

Testimony in Support of LD 1803: An Act to Amend the Laws Governing Optometric Practice

Good afternoon, Chairpersons and members of the committee.

My name is Dr. Gary Chu. I serve as Vice President of Professional Affairs at the New England College of Optometry and as a member of the Board of Directors for the National Board of Examiners in Optometry (NBEO). I am here today to express my strong support for LD 1803, which would authorize optometrists in Maine to perform selective laser trabeculoplasty (SLT), laser peripheral iridotomy (LPI), YAG capsulotomy, and administer injections.

This bill reflects the national standard in optometric education. All accredited schools and colleges of optometry in the United States now include education on ophthalmic lasers and injections, as students must be prepared to practice in any state, including the 14 states that currently grant optometric authority for these procedures.

At the New England College of Optometry, our advanced procedures course includes:

- 13 hours of didactic instruction and a 3-hour wet lab specifically focused on ophthalmic laser procedures, including SLT, LPI, and YAG capsulotomy
- 6 hours of lecture and hands-on lab instruction in intravenous (IV), intramuscular (IM), and intralesional injections

The laser curriculum covers:

- Laser physics and tissue interaction
- Clinical indications, contraindications, and potential complications of SLT, LPI, and YAG capsulotomy
- Pre-operative assessment, treatment protocols, and post-operative care
- OSHA safety compliance and medicolegal considerations

For injections, students are trained in:

- Pharmacology, delivery routes, and procedural protocols
- Safe administration of IV, IM, and intralesional injections
- Emergency management, including anaphylaxis

Hands-on simulation includes work with high-fidelity model eyes that replicate tissue response for lasers, and model arms and eyes for practicing injection techniques in a safe, competency-based environment. Instruction is further enriched by a consulting ophthalmologist, who brings clinical context and reinforces collaborative care standards.

Upon successful completion of the course, students are eligible to sit for both the NBEO Laser and Surgical Procedures Examination (LSPE) and the NBEO Injections Skills Examination. These nationally recognized credentials reflect a high standard of clinical readiness and ensure consistency across state licensure requirements. As an NBEO board member, I can attest to the rigor and integrity of these examinations in protecting patient safety and clinical quality.

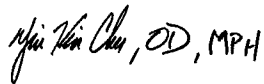
All of this advanced training is grounded in a rigorous foundation of basic science. Students complete extensive coursework including, but not limited to anatomy, physiology, pharmacology, microbiology, and pathophysiology. These are not peripheral subjects, they are the essential underpinnings that allow future doctors of optometry to understand, diagnose, and manage both ocular and systemic conditions, and to safely and effectively perform advanced procedures like lasers and injections.

Optometry schools train students to care for all populations, urban, rural, and underserved, with the goal of ensuring access to timely, essential eye care. Preserving vision is not simply a clinical responsibility; it is central to helping patients maintain independence, carry out daily activities, and preserve the quality of life that functional vision provides.

LD 1803 is a practical, patient-centered bill. It reflects what today's optometrists are already trained to do and removes unnecessary delays to care for Mainers who need timely, sight-preserving treatment.

NECO strongly supports this legislation. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Gary Y. Chu, OD, MPH". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Gary" being the most prominent.

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OD/MS Dual Degree Program: Year 1

Fall Term Course Number	Course Title	Lecture	Lab	Patient Care	Seminar/Online	Credits	Grade Type
BSD10300	Cell Biology, Histology, and Ocular Anatomy	52	4	0	0	3.50	letter
BSD10320	Anatomy and Physiology I	50	16	0	0	3.75	letter
GRS97001	Laboratory Research Survey	0	0	0	20	1.25	pass/fail
PC12021	Principles and Practice of Optometry I	42	22	0	0	3.50	letter
PC12041	Clinical Reasoning Ia	10	0	0	0	0.75	letter in Spring
PC12125	Patient Care Ia	0	0	20	0	0.75	pass/fail
VS11001	Optics I	54	12	0	0	4.00	letter
VS11221	Visual Sensation and Perception	51	6	0	0	3.50	letter
Totals		259	60	20	20	21	

Spring Term Course Number	Course Title	Lecture	Lab	Patient Care	Seminar/Online	Credits	Grade Type
BSD10009	Neuroanatomy	40	0	0	0	2.75	letter
BSD10321	Anatomy and Physiology II	35	6	0	0	2.50	letter
BSD10721	Ocular Disease Principles I	30	2.5	0	0	2.00	letter
GRS97040	Laboratory Research I	0	0	0	10	2.00	pass/fail
PC12042	Clinical Reasoning Ib	0	0	0	18	1.25	letter
PC12022	Principles and Practice of Optometry II	52	32	0	0	4.50	letter
PC12126	Patient Care Ib	0	0	20	0	0.75	pass/fail
VS11002	Optics II	51	32	0	0	4.50	letter
VS11210	Color Vision	20	2	0	0	1.25	letter
Totals		228	74.5	20	28	21.5	

OD/MS Dual Degree Program: Year 2

Summer Term Course Number	Course Title	Lecture	Lab	Patient Care	Seminar/Online	Credits	Grade Type
BSD10340	Biochemistry	25	0	0	0	1.75	letter
PC22402	Introduction to Public Health	10	0	0	0	0.75	letter
PC22023	Principles and Practice of Optometry III	14	14	14	0	1.75	letter
VS21003	Optics III	40	10	0	0	3.00	letter
Totals		89	24	14	0	7.25	

