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February 12, 2021

Dear Honorable Legislators:

I am a practicing physician in Oregon and am writing to ask you to oppose HB 2541 that greatly expands the surgical scope for optometrists in Oregon.

In our own group, we in fact have 15 optometrists with whom we work closely and although optometrists are an important part of eye health care in our state, we know firsthand that they do not have the medical training necessary for advanced surgical procedures.

They have not gone to medical school, have not performed a medical internship, have not completed a 3-year medical/surgical residency, all of which is the minimum required of all ophthalmologists before we can treat patients on our own.

An ophthalmologist is an MD who has chosen to specialize in the area ophthalmology.

In contrast, optometrists are not physicians.

The fact that HB 2541 would permit optometrists to perform all the surgeries authorized in this bill without ever having completed medical school and surgical residency is alarming and ultimately threatens the vision and well-being of the people of Oregon. It will place Oregonians at severe risk by creating two vastly unequal standards of care.

I have been in practice in this beautiful state of Oregon since 1983, having completed my medical internship at Good Sam and my ophthalmology residency at OHSU in 1987. I have served the greater Portland area since that time.

I recognize that this type of legislation to some can be readily minimized and dismissed as a turf-battle, but as a physician on the front-line of eye care, day in and day out for the past 30 years, I understand the skills that are required for surgical eye care need to be gained by years of training and cannot be achieved by legislation.

Please oppose and vote "NO" on this dangerous legislation. And please do not hesitate to reach out to me if I can answer any questions.

Respectfully submitted,



Andrew Romanowski, MD