



NORTHEASTERN
STATE UNIVERSITY

Representative Ivy Spohnholz
Alaska State Legislature
State Capitol Room 421
Juneau, AK 99801
March 18, 2017

RE: HB 103

Dear Representative Spohnholz,

As a comprehensive ophthalmologist in practice in rural America for over two decades, I have been asked by the respected members of the Alaska Optometric Association to respond to a series of misleading statements that have recently been directed to members of the Alaska State Legislature and circulated through the local media. Unlike most of the individuals making claims with regards to education in our nation's colleges of optometry, I am a graduate of both one of our nation's premier programs in clinical optometry, The Oklahoma College of Optometry at Northeastern State University, as well as the Oklahoma State University Health Science Center's College of Osteopathic Medicine and Surgery, one of the top-ranked medical programs when it comes to rural medicine and primary care.

I followed this by completing a residency in ophthalmology and ophthalmic surgery at OSU-Tulsa. I have also been a professor, surgeon, and clinical faculty member at the Oklahoma College of Optometry for almost 18 years. Having trained in both optometry and ophthalmology, my perspective is formed from direct observation and daily experience, not from ostensible measures of speculation grounded in a politically crafted agenda of turf protection or self-serving ideology.

As an ophthalmologist, I am embarrassed that some of my colleagues are again resorting to deride the profession of optometry. These innuendos are part of a decades-old campaign which fails time and time again to recognize the expansion and maturation of the entirety of the optometric profession, with respect to the growth of the optometric, medical, and scientific knowledge base, evolved patterns of evidence-based care, and technological innovation. Optometry is a learned profession with over 150 years of humanitarian service to the American public. Optometry is an independent healthcare profession which has matured and evolved alongside the other health professions.

These types of unprofessional "scare tactics" are completely inappropriate and demonstrates a lack of respect for the members of the Alaska Legislature. Mockingly throwing professional dispersions your way, as if Alaska legislators are not sophisticated enough to understand the high standards and rigorous educational processes, state and national board examinations and certifications that young and aspiring students, 2/3 of which are women, must go through to become licensed doctors of optometry. These misstatements take the form of "optometrists didn't go to medical school", or "optometrists receive no hands-on training". Individuals making such statements are, respectfully, naïve and highly misinformed.

Oklahoma College of Optometry

1001 N. Grand Ave. | Tahlequah, Oklahoma 74464 | P 918.444.4000 | F 918.456.2104

www.nsuok.edu

With respect to my fellow ophthalmologists who think they know what modern optometric education is all about (without ever having stepped foot in an optometry school), I offer the following evidence-based facts. Following college where the majority of applicants to optometry school have completed a four-year baccalaureate degree, future optometrists complete a comprehensive and robust 4-year professional program which, like medical school, includes didactic instruction in the basic and clinical sciences. As a matter of fact, in several optometry programs across the nation optometry students sit side by side with medical students in the same classroom or with the same professor at Universities that offer both doctorates in optometry and medicine.

Similar to an ophthalmology residency, the professional optometry program includes years of supervised clinical practice. After graduation, many optometrists take on an additional 1 or 2 years of post-graduate work. Northeastern State University, for example, offers both 1 and 2-year post-graduate residencies with areas of focus that include advanced disease management. I know of many optometric physicians that have also completed fellowship programs beyond residency in intense areas of focus such as glaucoma, cornea, and retina; fellowships offered under specialized ophthalmologists.

I've been asked to comment on how optometrists learn new procedures or pick up new skills that were not available during their time in optometry school. The simple answer is the same way every other physician, dentist, advanced practice nurse, or other healthcare provider or professional does. By attending continuing education programs, workshops, and a lot of due diligence and independent study.

Optometry is an independent health care profession. Optometry is a noble profession that treats and attends to the visual and healthcare needs of the vast majority of Alaskans. After more than a century and a half of service, it has earned the right to chart its course, look to its future, and to remain accountable to society. Optometry adheres to the same high moral and ethical standards that the other learned-health professions do. Optometry has always sought to keep the welfare of the patient above all else.

