



OREGON OPTOMETRIC PHYSICIANS ASSOCIATION

TO: Senator Laurie Monnes Anderson, Chair
Senator Dennis Linthicum, Vice Chair

CC: Members of the Senate Health Care Committee

RE: Oregon Optometric Physicians Association Supports SB 129

Optometric Physicians depend on today's technology to properly diagnose and treat eye health and vision problems. Identifying hypertension or diabetes, glaucoma or cataracts and even heart disease begins with a combination of an OD's education and highest use of technology.

Telehealth technology can serve to improve patient care, providing platforms for communication and coordination between doctors of optometry and other primary or specialty care providers. While Telehealth practices are a safe and effective way to increase access for patients across Oregon, it is critical to note that current technology cannot give the same depth of care as an in-person office visit.

Presently, the use of eye and vision Telehealth platforms can be ideal for monitoring specific data points, confirmation of treatment results or even to track changes in chronic conditions. As of yet, it is insufficient to replace or replicate an in-person visit. This proposal contemplates that and asks that patients are alerted to potential limitations of any technology to date. Further, it encourages the patient to seek an in-person, comprehensive eye examine, via these disclosures and early referrals to - and coordination with - an Oregon licensed eye doctor.

It may not always be that way and advances are forthcoming. As we embrace technology in health care, it is important that we keep an eye towards health and safety. SB 129 lays the foundation for utilizing technology to benefit the patient by maintaining high standards of care and creating reasonable accountability measures.

Sharpening the lines around Ocular Telehealth and the accompanying technology also serves to protect a patient's choice of care. An online platform, for instance, might be the most accessible or affordable option. In Oregon, one that must comply with the standards set by SB 129 ensures that the reasonable expectation of both consumer safety and professional responsibility will be met.

OOPA urges your support of SB 129, as we seek to establish welcoming definitions, best practices as guidelines and reasonable regulations in both eye care and vision services in Oregon.



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SB 129

The start of this bill lays out key definitions that are intended to welcome the use of technology, not limit its use by being inflexible in the future. This includes “telemedicine,” which can include self-administered technology (i.e. - texting a photo of conjunctivitis to an OD).

SB 129 also prescribes a few baseline practices designed to help strengthen the use of Telehealth technology.

- Patient must be 18 years of age or older
- The OD has access to the patients prior prescriptions
- The OD records the amount of time lapsed since last exam
- An initial consultation for corrective lenses must be in person
- Creates a review process for diagnostic information collected

Passage of this proposal will put into motion programming at the Oregon Board of Optometry, starting the promulgation of regulations necessary to ensure that eye care, provided by board-approved Telehealth platforms, involves an Oregon licensed ocular physician.