

February 3rd, 2025

Re: changing Optometry status

Dear Committee Members:

This is Steve Bagan, M.D. of Fargo/West Fargo. I have been a practicing eye surgeon here for 44 years. I have seen the gradual assumption of Optometrists, who are not M.D.s, taking on more 'treatment' roles over the years.

Regarding this latest bill, I have no objection to Optometry clarifying rules for telehealth. But 'at the last minute', last evening I think, an amendment was added to this bill, under 'Definitions', number 7, striking the words "except by injection" from the bill. This is very suspicious that this would be inserted after this was initially approved by M.D. surgeons in our great State, hoping to get it through without scrutiny.

Most Optometrists are very capable, but I cannot see how this improves care for patients, to have them, by legislative fiat rather than attendance at medical school, do invasive treatments.

Injections? Of what drugs? Where? Obviously, complications can and do occur, and I am certain that is in the best interest of patients to have invasive medical/surgical treatments done by medical doctors or their appropriately trained and supervised proxies. We have enough eye surgeons in this State to provide in timely fashion for the needs of our citizens.

You might note also, that Optometrists care is supervised by the Board of Optometry, so there would be no medical oversight.

Please do not pass this as written.

Thank you

Steve Bagan, M.D.