And yet, no other independent doctoral-level health profession has been subjected to such a high degree of obstructionism and attempted derailment by another independent profession as has optometry. Neither dentistry nor podiatry has had to endure the same amount of seemingly endless dispirited commentary. Fortunately, the forthcoming decision is in the hands of the objective and clear-minded representatives of all the citizens of Alaska. And it is in their sole interest that decisions that seek to advance the public welfare are best served.

Respectfully,



Richard E. Castillo, OD, DO

Richard E. Castillo, OD, DO
OPHTHALMOLOGY & PROCEDURAL OPTOMETRY
Director, The Center for Advanced Practice Optometry
Assistant Dean/Surgical Training & Education
NSU | The Oklahoma College of Optometry
1001 N Grand Ave | Tahlequah, OK 74464
918-444-4038 (P) | 918-845-5148 (C) | 918-458-9608 (F)
castillo@nsuok.edu

Training Tomorrow's Optometric Surgeons Today
SINCE 1993





Alaska Native Health Board

THE VOICE OF ALASKA TRIBAL HEALTH SINCE 1968

907.562.6006 907.563.2001 • 4000 Ambassador Drive, Suite 101 • Anchorage, Alaska 99508 • www.anhb.org

March 17, 2017

The Honorable Ivy Spohnholz
Alaska State House of Representatives
State Capitol Room 421
Juneau AK, 99801

RE: Support for HB 103, "An Act relating to the practice of optometry."

Dear Representative Spohnholz:

On behalf of Alaska Native Health Board (ANHB), I am writing in support of House Bill No. 103, regarding optometry in Alaska. Established in 1968, Alaska Native Health Board (ANHB) serves as the statewide voice on Alaska Native health issues. ANHB is a 28-member representing tribes and tribal organizations carrying out health services on behalf of the 229 federally recognized Tribes in Alaska. ANHB's purpose is to promote the spiritual, physical, mental, social and cultural well-being and pride of Alaska Native people. As the statewide tribal health advocacy organization, ANHB assists tribal partners, state and federal agencies with achieving effective communication and consultation with tribes and their tribal health programs.

HB 103 updates the Alaska optometry statutes, making them similar to the dentistry and advanced practice nursing statutes, wherein the state board determines the regulatory details of practice, rather than setting them out in statute. This allows the state board more flexibility as technology advances and new modern treatment or procedures for patients become available. It also maintains the authority to protect the public.

HB 103 carefully and clearly empowers the state optometry board to regulate the practice in a manner consistent with current education and training. It clearly mandates strict limitations and restrictions that only allow the state board to authorize treatment within the confines of current training. All Alaskans will have better access to quality care into the future, while the board continues to provide oversight and authority to safeguard the public.

Optometrists in Alaska have an excellent history of safe, effective, and quality care. I support House Bill 103.

Sincerely,

Verné Boerner
ANHB President and CEO

ALASKA NATIVE TRIBAL
HEALTH CONSORTIUM

ALEUTIAN PRIBILOF
ISLANDS ASSOCIATION

ARCTIC SLOPE
NATIVE ASSOCIATION

BRISTOL BAY AREA
HEALTH CORPORATION

CHICKALOON VILLAGE
TRADITIONAL COUNCIL

CHUGACHMIUT

COPPER RIVER
NATIVE ASSOCIATION

COUNCIL OF
ATHABASCAN
TRIBAL GOVERNMENTS

EASTERN ALEUTIAN
TRIBES

KARLUK IRA
TRIBAL COUNCIL

KENAITZE INDIAN TRIBE

KETCHIKAN
INDIAN COMMUNITY

KODIAK AREA
NATIVE ASSOCIATION

MANILAQ ASSOCIATION

METLAKATLA INDIAN
COMMUNITY

MT. SANFORD
TRIBAL CONSORTIUM

NATIVE VILLAGE
OF EKLUINA

NATIVE VILLAGE
OF EYAK

NATIVE VILLAGE
OF TYONEK

NINILCHIK
TRADITIONAL COUNCIL

NORTON SOUND
HEALTH CORPORATION

SELDOVIA
VILLAGE TRIBE

SOUTHCENTRAL
FOUNDATION

SOUTHEAST ALASKA
REGIONAL HEALTH
CONSORTIUM

TANANA CHIEFS
CONFERENCE

YAKUTAT TLINGIT TRIBE

YUKON-KUSKOKWIM
HEALTH CORPORATION

VALDEZ NATIVE TRIBE



February 22, 2017

The Honorable Ivy Spohnholz
Alaska State House of Representatives
State Capitol Room 421
Juneau AK, 99801

