



**SB129 - Modernizing Laws Related to Optometry**

Sponsored by Senator Jerry Cirino

**Please Support Measured, Reasonable Changes to Ohio's Law Governing Optometry**

**The Issue**

Ohio's law related to the scope of practice for Doctors of Optometry has not been significantly updated in over 15 years. Advances in technology and education as well as problematic shifts in the eye care workforce necessitate a review and update of the law at this time. The OOA has reviewed potential updates to the current scope based on a number of factors, including access to vision care and benefit to patients, current educational and training standards at The Ohio State University College of Optometry, and the regulations of surrounding and similar states.

**Updates to the Law are Necessary**

- **Will Improve Access to Care and Decrease Wait Times**
  - As our population ages, it is estimated that 30% more eye care will be necessary.
  - Ophthalmology is experiencing stagnant growth in new providers.
  - As experts in vision and eye care, optometrists are well-equipped to fill the need – optometrists offer more expertise in eye care than physician extenders.
- **Will Create a More Efficient, Team Approach to the Delivery of Care**
  - Expansion is focused on minor procedures that bog down many ophthalmology practices.
  - These procedures represent a small percentage of scope of ophthalmology, only around 4%.
  - In 2018, the US Department of Health and Human Services issued a report which said that states should consider revising laws "to allow all healthcare providers to practice to the top of their licensure, utilizing their full skill set."
- **Will Help Ohio Maintain a Well-Trained Eyecare Workforce**
  - The legislation will bring Ohio in line with national standards taught in doctoral optometry programs.
  - Aligns Ohio with scopes of practice in surrounding and similar states like Indiana, Kentucky, West Virginia, Colorado, and Virginia.
  - 71% of graduating optometrists report that a state's scope of practice is a factor in determining where to practice.
  - Graduates often cite the inability to practice optometry to the full scope of their training as a primary reason for leaving the state.

**Proposed Updates Included in the Legislation**

The OOA supports a measured and reasonable approach for change which would include the following additions to modernize optometric regulations:

- **Procedures to Remove Obviously Benign Lesions, Cysts and Skin Tags**
  - Incision and curettage of a chalazion or sty
  - Removal and biopsy of skin lesions with low risk of malignancy such as cysts and skin tags
  - Injections, excluding intravenous or intraocular injections
- **In-Office Noninvasive Laser Procedures**
  - Laser Capsulotomy: removal of film following cataract surgery
  - Laser Trabeculoplasty: a glaucoma procedure which lowers pressure in the eye
  - Laser Peripheral Iridotomy: a procedure to prevent closed angle glaucoma
- **Update Pharmaceutical Regulations to Allow for Treatment of Conditions of the Eye (no changes to opioid standards)**
- **Authority for Vision Professionals Board to Establish Training and Infection Control Standards**