

David Carmack
Veazie
LD 1803

Good afternoon Senator Bailey, Representative Mathieson, and Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance, and Financial Services.

My name is David B. Carmack MD MBA , and I am from Veazie, ME. I practice full time as a clinical orthopedic trauma and acute care surgeon at Eastern Maine Medical Center in Bangor. I am submitting this testimony against LD 1803 – An Act to Amend the Laws Governing Optometric Practice.

As a surgeon, I am very aware of the benefits and harms associated with surgical and invasive procedures that we perform on our patients. Having completed 5 years of orthopedic surgical residency and one year of orthopedic trauma fellowship, I can attest to the value of a structured and supervised surgical training program.

Performing invasive procedures and surgical procedures is not something you are simply trained on, and then perform in the setting of not doing any other surgical and/or invasive procedures in your practice. The essence of being a surgeon and/or invasive procedure physician is that you are aware of all the complications and options in treating a medical condition. Providing only one invasive procedure in your practice is not a wise idea for the clinician and his/her patients. The only physicians that should be performing invasive procedures in eye care should be ophthalmologists. This is what they have trained to do. They are aware of all the risks/benefits of all the ophthalmic surgeries/invasive procedure available for their patients. With this ability, they can choose the best treatment for their patients (weighing risk/benefits). Having the optometrists perform one or a limited number of invasive procedures (laser) is not safe medical practice, in my opinion.

Additionally, having the Board of Optometry develop their own rules/guidelines around surgical and/or invasive procedures that can be practiced by our state optometrists is a poor decision. The ophthalmologists in Maine have completed ophthalmology residencies (some with additional fellowships) and are board certified. This is the standard that we currently accept in Maine and should not back away from this quality standard.

I mean no disrespect to our Maine optometrists... they are a valued part of our Maine medical team. It is just that LD 1803 is designed to expand their scopes of practice, without any clinical reason. And... the addition of surgical and/or invasive procedures, without the full experience of routinely providing all ophthalmologic surgeries/invasive procedures seems to me a set up for clinical complications. Thank you for your consideration.