

Chair Greenlick, members of the committee, my name is Dr. Ashley McFerron. I am a resident of Lake Oswego and own an Optometry practice in Canby where I employ 10 Oregonians. I am also the President-Elect of the Oregon Optometric Physicians Association.

I first want to thank the Legislature in passing HB 3530B in 2015 by a 59 to 0 vote in the House and a 29 to 0 vote in the Senate. The passage protected Oregonians who are patients, local small business owners, and employees. Effective January 1, 2016, this new law made abusive practices by out-of-state, national, for-profit corporations illegal.

HB 4015, which we are discussing today, attempts to unravel these protections after being in effect for only 1 month.

There are 3 main components of the bill:

1. HB 4015 forces participation in one vision plan in order to participate in another plan.
 - a. This would once again allow insurers to force providers contracting for one specific plan to accept additional plans that may not make the most sense for their practice and their patients.
2. HB 4015 forces use of specific optical labs and materials.
 - a. It would force providers to send spectacle lens jobs to out-of-state optical labs that are owned by the insurance company. It would also allow vision plans to require use of their own lenses and products which may not be the best choice for the patient. This reduces our ability to provide the level of service and quality of product that our patients need and deserve. Additionally, it limits choice for not only the provider, but the patient as well.
 - b. Although I don't have my own lens laboratory in my office, I prefer to work with a lab located in Portland due to the quality they provide, the speed at which we receive jobs back to be dispensed to the patient, and their excellent customer service. HB 4015 would allow national vision plan companies to force me to send work out of the state. As you know, this jeopardizes Oregon jobs and local economies.
3. The third part of this bill includes "voluntary" discount programs
 - a. Before the passage of HB 3530B, doctors were forced by vision plans to give discounts on products for which the insurer did not provide reimbursement. HB 4015 pretends to make accepting discounts "voluntary". However, the "voluntary" option still puts doctors in the corner when choosing between accepting non-reimbursed discounts or potentially losing patients.
 - b. In other states, vision plans are using tactics such as required acceptance of "voluntary" discounts in order to be placed on a preferred provider list. Additionally, vision plans have been sending letters to patients specifically listing providers that decided not to "volunteer." This option only provides a false choice.

HB 3530B was critical in leveling the playing field and addressing the many abuses that doctors and patients were experiencing. HB 4015 would repeal hard fought advances in patient access, protections, and choice. Oregon jobs will be affected and small businesses will suffer. Unfair business practices by large national for-profit vision plans will be allowed to diminish the ability of Oregon Optometric Physicians to provide optimal care for patients in communities all across Oregon. I respectfully ask you to oppose HB 4015.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony. I would be pleased to answer additional questions for the members of the committee at any time.