RE: Support for HB 103, "An Act relating to the practice of optometry."

Dear Representative Spohnholz:

On behalf of Southcentral Foundation (SCF), I am writing in support of House Bill No. 103, regarding optometry in Alaska. SCF is the Alaska Native tribal health organization designated by Cook Inlet Region, Inc. and the eleven Federally-Recognized Tribes of the Aleut Community of St. Paul Island, Igiugig, Iliamna, Kokhanok, McGrath, Newhalen, Nikolai, Nondalton, Pedro Bay, Telida, and Takotna to provide healthcare services to beneficiaries of the Indian Health Service pursuant to a Compact with the United State government under the authority of P.L. 93-638, as amended, the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act.

SCF provides services to more than 65,000 Alaska Native and American Indian people living in the Municipality of Anchorage, the Matanuska-Susitna Borough and 55 rural Alaska villages. Services provided by SCF include outpatient medical care, home health care, dentistry, optometry, psychiatry, mental health counseling, substance abuse treatment, residential treatment facilities for adolescents and for women, suicide prevention and domestic violence prevention.

SCF employs optometrists, dentists, physicians, and advanced practice registered nurses, all of whom have prescribing authority and their own state regulatory boards, and all work in harmony to treat patients for the best access to quality care.

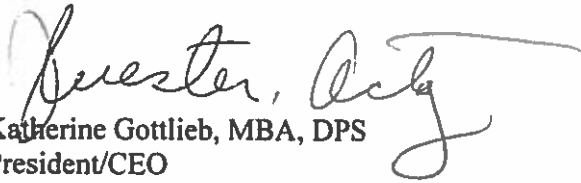
HB 103 updates the Alaska optometry statues, making them similar to the dentistry and advanced practice nursing statues, wherein the state board determines the regulatory details of practice, rather than setting them out in statute. This allows the state board more flexibility as technology advances and new modern treatment or procedures for patients become available. It also maintains the authority to protect the public.

HB 103 carefully and clearly empowers the state optometry board to regulate the practice in a manner consistent with current education and training. It clearly mandates strict limitations and restrictions that only allow the state board to authorize treatment within the confines of current training. All Alaskans will have better access to quality care into the future, while the board continues to provide oversight and authority to safeguard the public.

Optometrists in Alaska have an excellent history of safe, effective, and quality care. I support House Bill 103.

Sincerely,

SOUTHCENTRAL FOUNDATION



Katherine Gottlieb, MBA, DPS
President/CEO

[REDACTED]

From: Andrea Eberle <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Thursday, February 16, 2017 9:15 PM
To: Rep. Ivy Spohnholz
Subject: Please Support Optometry HB 103

Dear Representative Spohnholz,

Please support House Bill 103. The Alaska optometry board should have the authority to regulate its practice the same as the other prescribing health professions such as dentistry, medicine and nursing. This will allow Optometrists to be able to practice at the full scope of our education.

Thank you so much for your support of this important legislation for my professional career.

Sincerely,

Dr. Andrea Eberle

[REDACTED]

From: Lynn [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, February 16, 2017 6:27 PM
To: Rep. Ivy Spohnholz
Subject: Please Support HB 103

Dear Representative Spohnholz,

I am currently an optometrist in Wasilla, Alaska. I have been practicing in Wasilla for the past 33 years.

