

HB 2897 -- THE PRACTICE OF OPTOMETRY

SPONSOR: Farnan

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Professional Registration and Licensing by a vote of 19 to 2.

Currently, the practice of optometry does not include the provision of surgical procedures, including the use of lasers, and does not include the use of injectable agents. This bill modifies the practice of optometry by including the use of injectable agents for the purpose of treatment of the eye and adnexa and surgical procedures, except as otherwise specified and limited by the Board of Optometry.

Additionally, specific procedures are added to the practice of optometry. The procedures added include:

- (1) The removal of nonperforating foreign bodies from the cornea, conjunctiva, or eyelids;
- (2) The removal of eyelashes;
- (3) The scraping of the cornea for diagnostic tests, smears, or cultures;
- (4) The dilation, probing, irrigation, or closure of the tear drainage structure of the eye;
- (5) The expression of conjunctival follicles or cysts;
- (6) The debridement of the corneal epithelium;
- (7) The incision and curettage of a chalazion;
- (8) The removal and biopsy of skin lesions without known malignancy;
- (9) Laser capsulotomy;
- (10) Laser trabeculoplasty; and
- (11) Laser peripheral iridotomy.

This bill is similar to HB 929 and SB 219 (2025); and SB 956 and HB 1963 (2024).

PROPONENTS: Supporters say that optometrists are already trained to do the procedures the bill allows them to perform. The majority of other states allow optometrists to perform the injections. Patients already have trouble with access to ophthalmologists for these procedures. If optometrists are allowed to perform these procedures, it would reduce the amount of time a patient would have to wait to receive care.

Testifying in person for the bill were Representative Farnan; Jeff Gamble; Mark Curtis, Missouri Optometry Association; and M. Kory Scullaw.

OPPONENTS: Those who oppose the bill say this bill aims to make optometrists surgeons, which will put patients' safety at risk. Optometrists don't have adequate training to perform the procedures this bill would allow them to perform.

Testifying in person against the bill were Elizabeth Grace Riley, Missouri Society of Anesthesiologists; Christine Ryu; Arnie Dienoff; Douglas Snyder; Dylan Hailey; Missouri Association of Osteopathic Physicians & Surgeons; Jonathan Schell, MD, Missouri Society of Eye Physicians & Surgeons; and Nathan Hesemann, Missouri State Medical Association.

Written testimony has been submitted for this bill. The full written testimony and witnesses testifying online can be found under Testimony on the bill page on the House website.