

Dear legislators,

I write to give some perspective on the amendment proposed to the optometric scope bill. I applaud the amendment for requiring scope expansion for surgery to require oversight by the Vermont Board of Medical Practice. All patients having these surgeries deserve that protection regardless of who does the operation. Given that access to these surgeries is not a problem in VT, expansion should be offered only if quality is compromised as little as possible. Basic oversight should be uniform. The original bill also expands the number of doctors whose scope allows doing these surgeries from perhaps 20 ophthalmologists to well over a hundred combined ophthalmologists and optometrists in VT even though the huge number of new surgeons would only need to take a course and do the procedure twice. Studies show experienced surgeons get better outcomes. So, if VT intends to dilute the pool of experience per surgeon to such a small level, I feel the amendment to require 12 surgeries on humans to be certified, instead of 2, is much closer to appropriate. In summary, please support the amendment to this bill or oppose it altogether. Scope expansion is a natural evolution of any profession. But legislators must support it in a way that puts patients first. This amendment does that for Vermonters.

Thank you,

Greg McCormick