

December 12, 2020

Dear Senator/Representative,

I am writing to you regarding legislation to remove limitations on legend drugs put forth by optometry as submitted in HF 2022 and SF 1873.

As a board certified ophthalmologist in practice for the past 15 years in Minnesota, I have worked closely with many Doctors of Optometry. I am writing in support of expanded scope of practice for Doctors of Optometry, as it would allow for increased access to quality eye care for all Minnesota citizens.

I have read the legislation submitted on behalf of the Minnesota Optometric Association. In support of expanded scope of optometric practice in our state I would like to make the following assertions:

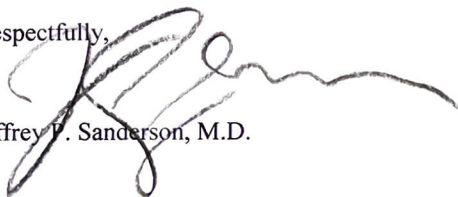
1. I have worked in collaborative patient care settings with our Optometrists and have witnessed well-grounded clinical judgement, mature diagnostic acumen and patient centered decision making.
2. I have witnessed significant advancements in the diagnostic skills and training of ocular disease management among optometrists who recently graduated from training programs.
3. I have found our optometrists, as a group, to be cautious in their delivery of care, knowing their limits and characteristically erring on the side of referral to ophthalmologists, neuro ophthalmologists and related specialties.
4. The last expansion of optometric scope allowing for oral drugs has led to effective management in a timely manner of common eye conditions including infections, ocular inflammation and glaucoma. The community has benefited without unnecessary risk by this expansion of care, the prescribing limits on oral antivirals, carbonic anhydrase inhibitors and exclusion of oral steroids is no longer necessary.
5. Surrounding states that have eliminated limitations on oral medications and injections for eyelid lesions have not seen a consequential increase in adverse patient care or malpractice rates as a result of this legislation.
6. Many patients are required to make multiple doctor visits with both OD's and MD's for the same condition because of our system of restricted practice, thereby duplicating costs for care for many patients.

I am not advocating that optometrists be given privileges to practice surgical or laser surgical care.

As you consider this proposed legislation, patient care and access should be the primary focus. I hope that my opinion will help in your consideration of the proposed Optometric Scope of Practice Legislation. If you would like to discuss this legislation further, please feel free to contact me at 952-641-6226.

Respectfully,

Jeffrey P. Sanderson, M.D.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jeffrey P. Sanderson", with a long, sweeping horizontal flourish extending to the right.