



Texans Deserve Better

Texans deserve access to affordable, quality optometric eye care using all new technology and knowledge available in the eye care field.

Right now, Texans are denied easy access to high quality optometric eye care because of old, worn-out restrictions that limit patient choice and drive up health care costs. Doctors of Optometry should be allowed to use the full scope of their training, eliminating duplicative co-management agreements with multiple providers that only inconvenience patients and drive up costs. When we use a common sense approach to health care decisions and put patients first, everyone wins.

Texans should be able to receive the same eye care services from their local optometrist as the citizens of Oklahoma, Louisiana or New Mexico do.

States surrounding Texas have modernized their laws allowing Doctors of Optometry to use all applicable medications to treat the eye, perform simple office procedures, and use lasers and other high tech tools to treat their patients. Texas invests significant resources in the training of a Doctor of Optometry. Doctors of Optometry attending the University of Houston learn these patient care skills so they can practice a full scope of care in whatever state they choose. But if these same doctors choose to practice in Texas they cannot use these skills due to shortsighted, outdated government regulations. Why restrict Texans access to the investment the State has made in higher education?

The training of Doctors of Optometry is almost identical to the training of dentists, yet medicine does not oppose a modern scope of care for dentists.

Despite similar undergraduate, graduate, and clinical training as dentists, medicine has convinced the legislature to maintain an outmoded law that restricts access and drives up costs. But medicine has no opposition against dentists using all the tools of their training including all medications, simple and complex office procedures, and the use of lasers – because there is no competitive medical specialty for care of the mouth. Yet ophthalmology competes for the same patients as Doctors of Optometry. How clear can their restrictive motives directed at the profession of optometry be?

The Texas Optometry Law has not been allowed to keep up with advances in technology like the rest of the country.

You don't want your doctor to be practicing the way they were 10 years ago and being prevented from using new technologies and procedures. Medicine, in the name of "scope of practice", is depriving Texans of the same care they can receive in our surrounding states. The medical lobby, in an effort to prevent economic competition, has placed these senseless barriers in place. The law shouldn't force medical professionals to offer only yesterday's treatments – especially if the antiquated system is in place just to give one profession a market advantage over another. Texans deserve the best we have to offer, not less than someone living in Oklahoma.

Ophthalmologists misrepresent modern eye care and the training of Doctors of Optometry for a simple reason – to protect their pocketbooks.

For decades, ophthalmology has opposed legislative efforts to make quality eye care more accessible and affordable for your constituents. Despite the age old scare tactics of crying patient safety, there are no safety issues. They cried death and blindness in the eighties, death and blindness in the nineties, and will make the same claims again. The fact is clear, optometric malpractice insurance is among the least expensive of all medical providers and is no higher in the surrounding states that allow full medical care, use of office procedures and lasers. There is a reason for that – Doctors of Optometry deliver safe, quality patient care.

In summary, we want to provide accessible, affordable eye care for all Texans using the newest technologies and techniques for which we have been trained. We hope we can count on you to do what is best for your constituents and remove artificial barriers to good health care.