During the current legislative session, SB 36 and HB 103 have been introduced to again address the issue of the scope of optometric practice. Current Alaska optometric statues and regulations are antiquated in terms of the scope of education and training of today's optometrist. The optometry board is the proper seat of authority to regulate the practice of optometry, the same as the other prescribing health care professions of medicine, dentistry, and nursing. The board should determine the full scope of optometric practice as defined by our training and education. This legislation will remove the legislative action currently necessary for optometric practice expansion.

Please support HB 103 when it appears in the House.

If I can be of further help, please contact me.

Respectfully,

Lynn

Lynn J. Coon, OD, FAAO
Valley Eye Associates, P.C.
935 E. Westpoint Dr. Suite 207
Wasilla, AK 99654
Office: 907-373-0225
Fax: 907-373-7776

[REDACTED]

From: Dr. Elizabeth Lane [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, February 16, 2017 3:00 PM
To: Rep. Ivy Spohnholz; Rep. Sam Kito; Rep. Bryce Edgmon; Rep. Adam Wool; Rep. Geran Tarr; Rep. David Eastman; Rep. Jennifer Johnston; Rep. Colleen Sullivan-Leonard; Rep. Andy Josephson; Rep. Louise Stutes; Rep. Chris Birch; Rep. Gary Knopp; Rep. Mike Chenault; Rep. Matt Claman; Rep. Dan Saddler
Subject: Please Support Optometry HB 103

Dear Representatives,

I'm writing to request your support for HB 103.

The bill allows an optometry board to have authority to regulate its practice, the same as other prescribing health professions including dentistry, medicine, and nursing. It will allow a board to regulate optometry's scope of practice to reflect optometrist's training and education.

If you have any questions about why I am in support of this bill, feel free to contact me.

Thank you for your consideration of support for HB 103.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Lane Bow, OD
907-250-4225

[REDACTED]

From: Kathleen Powell [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, February 16, 2017 2:15 PM
To: Rep. Ivy Spohnholz; Rep. Sam Kito; Rep. Bryce Edgmon; Rep. Adam Wool; Rep. Geran Tarr; Rep. David Eastman; Rep. Jennifer Johnston; Rep. Colleen Sullivan-Leonard; Rep. Andy Josephson; Rep. Louise Stutes; Rep. Chris Birch; Rep. Gary Knopp; Rep. Mike Chenault; Rep. Matt Claman; Rep. Dan Saddler
Subject: Please Support Optometry HB 103

Dear Representatives,

I am respectfully requesting your support for House Bill 103.

The optometry board should have the authority to regulate its practice the same as the other prescribing health professions such as dentistry, medicine and nursing.

Optometrists should be able to practice within the full scope of our training and education. Doctors of Optometry have 8 or more years of college with optional 1-2 years of residency.

Sincerely,

Kathleen Powell, O.D.
Anchorage

[REDACTED]

From: Jeffrey Mattson [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, February 16, 2017 2:06 PM
To: Rep. Ivy Spohnholz; Rep. Sam Kito; Rep. Bryce Edgmon; Rep. Adam Wool; Rep. Geran Tarr; Rep. David Eastman; Rep. Jennifer Johnston; Rep. Colleen Sullivan-Leonard; Rep. Andy Josephson; Rep. Louise Stutes; Rep. Chris Birch; Rep. Gary Knopp; Rep. Mike Chenault; Rep. Matt Claman; Rep. Dan Saddler
Subject: Please Support Optometry HB 103

Hello Representative,

My name is Jeffrey Mattson, I am an optometrist who practices in Anchorage, AK and I am asking your support of House Bill 103.

House Bill 103 does not authorize optometrists to do any procedures--it only gives the state board authority to regulate the profession for the safety of the public.

The state board would never authorize optometrists to do anything beyond their scope of education and training, as is clearly stated in House Bill 103.

On every legislation for over the past 40 years, organized ophthalmology has claimed "terrible harm by optometrists" yet history proves this has NEVER been true.

Once again, thank you for your support of House Bill 103.

Jeffrey Mattson, O.D.

