

Chair Prusak, Vice Chairs Salinas and Hayden, and members of the House Healthcare Committee:

I wanted to share with you a personal experience I had performing laser surgery on a patient of mine. You may have read or heard that laser surgery of the eye is a simple, straightforward procedure with little risk of complication. One of the laser procedures that my optometric colleagues are proposing to be granted privileges to perform is a YAG laser peripheral iridotomy (LPI). This is often performed to resolve a situation where the drainage system inside of the eye can get narrow or fully closed which can lead to high eye pressure and irreversible vision loss if not treated properly. The laser surgery is performed to punch a very small hole in the iris (colored part of the eye) so that the pressure build up in the eye can be alleviated. One of the complications of this procedure is that hidden blood vessels in the iris can be disrupted by the laser which can lead to bleeding in the eye. Most of the time, this bleeding can be stopped by applying pressure to the eye with a special contact lens. Several years ago, I performed the laser procedure and a hidden blood vessel was hit by the laser beam. The blood vessel began to bleed and the eye started filling up with blood. Even though I applied pressure with a contact lens, the bleeding could not be stopped. I immediately made the decision to take the patient to the operating room to drain the blood and to stop the bleeding. If I had not acting quickly, the bleeding would have eventually filled up the entire eye leading to very high pressure and possibly permanent loss of vision. I relied upon the tens of thousands of hours of training I received in medical school (4 years), internship (1 year), residency (3 years) and fellowship (2 years) to be able to make a fast, appropriate decision to successfully treat a potentially devastating complication. Laser surgery in the eye is NOT simple. Irreversible, blinding complications can occur if eye surgeries are left to be performed by practitioners who have not had extensive training in intraocular surgery. I urge all of the committee members to vote NO on HB 2541 and protect the health and safety of all Oregonians.

Respectfully

Shane K. Kim, MD