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SPECIALIZING IN
*Cataract Surgery and
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House Health Care Committee
Oregon House of Representatives
900 Court Street NE, H-489
Salem, OR 97301

Dear House Health Care Committee,

I am writing to you today to voice my support of HB2541, a bill that will allow Oregon's Optometric Physicians to perform certain ophthalmic procedures. As time passes and technology improves it will be beneficial to allow all health care providers to practice to the fullest level of their training. This bill will bring the Oregon scope of optometric practice more in line with what is currently being taught in the schools and colleges of optometry throughout the country.

This bill will also allow for greater access to eye care for our ever aging population. The Association of American Medical Colleges has projected there will be a shortage of physicians over the coming 10-20 years with ophthalmology being highlighted as one subspecialty where there will be a shortage. This will tend to hit rural areas the hardest since the majority of Oregon's ophthalmologist practice in the more urban areas of the state. In the more rural areas Oregon's Optometric Physicians are often the only eye care providers for many miles. This bill will allow eye care to be provided more uniformly across the state.

Oregon's Optometric Physicians have a long history of providing quality eye care to our patients. Past expansions in scope of practice have been put into place without compromise in the quality of the care provided and have increased the ease of access to quality eye care. Given that approximately 85% of the eye care in Oregon is provided by Optometric Physicians this bill will help expedite eye care and decrease unnecessary travel time and duplication of eye care.

This bill is not allowing privileges that are not already allowed in several other states in the US. States like Alaska, Arkansas, Louisiana, Kentucky, and Oklahoma have had similar scope of practice, in some cases for decades, with great success and without compromise in quality of care.

On a personal note, this bill will not be an "expansion in scope of practice" per se for me. This bill will allow me to perform procedures that I was trained for and performed during my residency program 30 years ago in Oklahoma. As such I fully support allowing Oregon's Optometric Physicians to practice to the fullest level of their training for the benefit of their patients. Thank you for your careful consideration in evaluating this measure.

Warm Regards,

Rick R. Burk, OD
Pacific Cataract and Laser Institute
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