



Board of Examiners in Optometry
State of Oklahoma
Office of the Executive Director

December 1, 2020

Oregon Optometric Association
4404 SE King Road
Milwaukie, Oregon 97222

To whom it may concern,

In 1988 laser training was provided to optometrists at a joint meeting with ophthalmologists. Language in the Optometric Scope of Practice was interpreted to allow the Oklahoma Board of Examiners in Optometry to certify those who had received this laser training to perform laser surgery procedures. Between 1988 and 1998 the Board required the reporting of post-laser procedure outcomes and there were approximately 5,000 laser procedures performed with no negative outcomes.

Legislation, which took effect November 1, 1998, authorized the statutory definition of optometry to include laser surgery procedures. Since 1998 there have been an additional estimated 50,000 laser surgery procedures in which there were no complaints registered. The Board has been informed there were only two (2) insurance settlements made involving PRK. In those two cases a confidentiality agreement was in place. In total, Optometrists in Oklahoma have been providing laser surgery procedures for 28 years.

Additionally, laser eye care is provided by optometrists in a majority of the 77 counties in the State of Oklahoma. The accessibility of this care provides an economical benefit to the citizens of the state since travel expenses are greatly reduced. Oklahoma optometrists may also work together in the same offices as ophthalmologists. These optometrists provide care at the level of their laser certification. Insurance providers authorize payments for laser procedures for Oklahoma licensed optometrists which includes senior citizens covered by Medicare.

Today laser training is provided to students of optometry in all Colleges of Optometry, most of which are state supported.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Russell Laverty, OD".

Russell Laverty, OD, Executive Director
Oklahoma Board of Examiners in Optometry

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