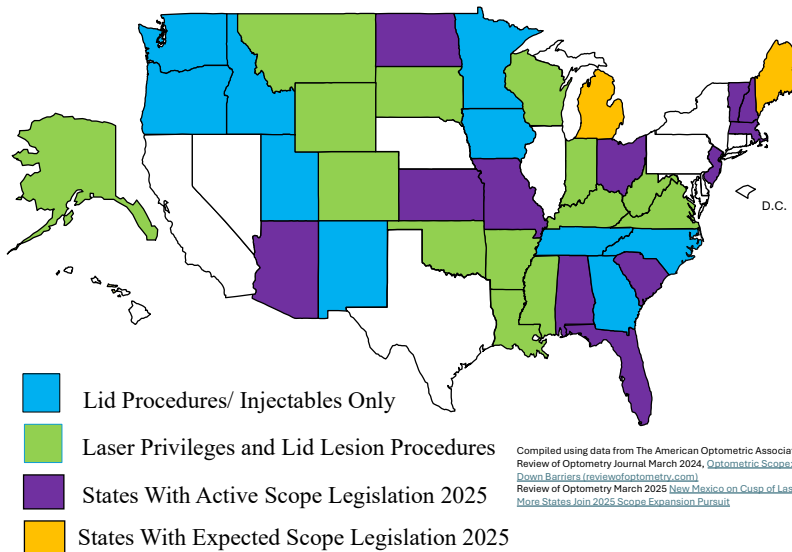




## OPTOMETRIC SCOPE EXPANSION EVIDENCE BASED FACTS

### ✓ Optometric Scope Across USA



#### 24 states allow lid lesion procedures

AK, AR, CO, GA, ID, IN, IA, KY, LA, MN, MS, MT, NC, NM, OK, OR, SD, TN, UT, VA, WA, WV, WI, WY

#### 14 states allow optometrists to use lasers.

AK, AR, CO, IN, KY, LA, MS, MT, OK, SD, VA, WI, WVA, WY

#### 11 states with 2025-2026 expected scope expansion legislation.

KS, MA, ME, MO, NH, NJ, NM, OH, PA, SC, VT

Optometry is a legislated profession. The optometric profession must have the ability to grow and evolve, so skills are expanded in order to provide the highest quality eyecare that is available to the public through new technologic advances and improvements in eye care delivery. The last scope of practice law in Ohio was updated 17 years ago.

### Do you want the same care for your eyes today that was the standard in 2008?

Earning the trust of the Ohio General Assembly has been proven over the history of optometric scope expansion by seeking **reasonable updates** in procedures and pharmaceutical prescribing that improve access to crucial eye care services and cost savings to patients. Many other states are proposing much larger practice expansions than Ohio.



**In a cost-benefit analysis, Avalon Health Economics determined that scope of practice expansion adds \$600 million per year in transaction costs savings and another \$4 billion per year in savings attributable to access-related improvements in health outcomes.**

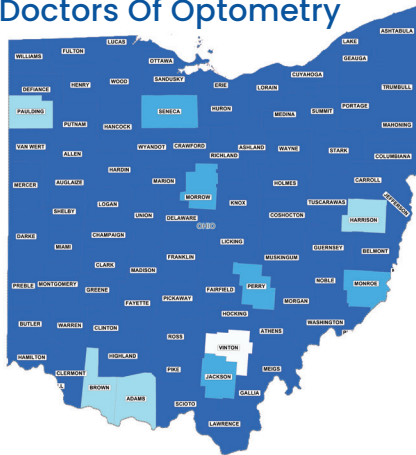
June 20, 2019 by Avalon Health Economics LLC ([Optometry's Essential and Expanding Role in Health Care](#))

The Ohio General Assembly **trusts optometrists** to treat patients safely and effectively. From the extremely high-level participation rates of optometrists in Medicaid, to the creation of two specific state-funded programs affirming the commitment of Ohio's optometrists to provide crucial vision care to children in underserved areas, **optometrists are seen as THE primary eye doctors in Ohio.**



## What are the Access Issues?

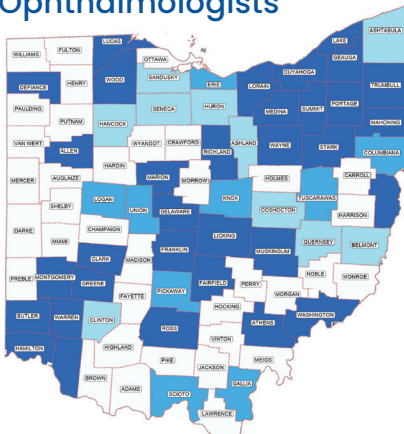
### Doctors Of Optometry



Ohio Access to  
Eye Care 2024  
Doctor of Optometry  
Locations/Doctor  
Combinations

None  
1  
2  
3 or More

### Ophthalmologists



Ohio Access to  
Eye Care 2024  
Ophthalmology  
Locations/Doctor  
Combinations

None  
1  
2  
3 or More

## Access to Eye Care Providers in Ohio

- Optometrists practice in 87 of 88 counties. Ophthalmology is present in 53 counties.
- The US Dept. of Health and Human Services Workforce Simulation Model forecasts a sizeable shortage of ophthalmology supply relative to demand by the year 2035 with substantial geographic disparities.

- Ophthalmology is one of the medical specialties with the lowest rate of projected workforce adequacy by 2035 with an expected 12% decline coupled with a projected increase in demand of 24%.

