

I am writing in hopes that the members of the legislature will oppose HB 2541. Though I have enjoyed working collaboratively with my optometric colleagues to provide care for Oregonians, I am deeply worried about the safety of the expanded scope of care that would be granted to optometrists and the Oregon Board of Optometry in this bill.

The ability to do dozens of invasive procedures on patients would be granted virtually overnight at the sole discretion of the Board of Optometry. The list of excluded procedures is only a small fraction of the procedures that surgically trained ophthalmologists must master to provide safe and effective eye care. The safety and sight of Oregonians will be needlessly put at risk if the authority to do these procedures is granted to those without adequate training and expertise to perform these very demanding procedures. Currently, an eye surgeon must spend anywhere from four to six years after medical school learning their profession in a closely monitored setting to develop the diagnostic skills, judgement, and procedural expertise to consistently perform skilled surgery and manage the risk of complications.

The bill also removes the necessity for optometrists to consult with their surgically-trained ophthalmologist colleagues in cases of complex eye disease. Again, this needlessly removes guardrails that help ensure high-quality, safe medical care.

For the health and safety of our fellow Oregonians, please oppose this bill.

Respectfully,

John Hyatt, MD
Ophthalmologist specializing in treatment of retinal diseases
Ashland, OR