[REDACTED]

From: Jim Falconer [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, February 16, 2017 1:39 PM
To: Rep. Ivy Spohnholz; Rep. Sam Kito; Rep. Bryce Edgmon; Rep. Adam Wool; Rep. Geran Tarr; Rep. David Eastman; Rep. Jennifer Johnston; Rep. Colleen Sullivan-Leonard; Rep. Andy Josephson; Rep. Louise Stutes; Rep. Chris Birch; Rep. Gary Knopp; Rep. Mike Chenault; Rep. Matt Claman; Rep. Dan Saddler
Subject: Please Support HB 103

Dear Representative,

As an optometrist in Alaska, I am writing you to ask that you please support HB 103, which gives broader authority to the state optometry board to determine the scope of practice for optometry in Alaska. We have a long history of taking good care of our patients, and it is certainly not in our interest to allow doctors of optometry to practice beyond their level of training. The goal of this bill is simply to allow us to broaden the scope of practice for optometrists as new medications and procedures become available which are not explicitly written into our current law regulating optometry.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

James C. Falconer, OD

[REDACTED]

From: John Demske [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, February 16, 2017 1:28 PM
Subject: HB 103

Hello Representative Spohnholz,

I am writing to inform you that I fully support HB 103, the bill that gives autonomy to the Alaskan Board of Optometry and allows doctors of optometry to practice as taught in their university training.

I have been practicing optometry in Alaska since 1978, in Soldotna since 1983 and this bill is long overdue. Other health professionals with less university training have an autonomous board.

The optometrists of Alaska would appreciate your support of this bill.

Thank you for introducing HB 103.

John Demske, O.D.

Soldotna Alaska

907-262-3168

[REDACTED]

From: Erik Christianson [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, February 16, 2017 12:56 PM
To: Rep. Ivy Spohnholz; Rep. Sam Kito; Rep. Bryce Edgmon; Rep. Adam Wool; Rep. Geran Tarr; Rep. David Eastman; Rep. Jennifer Johnston; Rep. Colleen Sullivan-Leonard; Rep. Andy Josephson; Rep. Louise Stutes; Rep. Chris Birch; Rep. Gary Knopp; Rep. Mike Chenault; Rep. Matt Claman; Rep. Dan Saddler
Cc: 'Elizabeth Stevens'; 'Pam Christianson'; Rick Swearingen, O.D.
Subject: Letter of support for HB 103

Alaska House Members,

I am an optometric physician who has practiced in Ketchikan since 1990. I have practiced in Alaska since my graduation from optometry school in 1986. Prior to coming to K-town I spent 3 years in Barrow serving the residents of the North Slope. I have committed my entire professional career (currently 30 years...yikes) to preserving and enhancing the eye and visual health of rural Alaska. In the time I have been in Alaska I have seen optometry advance greatly as a profession. I have seen us become the "family eye doctor". I am a trusted member of the health care team. Daily I work with the gamut of local health care providers as the "go to" eye expert in our community. Daily I refer to and work with ophthalmologists and other specialty providers from Alaska and the northwest to maximize outcomes for our patients through cooperative management of eye and related health conditions. Much of this advancement came because of legislation that modernized state law to allow doctors of optometry to expand their practice as knowledge, training, and technology advanced. HB 103 is the next logical step in the evolution of modern optometric practice. It is particularly applicable in our rural state where the doctor of optometry is the eye expert.

I am asking your support of HB 103. HB 103 does not authorize doctors of optometry to do any procedures--it only gives the state board authority to regulate the profession for the safety of the public. The state board cannot authorize optometrists to do anything beyond their scope of education and training, and this is clearly stated in HB 103. HB 103 allows the State Board to regulate optometry just as other prescribing professions...without having to always return for legislation when new technology develops. Costs are reduced when local eye care providers are able to practice at a level commensurate with their experience and training. This will help reduce the number of trips a rural patient must make to see specialists. Additionally, new doctors of optometry are looking for places where they can practice the full spectrum of their skills. This modernization legislation will allow rural Alaska to be competitive in attracting quality young doctors. If you have questions regarding HB 103 feel free to contact me

Once again, thank you for your support of HB 103.

Erik D. Christianson, O.D.

