



## OREGON OPTOMETRIC PHYSICIANS ASSOCIATION

Chairperson Neron, Vice-Chairs Dobson and McIntire, and esteemed members of the Committee,

Good afternoon. I'm Dr. Bill Hefner, the president-elect of the Oregon Optometric Physicians Association (OOPA) and the Associate Dean of Clinical Programs at Pacific University College of Optometry. Before my current role within the OOPA and with Pacific University, I served for twenty-four years in the United States Air Force as a Kansas Air National Guardsman and for twenty years in private practice, specializing in pediatric optometry.

I want to start by thanking you for allowing us to share our input on HB 2992.

The Oregon Optometric Physicians Association supports any endeavor that serves to increase access to comprehensive eye and vision care for all Oregonians delivered by licensed eye care providers. While there are more than 660 practicing optometrists in Oregon, with a presence in thirty-four of the thirty-six counties, there are more than 539,000 school-aged children who need access to care – an overwhelming number, especially in geographic regions, where the logistics of getting the child to the eye care provider's office can prove insurmountable for the family.

By focusing on the most vulnerable of Oregon children, the estimated 215,000<sup>1</sup> who rely on Medicaid/CHIP, HB 2992 seeks to codify in statute a mechanism that would support qualified non-profit organizations and the licensed eye care providers who work for them, under the oversight of the Oregon Health Authority in consultation with the Oregon Department of Education, to deliver basic eye exams to these children within the school districts. The Oregon Optometric Physicians Association is in support of HB 2992 with the following caveats:

1. OOPA recommends that the Oregon Board of Optometry serve as a sentinel organization that provides consultation and input to the Oregon Health Authority as part of the rule-making and oversight processes. This would ensure that the non-profit organizations and the eye doctors they employ operate under the same standards of care as those in more traditional settings (such as an office, a clinic, or a hospital), particularly given that they receive public funds in the form of Medicaid payments.
2. OOPA recommends adopting the definition of Eye Examinations from ORS 336.211 to maintain consistency within and between Oregon statutes.

As policymakers and healthcare providers continue to seek meaningful, fiscally responsible ways to provide ready access to high-quality eye and vision care to all Oregonians, regardless of where they live or their ability to pay, the Oregon Optometric Physicians Association remains committed to the endeavor and to those we serve—our fellow humans.

On behalf of the more than 660 practicing Oregon Optometric Physicians, thank you for your time and, more importantly, for carefully considering our comments.

Sincerely,

William F. Hefner, O.D., M.Ed., M.S.S., F.A.A.O.

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President-Elect, Oregon Optometric Physicians Association

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<sup>1</sup> Georgetown Children's Healthcare Report Card (<https://kidshealthcarereport.ccf.georgetown.edu/states/oregon/>)  
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