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SPECIALIZING IN
Cataract Surgery and
Laser Vision Correction

February 11, 2021

House Health Care Committee
Oregon House of Representatives
900 Court Street NE, H-489
Salem, OR 97301

Dear House Health Care Committee:

I write you today in support of [HB2541](#), which allows Doctors of Optometry to practice to their highest level of education and training. This bill will be an important step towards increasing patient safety and access to care in Oregon.

I practice at Pacific Cataract & Laser Institute, a large ophthalmic practice which employs optometrists and ophthalmologists working side-by-side. Both professions practice at the top of their licenses; the optometrists handle much of the evaluation and clinic-side management of patients, freeing the surgeons to perform a lot of surgery. The patients experience seamless and proficient care.

In addition, we co-manage with a wide network of community-based optometrists, who also share in the pre-surgical and post-surgical care of these patients. The net result is a highly efficient network that cares for patients at locations close to their homes with experienced providers, saving everybody lost time from work and long drives.

With a growing and aging population, the number of needed cataract surgeries alone has been projected to double in the next 12 years, while the number of ophthalmologists has been flat for 20 years. We have to aggressively seek ways to improve efficiency and safety in our eye care system to absorb this increase. A report released in 2018 by the US Department of Health and Human Services concluded, "States should consider changes to their scope of practice statutes to allow all health care providers to practice to the top of their license, utilizing their full skill set." Currently, five states - Alaska, Arkansas, Louisiana, Kentucky, and Oklahoma - permit some surgical procedures, including YAG laser capsulotomy and laser trabeculoplasty, under their optometric scope of practice acts.

85% of primary eye care is provided by a Doctor of Optometry. Doctors of optometry are on the front lines of eye health and vision care. In addition to providing comprehensive vision care, we also manage the entire spectrum of ocular diseases. As a legislated



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profession, our ability to manage these conditions appropriately requires occasional modifications to the scope of practice defined in Oregon Revised Statutes. Technology and optometric training have changed to the point that it is now time to update Oregon statutes to reflect these changes.

It is for the reasons listed above that I support Doctors of Optometry practicing to their full educational authority.

Sincerely,

Oliver Kuhn-Wilken, OD
Pacific Cataract & Laser Institute
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Laser Vision Correction

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