Ketchikan Eye Care Center

351 Carlanna Lake Rd

Ketchikan, Alaska 99901

[REDACTED]

From: David Holdgrafer [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, February 16, 2017 12:49 PM
To: Rep. Ivy Spohnholz; Rep. Sam Kito; Rep. Bryce Edgmon; Rep. Adam Wool; Rep. Geran Tarr; Rep. David Eastman; Rep. Jennifer Johnston; Rep. Colleen Sullivan-Leonard; Rep. Andy Josephson; Rep. Louise Stutes; Rep. Chris Birch; Rep. Gary Knopp; Rep. Mike Chenault; Rep. Matt Claman; Rep. Dan Saddler
Subject: Please Support Optometry bill Hb 103

Greetings Representatives,

I would appreciate it if you would lend your support to Hb 103 in the House.

Thanks for your time and best regards,

--

David J Holdgrafer OD

Eyecare Excellence
3450 E Rezanof Drive
Kodiak, AK 99615
t. 907-486-5504
f. 907-486-6577

djholdgrafer@gmail.com

[REDACTED]

From: Jeremy Fulk [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, February 16, 2017 12:45 PM
To: Rep. Ivy Spohnholz; Rep. Sam Kito; Rep. Bryce Edgmon; Rep. Adam Wool; Rep. Geran Tarr; Rep. David Eastman; Rep. Jennifer Johnston; Rep. Colleen Sullivan-Leonard; Rep. Andy Josephson; Rep. Louise Stutes; Rep. Chris Birch; Rep. Gary Knopp; Rep. Mike Chenault; Rep. Matt Claman; Rep. Dan Saddler
Subject: Support HB 103

Dear Representative,

Please support HB 103 for the following reasons:

- The optometry board should have the authority to regulate its practice the same as the other prescribing health professions such as dentistry, medicine and nursing.
- Optometrists treats the majority of eye patients all over Alaska including remote areas.
- The optometry board deserves the same respect as the other boards.
- The Alaska optometry law needs to be updated.
- Optometrists should be able to practice at the full scope of our education.
- Doctors of Optometry have 8 or more years of college and optional 1-2 years residency.

Sincerely,

Jeremy C. Fulk O.D.

Eye Clinic of Fairbanks

116 Minnie St., Fairbanks, AK 99701

907-456-7760 Ext. 258

jfulk@eyeclinicfbks.com

jcfulk@outlook.com

From: Jerimiah Myers [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, February 16, 2017 12:29 PM
To: Rep. Ivy Spohnholz
Subject: Support HB 103

Dear Representative:

Having done eye care in the bush of Alaska for some 30 years, our profession finds this legislation a necessity to give the best care for our Alaskans.

Thank you for your attention to this.

- The optometry board should have the authority to regulate its practice the same as the other prescribing health professions such as dentistry, medicine and nursing.
- Optometrists treat the majority of eye patients all over Alaska including remote areas.
- The optometry board deserves the same respect as the other boards.
- The Alaska optometry law needs to be updated.
- Optometrists should be able to practice at the full scope of our education.
- Doctors of Optometry have 8 or more years of college and optional 1-2 years residency.

Once again, thank you for your support of this important legislation.

*Dr. Jerimiah Myers
PO Box 1948
Kodiak, AK 99615*

*(907) 539-2010 cell
(907) 486-6117 office*

From: Dr. Laura Kompkoff <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Tuesday, February 14, 2017 4:22 PM
To: Rep. Ivy Spohnholz; Rep. Sam Kito; Rep. Bryce Edgmon; Rep. Adam Wool; Rep. Geran Tarr; Rep. David Eastman; Rep. Jennifer Johnston; Rep. Colleen Sullivan-Leonard; Rep. Andy Josephson; Rep. Louise Stutes; Rep. Chris Birch; Rep. Gary Knopp; Rep. Mike Chenault; Rep. Matt Claman; Rep. Dan Saddler
Subject: Please Support Optometry HB 103

Please support HB103. Doctors of Optometry want to provide the best care for our patients, and that includes the most safe and up-to-date care in which we are trained. Our education includes a 4-year doctorate program following an undergraduate education, National and State Board examinations, and Continuing Education. The Dentists of Alaska have successfully brought the best and most up to date oral health to Alaskans by successfully governing their own board. Like the Alaskan Dentists, Optometrists provide healthcare all over the state which makes it imperative to keep up with the most advanced care without delay most often caused by having to turn to the legislative body when technology and research changes. Alaska has always strived for the most up to date healthcare for its residents. In today's world, advances are learned and expected from healthcare providers at a quicker rate than ever. Please help us give the best care to Alaskans. Thank you for your support!

