

February 10, 2021

Dear Oregon Legislators:

A an ophthalmologist who has been deeply involved in medical education at the medical school, residency and fellowship levels for the last 26 years, **I am deeply troubled by how House Bill 2541 will erode the safe delivery of eye care for Oregonians. This is definitely a public safety issue.**

Surgical eye care leaves little room for error and the ability to deliver such care in a safe and effective fashion requires the necessary preparation through medical school training (4 years), internship as supervised medical doctor (1 year), ophthalmology residency (3-4 years) and in numerous cases fellowship training (1-2 years). **There are no shortcuts to the 9-11 years of medical training needed to practice surgical and medical eye care in a competent and autonomous fashion. No short cuts.**

Ophthalmologists are medical doctors who are also trained surgeons. The training is structured and exhaustive. In order for residents to become eye physicians and surgeons, there is a need to perform successfully a nationally required amount and diversity of procedures through hours and hours of surgical simulation followed by step-wise surgery on humans in a very very controlled and graduated fashion. Trainees will have performed 600 or more supervised surgeries by the time they become ophthalmologists. For those who do sub-specialty fellowship training an additional 500 -1200 procedures must be performed under supervision before we can sign off on them as competent.

Allowing people without such training to do such surgery is dangerous and unconscionable. Performing such surgery without such training is arrogant and a lack of respect for the delicate structures of the eye and visual system. What may seem simple, is absolutely not.

The bill also includes provisions that expand the scope of care for glaucoma. This expansion of scope is not appropriate for this condition that leads to irreversible blindness.

House Bill 2541 is written in a confusing way by having a procedures and surgery listed as exclusions and does not specify inclusions. Neither the exclusions nor the implied inclusions should be performed without proper training and experience. The bill will create confusion among the public. Eye surgery and eye care does not benefit from confusion.

I strongly oppose House Bill 2541. It is not safe for you, me, our families or the people of Oregon.

Sincerely,

Andreas K. Lauer, MD

Portland, Oregon