

Dear Senators,

I am writing to ask that you oppose bill S.64.

In my 20 years of family medicine practice, performing or assisting with a variety of outpatient surgical procedures, the eye was one part of the body that was “off limits” except to highly trained specialists. It was understood by family physicians, emergency physicians and others that ophthalmologic procedures are by definition high risk. If a patient comes in with any kind of significant eye injury, make arrangements for them to see an ophthalmologist right away.

Several years ago, my husband had eye surgery – a procedure that is less specialized than some that our optometrist colleagues are now wanting to perform. Unfortunately, there was a complication. Without the prompt action of his ophthalmologic surgeon, he would have lost sight in that eye.

Some of the procedures that optometrists now want to perform are so specialized that most ophthalmologists send patients who need them to their ophthalmologic colleagues who have had more specialized training. Why on earth would someone with very little surgical training take these on? This is not fair to the Vermonters who are seeking eye care in good faith.

I do not believe that “low risk eye surgery” exists.

Sincerely,

Evan Eyler
East Montpelier