Laura Kompkoff, O.D.

Katmai Eye and Vision Center

Katmaieye.com

907-334-3937

From: Dr. Sheryl Lentfer [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, February 14, 2017 4:00 PM
To: Rep. Ivy Spohnholz
Subject: HB103

Please support HB103. As a practicing Optometrist for 20 years in Anchorage, we are asking to be able to run our own board. Our education includes a 4 years doctorate program (after an undergraduate college degree and National entrance examination) and, governed and approved continuing education. The Dentists have successfully brought the best and most up to date oral health to Alaskans by successfully governing their own practitioners. They do not have to go through the state legislative body to provide patients the best of care as healthcare advances. Optometrists provide healthcare all over the state and in a timely manner. Alaska has always strived for the most up to date healthcare for its residence, and in today's world, advances are learned about and expected from healthcare providers at a quicker rate than ever. Like the doctors of Dentistry, Doctors of Optometry want to provide the best care for our patients, and that includes the most safe and up-to-date care in which we are trained. Thank you for your support!

Sherry Lentfer, OD

Katmai Eye and Vision Center

Neuro Vision Performance Center

12570 Old Seward Hwy., Suite 104

Anchorage, Ak 99515

907 334-3937

907 885-2522 FAX

Katmaieye.com/Facebook: Katmai Eye and Vision Center

JEFF GONNASON, O.D.

A member of *Vision Source*

2211 E. Northern Lights Blvd. STE 202 - Anchorage, AK 99508

Dr. Jeff Gonnason
Doctor of Optometry
Phone: 907-276-2080
Fax: 907-276-2081

E-mail: alaskavisionsource@gmail.com
www.gonnason.com

February 14, 2017

Representative Ivy Spohnholz
Chair Health & Social Services
Alaska State Legislature

RE: **HOUSE BILL 103**

- **This bill authorizes optometry board autonomy — The same as the dental board and advanced practice nursing board:**

The Alaska Legislature establishes statutes by which all licensed health care professionals practice, and creates regulatory boards to protect the public by regulating the details of practice. The optometry board would never authorize any practice outside the scope of education and training, and doctors of optometry are held to the same standard of care as any medical provider treating patients.

- **Optometry education and training is identical to the dentistry model with 8-10 years of university level education and residency:**

4 year professional program after acceptance, with the first 2 years of sciences and final 2 years of clinical experience. Many also take a 1-2 years additional residency in a specialized area. How optometry and dentistry are different from medical school is that the first 2 years of sciences are similar - in fact optometry & dental & medical students often train together or have the same professors at the universities - but the second 2 years of clinic are different. Because medical school must cover the entire range of the body, more clinic time is spent on the priorities of vital organ systems of heart disease, cancer, stroke, etc. Because the eyes and teeth are so specialized, optometry and dental school clinics are mostly devoted to ocular and dental training. Optometry school covers systemic diseases with ocular manifestations such as diabetes or hypertension and to make appropriate referrals, and focuses on treating eye diseases and appropriate use of medications. Alaska optometrists have been prescribing Rx medications for 25 years, including prescribing Rx scheduled narcotics when needed for the past 10 years with no issues.

- **The prerequisites for optometry school meet or exceed the requirements for medical school admission:**

The Optometry Admission Test (OAT) parallels the Medical College Admission Test (MCAT) and the Dental Aptitude Test (DAT). Through the primary care doctoral program in optometry school, the graduate is educated to make professional judgments and is quick to consult with other providers when a patient needs advanced services outside the scope of practice. The opposition claims optometrists "don't go to medical school" but neither do dentists or advanced nurses — they also have their own very specialized education.

