

EXPANDED OPTOMETRIC FULL PRACTICE AUTHORITY

ENSURING GREATER ACCESS TO HIGH-QUALITY EYE HEALTH AND VISION CARE

52MM
SINCE 2000

NATIONALLY, THE U.S. POPULATION IN 2020 WILL HAVE GROWN BY AN ESTIMATED 52 MILLION SINCE 2000.

WHILE LICENSED OPHTHALMOLOGISTS HAVE STEADILY DECLINED IN THE SAME PERIOD OF TIME

IN MORE THAN 10,000+ U.S. COMMUNITIES, DOCTORS OF OPTOMETRY ARE THE ONLY EYE CARE PROVIDERS.

IN VERMONT, THERE ARE 2 COUNTIES (OUT OF 14) WHERE DOCTORS OF OPTOMETRY ARE THE ONLY EYE CARE SPECIALISTS

10,000+
U.S. COMMUNITIES

15,711
INCREASE

FROM 2000 TO 2020, THERE HAS BEEN AN INCREASE OF 15,711 DOCTORS OF OPTOMETRY NATIONWIDE.

- No other health care providers are denied the ability to practice what they have been educated to do because there is another provider 60 minutes or 30 miles away who can perform the service.
- No medical doctor is prevented from providing their patients the benefits of new technologies because there is another medical doctor in their town already using the new technology.
- Optometric patients should not be denied the ability to receive the latest health care innovations in their local communities.
- Being forced to travel an hour to see an ophthalmologist is a long way to go when you can get the service in your hometown. Not only is it difficult for many rural and elderly to travel an hour, it is also costly to individuals and Medicaid programs.

PATIENT CARE & SAFETY



- Optometric scope of practice has never been repealed by any state legislature.
- Liability insurance rates for doctors of optometry in states with advanced scope have not increased even though they are based on state specific data.
- No state licensure board where ophthalmic procedures are practiced has ever been notified by the National Practitioner Data Bank of a judgment against one of their licensees regarding ophthalmic procedures.
- The Vermont report failed to research complaints and malpractice actions against ophthalmologists.
- Oversight of competency of doctors of optometry is exercised by state-run licensure boards. This is consistent with the authority of other doctoral level licensure boards. Like optometry, the other health boards are made up of members of the profession and the public.
- No current licensee will be “grandfathered” in to certification to perform the ophthalmic procedures.
- The credibility of the profession of optometry, proven by the safe delivery of new services each time the law has been updated, can assure legislators that optometrists will act responsibly in exercising these new privileges as they have done in the past. Nationally, doctors of optometry have a successful track record in treating the eye health care needs of their patients, efficiently, effectively and safely.

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ADVANCED EDUCATION & TRAINING



- Doctors of optometry are doctoral level independent health care practitioners educated on the human body with specific emphasis on the eye, vision and ophthalmic manifestations of systemic conditions.
 - Doctors of optometry are held to the same standard of care as medical doctors. They are educated to recognize eye conditions and evaluate the need for treatment.
 - Optometric care is still limited to the eye and its appendages.
 - This will not broaden the scope of what conditions doctors of optometry currently manage and/or treat but will enable them to utilize the latest technologies to bring their patients the best possible care.
 - Doctors of optometry have been performing pre- and post-operative of eye surgical patients under Medicare protocols for decades.
 - All optometric colleges submitted legal affidavits demonstrating their curriculums currently cover the teaching of ophthalmic procedures and their graduates are trained to perform these therapies.
 - The National Board of Examiners of Optometry includes a didactic and clinical test on Advanced Procedures and Lasers.
 - To perform these ophthalmic procedures, state licensed doctors of optometry must meet specific educational requirements.
 - Ophthalmologists perform surgeries today that they did not learn in their formal training. They attend CME to learn new technologies just as doctors of optometry do.
 - Once licensed, medical doctors never have to document any kind of specific training to the medical licensure boards in order to perform surgeries that they did not learn in their medical school or residencies.
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THE CASE FOR FULL PRACTICE AUTHORITY



- All health care providers are obligated to keep up with the latest knowledge in their fields. No health care provider should be limited to practicing at the standard of medical knowledge at the time when they finished their training.
- Optometric scope of practice is updated in every state over the years as new knowledge is incorporated optometric education.
- No state has ever repealed an expansion of optometric scope.
- Medical doctors have opposed every attempt to modernize the practice of optometry in the last century.