



AMERICAN SOCIETY OF  
PLASTIC SURGEONS®

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FLORIDA SOCIETY OF  
PLASTIC SURGEONS

March 27, 2017

The Florida Senate  
Senate Committee on Health Policy  
Senator Dana Young, *Chair*  
Senator Kathleen Passidomo, *Vice Chair*  
404 S. Monroe Street  
Tallahassee, Florida 32399

**RE: Oppose HB 1037, An Act Relating to Optometry**

Honorable Committee Members:

On behalf of the Florida Society of Plastic Surgeons (FSPS) and the American Society of Plastic Surgeons (ASPS), we are writing to request that you **oppose HB 1037**, which will expand the scope of practice for optometrists beyond their professional training. The Florida Society of Plastic Surgeons is the largest association of plastic surgeons in Florida, and in conjunction with our national affiliate the American Society of Plastic Surgeons, collectively represent 534 board-certified plastic surgeons in the state.

It is our belief that only licensed physicians who meet appropriate education, training and professional standards should perform surgery in the ocular region. HB 1037 would allow non-physician optometrists to perform surgical procedures. This includes procedures that fall squarely within the practice of medicine. HB 1037 also grants the Florida Board of Optometry (Board) complete authority over optometric scope of practice, and this Board will determine which surgeries optometrists may perform. Alarming, the bill requires optometrists only complete “a board approved course and examination” to perform ophthalmic surgery”. Allowing optometrists to perform periocular surgery jeopardize patient safety and risking serious injury or blindness!

HB 1037 also broadens the range of pharmaceuticals optometrists may use and/or prescribe. Optometrists do not have the requisite education and training to safely use this expanded pharmacopeia. Physicians are well-trained to recognize and treat patients when an allergic reaction or some other life-threatening complication arises. Optometrists are not. Optometrists lack sufficient training in disease management which is critical in identifying and effectively treating conditions that cause eye disease, such as diabetes or hypertension. Sadly, in 2009, optometrists at a VA facility provided inadequate treatment to patients with glaucoma, resulting in blindness or progressive vision loss in 22 veterans.<sup>1</sup> Ophthalmologists and plastic surgeons receive core medical and surgical education while completing seven to ten years of training, which includes increasing responsibility and decision-making authority in the hospital setting. Optometric education is of only 4-5 years in duration, with significantly less clinical exposure and responsibility.

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<sup>1</sup> Dremann, Sue. VA investigates glaucoma patients’ treatment: ‘Exhaustive’ internal review found inadequate referrals; optometry chief sidelined. Palo Alto Weekly, July 23, 2009.

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Patient safety requires that periocular surgical procedures be performed by physician surgeons with comprehensive training and board certification. We urge you to OPPOSE HB 1037 for the protection of Florida's citizens.

Please do not hesitate to contact Patrick Hermes, ASPS's Senior Manager of Advocacy and Government Affairs, with any questions at [Phermes@plasticsurgery.org](mailto:Phermes@plasticsurgery.org) or (847) 228-3331.

Sincerely,

Florida Society of Plastic Surgeons  
American Society of Plastic Surgeons