

I greatly appreciate my optometry colleagues as a practicing ophthalmologist. However, surgical treatments are simply not part of optometric education and should not be part of optometric scope of practice. The practice of surgery, including use of lasers as well as scalpels, should remain limited to medical doctors that have been trained formally in ophthalmic surgery, and have trained for nearly 20,000 hours to get there (as opposed to around 2,000 hours for optometry) (Reference: <https://www.aao.org/about/policies/differences-education-optometrists-ophthalmologists>).

The Vermont Secretary of State Office of Professional Regulation has already done a lot of the heavy lifting in terms of non-biased research into whether there is evidence to support expanded scope of practice for optometry (there is certainly not). You can read the rather informative and extensive document here: <https://sos.vermont.gov/media/dhlgd0ve/optometry-advanced-procedures-report-january-2020.pdf>

We really need to keep in mind the sanctity of the physician-patient relationship and advocate always for patient safety. We each have our role on the healthcare team, let's work together to take great care of people!