- Projections in ophthalmology workforce show a decrease by year 2035 in both metro (77% adequacy) and rural (29% adequacy) geographies.

- Optometry is predicted in 2035 to have a workforce adequacy of 89%.

Berkowitz ST, Finn AP, Parikh R, Kuriyan AE, Patel S. Ophthalmology Workforce Projections in the United States, 2020 to 2035. *Ophthalmology*. 2024 Feb;131(2):133-139. doi: 10.1016/j.optha.2023.09.018. Epub 2023 Sep 20. PMID: 3773923

- In a 2025 study in JAMA, percentages of rural ophthalmologists have declined over time suggesting a disparity in the number of rural subspecialist surgeons available to serve rural patients.

Ahmed A, Ali M, Dun C, Cai CX, Makary MA, Woreta FA. Geographic Distribution of US Ophthalmic Surgical Subspecialists. *JAMA Ophthalmol*. 2025 Jan 2. doi: 10.1001/jamaophthalmol.2024.5605. Epub ahead of print. PMID: 39745719.

- According to the Accreditation Council For Graduate Medical Education, there are 125 ophthalmology programs in the country with 505 residents across the nation.

- **There are 5 ophthalmology Residency Programs in Ohio with a total of 19 ophthalmologists graduating per year.**

- There are over **2400 licensed Doctors of Optometry in Ohio.**

- Convenience is a key determinant for 80% of voters when it comes to their eye health, reporting they would rather have easy access to a Doctor of Optometry than travel further or wait longer to see an ophthalmologist.

June 20, 2019 by Avalon Health Economics LLC (*Optometry's Essential and Expanding Role in Health Care*)

- The mean wait times for adults was 23.6 days for ophthalmologist appointments and 9.0 days for optometrist appointments in 2018 before post COVID shortages.

Comparison of Access to Eye Care Appointments Between Patients With Medicaid and Those With Private Health Care Insurance. *JAMA Ophthalmol*. 2018 Jun 1;136(6):622-629

- Between 2015 and 2022, the number of ophthalmologists decreased 0.2%, whereas the number of practices decreased 18%. Ophthalmology has undergone practice consolidation from 2015 to 2022.

*Trends in Ophthalmology Practice Consolidation 2015-2022. Ophthalmology*, ISSN: 0161-6420, Vol: 130, Issue: 9, Page: 983-992 Sept. 2023.

- 50% of ophthalmologists are older than 50 years of age and closer to retirement than training.

- The number of ophthalmologists has remained stable since 1990, while the number of patients over age 65 is increasing.

*American Academy Ophthalmology 2022 Ophthalmology Numbers Cause for Concern - American Academy of Ophthalmology (aao.org)*



## ✓ What is the Safety Data for These Procedures Performed by Optometrists?

- **Nd:YAG Laser Capsulotomy: Efficacy and Outcomes Performed by Optometrists**

95% of subjects showed visual improvement after the procedure, which allowed for a better quality of life. No significant adverse events were noted in any subject. **This study demonstrates that capsulotomies can be effectively and safely performed by Doctors of Optometry** with minimal risk to patients and significant benefit to visual function and provides evidence to support the use of YAG capsulotomy in optometric practice.

*Lighthizer N, Johnson S, Holthaus J, Holthaus K, Cherian B, Swindell R, Weber B, Weise K, Cockrell D, Lewis S, Wroten C, Anastasio J, Ellen J, Miller JM. Nd:YAG Laser Capsulotomy: Efficacy and Outcomes Performed by Optometrists. Optom Vis Sci. 2023 Oct 1;100(10):665-669. doi: 10.1097/OPX.0000000000002057. Epub 2023 Aug 8. PMID: 37594749; PMCID: PMC10662619.*

- To date, there have been over 40,000 laser and surgical procedures performed in Kentucky by optometrists. The Board of Optometric Examiners has received no complaints and have not been notified by the National Practitioner Data Bank of a judgment against one of their licensees regarding ophthalmic procedures.

*Source: Jonathan Shrewsbury, OD, President Kentucky Board of Optometric Examiners 2021*

- Since the General Assembly last expanded the optometric scope of practice 17 years ago, the OOA is unaware of complaints registered with the Ohio Vision Professionals Board resulting from that expansion.



### **Patient safety is the cornerstone of optometry in Ohio.**

Our profession would **NEVER** propose a change in Ohio law that would allow optometrists to perform procedures on patients for which they were not properly trained and educated.

- 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.
- The reasonable procedures in SB 36 build upon existing skills using a slit-lamp microscope already mastered and in use daily well beyond optometry school. Optometrists currently evaluate and diagnose the conditions that need the procedures listed in SB 36. After referring to ophthalmology for the procedure to be performed, patients are promptly returned to the optometrist where they provide post-operative surgical care and manage complications.
- Ophthalmologists also perform new surgeries today that they did not learn in their residency which build upon already existing skills. They attend weekend CME courses to learn these new surgical procedures and obtain training with surgical industry representatives. Optometrists attend similar courses but will additionally need to become certified by the Ohio Vision Professionals Board by taking required coursework, observing and assisting in these procedures as well as being evaluated by a certified preceptor for competency and/or passing the National Board of Optometry Laser and Injections Examination.
- No current licensee will be “grandfathered” certification to perform the ophthalmic procedures.

*The credibility of the profession of optometry, proven by the safe delivery of new services each time a 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.*