



Chicago Ophthalmological Society

Established in 1893

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The Honorable Pamela Althoff
Illinois State Senate
309L Capitol Building
Springfield, IL 62706

The Honorable Anna Moeller
Illinois House of Representatives
235-E Stratton Office Building
Springfield, IL 62706

Re: SB 2899/HB 6166 - Optometry Practice Act

Dear Senator Althoff and Representative Moeller:

For more than 120 years, the Chicago Ophthalmological Society (COS) has been dedicated to furthering the quality of medical and surgical eye care through ongoing educational activities and support of ophthalmic research. Continuing education for our nearly 300 members has been a critical focus for our organization given the rapid pace of advancements in medical and surgical treatment of eye disease.

Indeed, our members include some of the most prominent educators in the United States based here in Chicago, as well as well-established private practitioners, ophthalmologists who are relatively new in practice, and residents/fellows who are still in training. Speakers at our conferences are the leaders in the ophthalmology profession who present their research findings and report on new treatment options with medicine and surgical intervention.

The point is this: there are no shortcuts to becoming a qualified eye physician and surgeon, and education does not end when you hang your diploma on the wall. Even with eight or more post-graduate years of formal training, practicing ophthalmologists work hard to keep their skills up to date, as well as learning new thinking in diagnosis and treatment options for patients. The fact is that the eye is part of the entire body, and we frequently are confronted with a patient who has a serious systemic condition that presents with symptoms in the eye. A thorough understanding of the entire body – gained through intense training in medical school and internship – is an absolute must in addition to specialty experience gained in residency to safely and effectively treat patients, especially with surgical intervention.

It is for these reasons that we are quite concerned about HB 6166 and SB 2899 which would grant optometrists – who are not physicians and are not trained in surgery – the right to perform surgical procedures and give injections into the delicate tissues in and around the eye. **We urge you to preserve the quality of surgical eye care in our state and maintain patient safety by removing these dangerous and unwarranted provisions from the optometry practice act sunset legislation.**

Thank you for taking our views into consideration.

Sincerely yours,

Mathew MacCumber, MD, PhD
President