



OREGON OPTOMETRIC PHYSICIANS ASSOCIATION

The Case for Practice Modernization

On behalf of its 700-plus members, [Oregon Optometric Physicians Association](#) has submitted a bill ([HB2541](#)) that will expand optometric full practice authority through a proposed change in Oregon state statute. The change, permitting optometrists to perform specified ophthalmic surgery procedures, will ensure greater access to high quality eye health and vision care.



"After completing my studies in Mass., I moved back to Oregon to practice to the full scope of my training and education."

-Dr. Emilee Nehring, OD, OOPA Board of Directors.

Oregon optometrists are trained to perform more procedures than current State statutes allow. No other independent provider group denies patients access to qualified care and the benefits of technology because of unnecessarily restrictive laws and regulations. This will not broaden the scope of what conditions doctors of optometry currently manage and/or treat, but will enable them to utilize the latest technologies to bring their patients the best possible care.

Optometrists are trained and qualified to perform laser surgery and if rules were modernized to maximize the practice of optometry, the result would be greater access to care and the ability to retain optometrists who might otherwise relocate to states that offer the ability to perform these procedures.

Being forced to travel great distances, sometimes across county and state lines, to see an ophthalmologist is a long way to go when you can get the service in your hometown. Not only is it difficult for many rural and elderly to travel, but it is also costly to individuals and Medicaid programs. Revising state rules of optometric procedural practice will benefit all Oregonians through

expanded care and greater access, especially in rural regions of the state.

Students graduating from Oregon's prestigious [Pacific University College of Optometry](#) may opt to practice in a state that allows them to perform to the full extent of their education and training.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services ([HHS](#)) claims in a special report that doctors of optometry can provide some of the same services as other physicians. Current Oregon optometric law creates barriers to optometric practice and care. HHS recommends that: "States should consider changes to their scope of practice statutes to allow all health care providers to practice to the top of their license, utilizing their full skill set."



"As recent wildfires disrupted traffic routes and COVID-19 restrictions interrupted office scheduling, the need for greater access has never been more compelling."

-Dr. Nate Roland, OD, President-Elect, OOPA Board of Directors.