

I am a glaucoma specialist at Oregon Health and Science University, and I'm writing to express my concern for our patients who may be at risk with the consideration of House Bill 2541. This bill allows non MD optometrist to perform laser and surgical procedures on the eye.

House Bill 2541 allows limitless laser and surgical procedures by non MDs. While it excludes several procedures specifically listed, this bill allows for over one hundred laser and surgical procedures not listed, as well as future lasers and surgeries that have yet to be invented or approved. This bill has a potential for unlimited safety risks and complications for our patients. MD ophthalmologists undergo rigorous training focusing on ophthalmology as medical students, interns, residents, and often times fellowship training. This is not required for non MD optometrists.

House Bill 2541 may put our patients' safety at risk. MD ophthalmologists are trained to deal with the potential side effects and risks of lasers and surgical procedures on the eye, which may require more complex incisional surgical intervention to address. Unfortunately, if non MD optometrist perform laser and surgical eye procedures and have a complication that requires urgent or emergent surgical intervention, they will not have the surgical training to deal with the complications. This can potentially cause irreversible vision loss to our patients when no addressed in a timely manner.

House Bill 2541 does not distinguish between adults and children. This bill allows for lasers/procedures on children and adults. MD ophthalmologists are required to undergo rotations on the pediatric service during medical school, pediatric ophthalmology during residency, and pediatric fellowship when subspecializing in pediatric ophthalmology. This bill would allow non MD optometrists to perform laser and surgical procedures on children without any of the training listed above.

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