

REVENUE: No revenue impact

FISCAL: No fiscal impact

Action: Do Pass as Amended and Be Printed Engrossed
Vote: 9 - 0 - 0
Yeas: Bonamici, Bruun, Cannon, Flores, Gelser, Kotek, Maurer, Richardson, Greenlick
Nays: 0
Exc.: 0
Prepared By: Sandy Thiele-Cirka, Administrator
Meeting Dates: 5/4, 5/21, 5/29, 5/31

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES: Allows an optometrist to treat a patient with antiglaucoma medication and to consult with an ophthalmologist if: 1) the glaucoma progresses despite the use of a two medications; 2) more than two medications are required; or 3) a secondary glaucoma develops. Establishes that optometrists, who prescribe pharmaceutical agents, be held to the same liability standards as licensed physicians. Allows optometrists to remove superficial foreign bodies from the eye and its appendages. Specifies that a combination medication that contains two pharmacologic agents shall be considered one medication.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Impact of glaucoma on African-American population
- Scope of practice versus medical protocol
- Current practices for treating glaucoma
- Differences between optometrists versus ophthalmologists
- Additional proposed amendment language

EFFECT OF COMMITTEE AMENDMENT: Specifies that a combination medication that contains two pharmacologic agents shall be considered one medication. Adds clarification to the required conditions that an optometrist consult with an ophthalmologist when treating glaucoma. Increases the consultation requirement from one medication to two medications and if more than two medications are required to control the glaucoma.

BACKGROUND: Glaucoma is usually associated with elevated pressure in the eye. This pressure leads to damage to the optic nerve. Glaucoma is now considered a disease of the optic nerve that causes a loss of vision, usually in both eyes. This loss often begins with a subtle decrease in peripheral vision. If the glaucoma is not diagnosed and treated, it may progress to loss of central vision and blindness. It is the leading cause of blindness in African-Americans.

An optometrist is an eye care professional who is licensed to provide primary eye care services including the diagnosis of glaucoma. An ophthalmologist is a Doctor of Medicine (MD) or Doctor of Osteopathy (DO) who specializes in eye and vision care. They are trained to provide the full spectrum of eye care from prescribing glasses to complex eye surgery.