

North Dakota Society of Eye Physicians & Surgeons

February 3, 2025

House Industry Business and Labor

Re: HB 1267

Chairman Warrey and committee members.

My name is Dr. Elena Raducu. I have been practicing ophthalmology since 2012 in Bismarck, ND, I consult in ophthalmology at both hospitals in Bismarck and instruct UND medical students and family medicine residents. I am speaking on NDSEPS' behalf.

We are in favor of HB 1267 **with** the proposed amendment submitted by Dr. Atchison.

The original HB 1267 version changes the language of the current ND Century code that prevented optometrists from injecting pharmaceutical agents. The current North Dakota Century Code also prevents optometrists from performing "invasive surgery", but this term is not clearly defined. It should be clarified to ensure that the optometrists in North Dakota continue to practice within the limits of their training to ensure the safety of North Dakotans.

I will emphasize **the level of training** required of ophthalmology doctors to be able to safely perform surgeries or injections in the eye and, if needed, address consequences or complications. We pursue 4 years of college, 4 years of medical school, 4 years of ophthalmology residency, and 1-2 years of fellowship training. Not only do we get certified to perform the aforementioned surgeries after **thousands of hours** of procedures, but we also have the **medical background** to recognize comorbidities, risk of complications, and we are trained to deal with complex situations, no matter how severe.

Our work schedule includes **call hours, hospital coverage, etc.** If our patient's vision is in danger, we come to the hospital or open the surgical center at night or weekend to promptly address any situation.

The NDSEPS board and I wish to emphasize the respect for the excellent care provided by our optometry colleagues. We work with them on a daily basis. We in no way wish to restrict any of the procedures that are currently safely provided by optometrists acting within the definition of the existing North Dakota Century Code.

We urge that legislature provides the clearest language possible, to avoid unsafe situations that may result into untoward events like loss of vision, central nervous complications, etc.

Our allegiance is to the safety of our patients, to ensure their eyes' health, from preventative measures to conditions of any degree of severity.

This concludes my testimony, and I am happy to answer any questions.



Elena R. Raducu, MD

Senior Partner Dakota Eye Institute - Bismarck, ND

Clin. Instructor UND – Dept of Ophthalmology