

February 14, 2017

Iowa Senate - Subcommittee on Human Resources
State Senator Mark Segebart, Chair
State Senator Mark Costello, Vice Chair
State Senator Liz Mathis, Ranking Member
1007 East Grand Avenue
Des Moines, Iowa 50319

RE: Oppose SSB 1032, An Act Relating to the Practice of Optometry

Dear Honorable Committee Members:

On behalf of the American Society of Plastic Surgeons, we are writing to express serious opposition to SSB 1032, which would expand the scope of practice for optometrists beyond their professional training. This legislation raises considerable patient safety concerns that would compromise quality medical care for patients in Iowa.

As residents and surgeons in this state, we encourage you to maintain the high level of patient care that has been established and maintain current standards for the use of injections. Members of the American Society of Plastic Surgeons typically complete four years of graduate medical education, three or more years of clinical surgical training, and three or more years of plastic surgery residency training. Many of our physicians pursue additional training through a surgical fellowship after they complete the initial ten or more years of advanced medical and surgical training. Unlike licensed Medical Doctors (MD) or Doctors of Osteopathic Medicine (DO) who meet appropriate education, training and professional standards to perform injections in the ocular region, optometrists are not sufficiently trained to perform these procedures. Instead, optometrists only complete four to five years of education with significantly less clinical exposure and responsibility.

The advanced training of Medical Doctors and Doctors of Osteopathic Medicine is particularly important as complications arise in highly sensitive areas, such as the eye and ocular adnexa. Unlike epinephrine or other drugs used to counteract an anaphylactic reaction, medications injected into the ocular region could cause serious side effects and harm to the patient if administered improperly. Many cosmetic injectables carry the risk of not only infection, but also permanent side effects, such as blindness, nerve paralysis, necrosis and the formation of permanent hard nodules. The medications injected into this area should not be taken lightly and require sufficient and continued education to ensure the highest levels of patient safety.

In addition, as currently written, the bill would permit optometrists to perform injectable anesthesia to areas outside of the globe. Optometrists are not adequately trained to administer any form of anesthesia beyond that which is applied topically. Inappropriate use of local anesthesia can have toxic effects, can cause nerve impairment and permanent nerve damage. The administration of local anesthesia requires training and education beyond that which is provided to optometrists.

Optometrists are simply not properly trained to perform injectable procedures. Their professional training does not offer sufficient education to allow them to perform injectable procedures of any magnitude, which is why the legislature originally intended for these professionals to only perform injections to counteract an anaphylactic reaction. By permitting optometrists to perform these procedures, patient safety will be jeopardized as lowans receive treatment by unqualified practitioners.

Due to these patient safety concerns, it is critical that such procedures are performed by health care professionals who have the comprehensive training and board certification to handle those complications when they occur. We urge you to **OPPOSE** SSB 1032 to protect the high standard of patient safety and care in Iowa. If you have any questions or need further assistance, please feel free to contact Patrick Hermes, Senior Manager of Government Affairs and Advocacy at phermes@plasticsurgery.org.

Sincerely,



Debra Johnson, MD
President, American Society of Plastic Surgeons



W. Thomas Lawrence, MPH, MD, FACS
President, Iowa Society of Plastic Surgeons