

Dear Committee Members,

I implore you to throw out the **horrible** amendment that was just proposed and send S.64 as is to the floor for a vote now.

OPR worked very hard with us to come up with a fair bill. S.64 is a compromise already from what we originally wanted. This amendment simply ruins the bill.

We want to work alongside ophthalmology to take care of Vermonters and with the shortage of eye doctors in this state and delayed access to care, Vermonters need change now. Every Vermont optometrist that wants to practice at the highest level that S.64 allows will have to complete the strictest requirements of any of the 16 states that allow the level of scope that we are trying to achieve.

I see patients every day that I have to refer out to an ophthalmologist and it takes months for them to get the care they need. My patients have to see a new eye care provider and be billed as a new patient which brings higher costs and duplicating care. This referral often comes with an expensive facility charge for a hospital, and this adds to higher health care costs for the patient and increases the burden on our state and contributes to the rising health care costs.

As a small business owner, I am deeply worried about the rising costs of health insurance for my employees. This hurts my business and may cause my employees to leave and find employment elsewhere.

I think quicker access to care, less expensive care, and care by their own trusted optometrist who is trained to do the care, is BETTER CARE.

I also want to hire a new OD and as I said before, expanding scope in VT will help us attract the best talent. ODs who want to use their training and practice full scope. Please get rid of this terrible amendment that is really designed to ruin our bill. Please send S.64 to the floor now for a vote! Any questions, I would love to speak with you. Please reach out to me by email or phone at 802-295-4887.

Thank you for your time and service to our state!

Sincerely,

Sandra Dufour, OD
Owner White River Family Eyecare

White River Junction VT