Fall Term Course Number	Course Title	Lecture	Lab	Patient Care	Seminar/Online	Credits	Grade Type
BSD20401	Immunology	30	0	0	0	2.00	letter
BSD20722	Ocular Disease Principles II	74	35	0	0	6.00	letter
BSD20813	Pharmacology I	30	0	0	0	2.00	letter
GRS97003	Biostatistics and Experimental Design I	33	0	0	0	2.25	letter
GRS97010	Research Colloquia	8	0	0	0	0.50	pass/fail
GRS97020	Graduate Research Seminar	0	0	0	24	1.50	letter
GRS97030	Thesis Proposal Development		arranged with advisor			1.00	pass/fail
PC22125	Patient Care IIa	0	0	50	0	1.75	pass/fail
SAC23002	Contact Lenses I	20	18	0	0	2.25	letter
VS21203	Binocular Vision and Ocular Motility	65	8	0	0	4.50	letter
Totals		260	61	50	24	23.75	

Spring Term Course Number	Course Title	Lecture	Lab	Patient Care	Seminar/Online	Credits	Grade Type
BSD20723	Ocular Disease Principles III	34	12.5	0	0	2.75	letter
BSD20813	Pharmacology II	30	0	0	0	2.00	letter
BSD30901	Clinical Medicine	0	0	0	60	4.00	letter
GRS97004	Biostatistics and Experimental Design II	10	5	0	0	0.75	letter
GRS97010	Research Colloquia	8	0	0	0	0.50	pass/fail
GRS97020	Graduate Research Seminar	0	0	0	24	1.50	letter
GRS97031	Thesis Proposal		arranged with advisor			1.50	pass/fail
GRS97041	Laboratory Research II		arranged with advisor			2.00	pass/fail
PC22126	Patient Care IIb	0	0	60	0	2.00	pass/fail
SAC23003	Contact Lenses II	30	21	0	0	2.50	letter
SAC33405	Binocular and Accommodative Anomalies	51	14	0	0	3.75	letter
VS21207	Neural Basis of Vision	49	0	0	0	3.25	letter
Totals		212	52.5	60	84	26.5	

OD/MS Dual Degree Program: Year 3**Summer Term**

Course Number	Course Title	Lecture	Lab	Patient Care	Seminar/Online	Credits	Grade Type
PC32125	Patient Care IIIa	0	0	120	0	4.00	pass/fail
PC32505	Clinical Ocular Imaging Topics	20	0	0	0	1.25	letter
SAC33403	Development of Vision	24.5	0	0	0	1.75	Letter
Totals		44.5	0	120	0	7.00	

Fall Term

Course Number	Course Title	Lecture	Lab	Patient Care	Seminar/Online	Credits	Grade Type
BSD30701	Advanced Ocular Disease I	56.25	0	0	0	3.75	letter
GRS97010	Research Colloquia	8	0	0	0	0.50	pass/fail
GRS97020	Graduate Research Seminar	0	0	0	24	1.50	letter
GRS97042	Laboratory Research III			arranged with advisor		2.00	pass/fail
PC32406	Public Health and Clinical Practice	10	0	0	0	0.75	letter
PC32126	Patient Care IIIb	0	0	120	0	4.00	pass/fail
BSD20350	Clinical Neuro-ophthalmic Topics	23	0	0	0	1.50	letter
SAC33203	Low Vision Rehab Throughout the Life Span	38	12	0	0	3.00	letter
SAC33583	Strabismus and Amblyopia	36	6	0	0	2.50	letter
Totals		171.25	18	120	24	19.5	

Spring Term

Course Number	Course Title	Lecture	Lab	Patient Care	Seminar/Online	Credits	Grade Type
BSD30702	Advanced Ocular Disease II	72	0	0	15	4.75	letter
BSD30710	Special Topics: Ocul. Dis. and Adv. Clinical Care	20	0	0	0	1.25	pass/fail
GRS97010	Research Colloquia	8	0	0	0	0.50	pass/fail
GRS97020	Graduate Research Seminar	0	0	0	24	1.50	letter
GRS97043	Laboratory Research IV			arranged with advisor		2.00	pass/fail
PC32006	Advanced Surgical and Laser Procedures	26	21	0	2	2.50	letter
PC32127	Patient Care IIIc	0	0	120	0	4.00	pass/fail
PC32721	Ophthalmic Business and Management Policy I	10.5	0	0	5	0.75	letter
SAC33605	Pediatric Optometry	36	0	0	8	2.75	letter
Totals		172.5	21	120	54	20	

OD/MS Dual Degree Program: Year 4**Summer Term: course taken while students in clinical rotations**

PC32722	Ophthalmic Business and Management Policy II	12	0	0	5	1.00	pass/fail
Totals		12.00	0.00	0.00	5.00	1.00	

Fall Term: course taken while students in clinical rotations

Course Number	Course Title	Lecture	Lab	Patient Care	Seminar/Online	Credits	Grade Type
GRS97050	Thesis Preparation I			arranged with advisor		2.00	pass/fail
PC32723	Ophthalmic Business and Management Policy III	10	0.00	0	7	1.00	pass/fail
Totals		10.00	0.00	0.00	7.00	3.00	

Spring Term: course taken while students in clinical rotations

Course Number	Course Title	Lecture	Lab	Patient Care	Seminar/Online	Credits	Grade Type
GRS97051	Thesis Preparation II			arranged with advisor		2.25	pass/fail
Totals						2.25	

Final-year Clinical Rotations

Course Number	Course Title	Patient Care	Credits	Grade Type
ACC4963	Specialty Care Rotation	Minimum of 400	13.25	pass/fail
ECP4918	Primary Care Rotation	Minimum of 400	13.25	pass/fail
ECP4923	Advanced Care Rotation	Minimum of 400	13.25	pass/fail

Each student completes 53 clinical rotation credit hours during their four final year rotations.

Contact Lenses Clinical Care is included in the rotations.