

Dear Legislators,

I am writing in opposition of this dangerous bill. Optometrists do not have the extensive medical or surgical training that ophthalmologists do. It's not enough to learn how to do a procedure. Ophthalmologists spend 3 years in residency and possibly 1-2 more years in a subspecialty fellowship to acquire the in depth knowledge, skills, and judgment needed to perform eye procedures as safely as possible. It does take a long time to learn these procedures and more importantly, whether to do them, and how to manage complications. There is a lot of medical judgment and decision making that affects patient safety, including taking the entire medical condition of the patient in mind, and determining whether a patient is appropriate for office based surgery or not, and weighing all the risks vs benefits of the procedure in a particular individual. Sound judgment is often what prevents complications, and this comes from extensive training and experience. Lasers and scalpel surgery all have risk to vision and knowing how to manage complications is critical. This is not something that can be learned in a weekend or few weeks course. Also, we do not have a shortage of ophthalmologists in this state. I am in southern Oregon which is semi-rural and see patients same or next day with any urgent or emergent conditions. Also, there is often a false sense of confidence, or overestimation of one's ability as a novice. This comes from not knowing what one doesn't know. We are seeing a rising number of inappropriately managed, misdiagnosed, and harmed patients in states where nurse practitioners are no longer working with a supervising MD or DO physician. This bill would have optometrists completely deciding on their own what procedures they can perform, without the rigorous training involved in protecting patient safety. And without needing to consult with ophthalmologists. If you personally would want a highly trained expert to laser your own eyes or do surgery in or around your own eyes, or those of your family and children, then please do the right thing and vote this bill down.

Sincerely,

Vivian Schiedler, MD