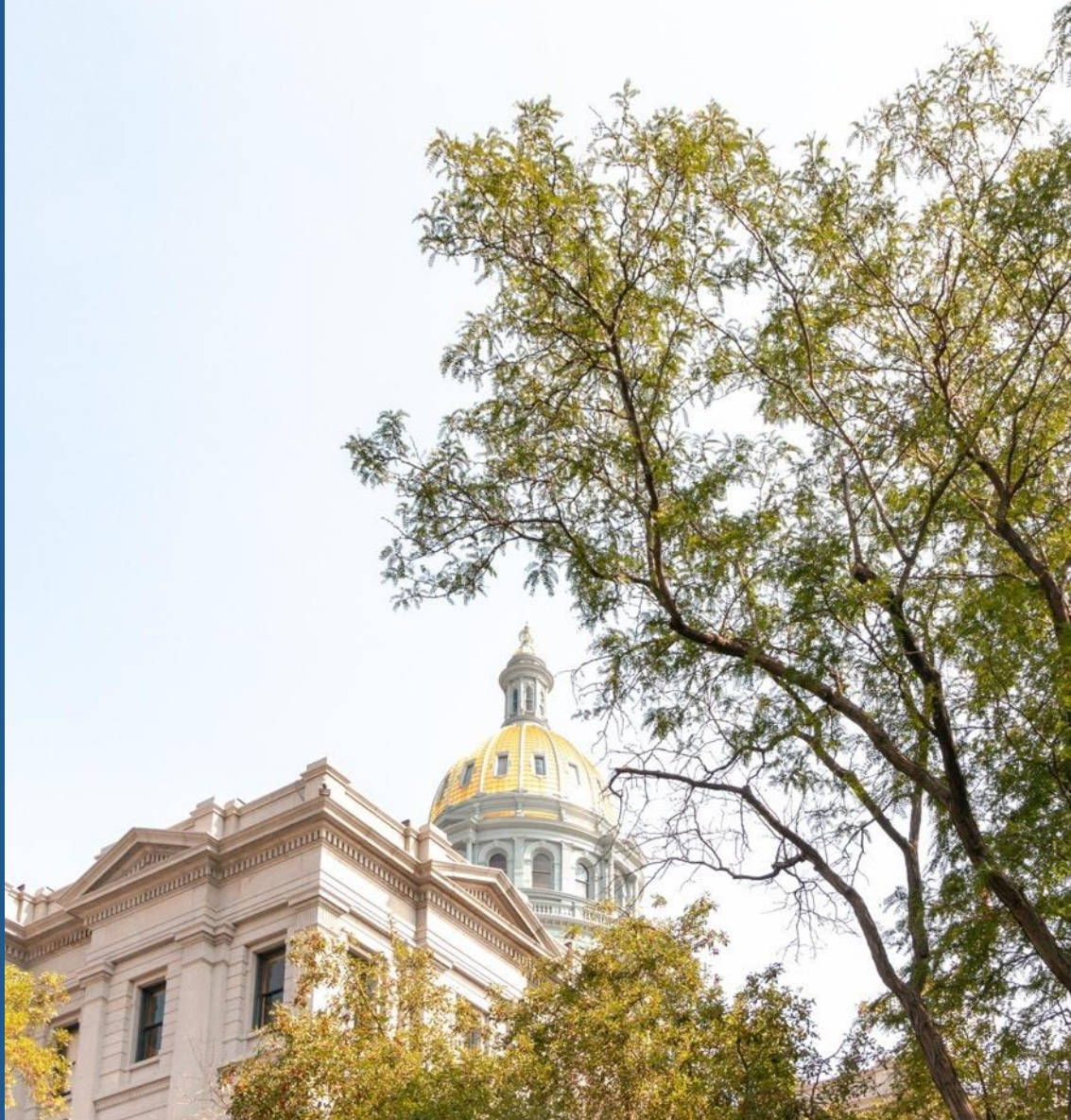
States with Specific Injection Authorities

	<u>Vermont</u> <u>SB 64</u> <u>(Pending)</u>	<u>California</u>	<u>Colorado</u>	<u>Iowa</u>	<u>Minnesota</u>	<u>Mississippi</u>	<u>South Dakota</u>
Epinephrine for anaphylaxis							
Vaccinations							
Fluorescein angiography							
Local anesthesia via injection							
Removal of chalazion							
Therapeutic pharmaceutical agents							
Needle drainage							

Additional Resources

- [Health Workforce Legislation Database](#), NCSL
- [Scope of Practice Policy: Optometrists](#), NCSL
- [Knee Regulatory Research Center](#), West Virginia University
- [American Optometric Association](#)
- [Association of Schools of Optometry](#)





NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF STATE LEGISLATURES

Thank you!

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