

I am a practicing physician, and I am writing to ask you to oppose HB 2541. This bill will, without a doubt, lead to irreversible patient harm in Oregon.

HB 2541 would create greatly expanded surgical scope for optometrists in Oregon. While optometrists are certainly an important part of eye health care in our state, they do not have the medical training necessary for advanced surgical procedures. Yet HB 2541 would allow optometrists to perform ophthalmic surgeries, including eyelid surgeries, refractive surgeries, surgeries involving needles and puncture of the cornea in emergencies.

In fact, HB 2541 would allow optometrists to perform hundreds of different types of eye surgeries. It is not a "limited" surgery bill restricted to a "few uncomplicated" eye surgeries as some proponents seem to be suggesting.

Ophthalmologists are medical doctors and surgeons specializing in comprehensive eye care. We train for four years in medical schools, undergo one-year hospital internships, train for three additional years in surgical residency programs, and often perform one-year fellowships. All in, we log more than 17,000 combined education and training hours before we can treat patients on our own.

In contrast, optometrists are not physicians. The fact that HB 2541 would permit optometrists to perform all the surgeries authorized in this bill without ever having completed medical school and surgical residency is alarming. It will place Oregonians at severe risk and create two vastly unequal standards of care.

Please oppose and vote "NO" on this dangerous legislation. And please do not hesitate to reach out to me if I can answer any questions.