- **Optometrists are defined as "Physicians" under federal Medicare:**

They are held to the same standard of care as they treat Medicare patients. The malpractice claims for optometry are far lower than other professions, and the Alaska rate is about \$400/year for \$4 Million coverage. There has never been a case of patient harm before the State Optometry Board involving prescriptions or treatment, yet the opposition has testified for over 40 years predicting dramatic public harm which has never been true.

JEFF GONNASON, O.D.

A member of *Vision Source*

2211 E. Northern Lights Blvd. STE 202 - Anchorage, AK 99508

Dr. Jeff Gonnason
Doctor of Optometry
Phone: 907-276-2080
Fax: 907-276-2081

E-mail: alaskavisionsource@gmail.com
www.gonnason.com

- **The ophthalmologists are always comparing their advanced sub-specialty education to optometry education:**

Optometry are trained in very few of the procedures that ophthalmologists do. The clinical education of an optometrist does not have to parallel that of an ophthalmologist any more than the education of a family physician needs to parallel a neurosurgeon or heart surgeon. Ophthalmologists are vitally needed, patients need their advanced expertise for cataract surgery, retina surgery, severe trauma, etc. These are all vital secondary and tertiary care conditions that optometrists do not treat and do not propose to treat. It is regretful that the opposition resorts to "drama & scare tactics" trying to frighten legislators in their turf battle. Risk of harm to the public has never been an issue.

- **Optometry is also vitally needed in Alaska:**

Approximately 150 doctors of optometry practice all over Alaska, and serve over 80 remote villages. Optometrists provide the vast majority of primary eye care in Alaska. Local optometrists are called upon at rural clinics for their expertise. Travel and treatment costs greatly increase when routine primary care is provided by urban specialists. Alaska needs the best new doctors of optometry, and antiquated state statutes are a barrier to attracting the best and brightest to our state.

- **In reality, optometry and most ophthalmology specialists currently work very well together:**

Both daily collaborate care and co-manage surgical patients all over Alaska. The actual opposition comes from only a handful of local ophthalmology & medical political leaders, but mainly from their Outside national "Academy" with flamboyant and appalling claims of disaster. Their disrespect for optometry is unwarranted.

- **To be absolutely clear, this bill does NOT authorize any optometrist to do ANYTHING:**

It only updates 40+ year old statutes to allow the optometry board to regulate practice under their sworn duty to protect the public. The same as Alaska Dentists and Advanced Practice Nurses, so that Optometry does not have to return for legislation for every new advance in new technology. Of the 4 independent prescribing professions, only optometry has been treated unfairly for so many years. The Alaska Optometry Board deserves to receive the same level of trust and respect as these other professions.

Sincerely yours,



Jeff Gonnason, OD

Legislative Chair, Alaska Optometric Association
Past President, Alaska Optometric Association
Past Chair, Alaska State Board of Examiners in Optometry
Alaska Volunteer for the American Optometric Association

From: Rob Fleckenstein
Sent: Monday, February 13, 2017 11:09 AM
To: Rep. Ivy Spohnholz
Subject: Please Support HB 103

Hello, my name is Rob Fleckenstein, O.D., and I am a practicing Optometrist in Eagle River. I'm asking for your support of HB 103 for the following reasons:

- The optometry board should have the authority to regulate its practice the same as the other prescribing health professions such as dentistry, medicine and nursing.
- Optometrists treats the majority of eye patients all over Alaska including remote areas.
- The optometry board deserves the same respect as the other boards.
- The Alaska optometry law needs to be updated.
- Optometrists should be able to practice at the full scope of our education.
- Doctors of Optometry have 8 or more years of college and optional 1-2 years residency.

Thank you for your consideration,

Rob

ROBERT J. FLECKENSTEIN, O.D.

Vision Source

Eagle River Vision Clinic

16331 Heritage Pl. #104

EAGLE RIVER, AK, 99577

T: 907-694-2511

F: 907-694-3900

www.crv.com

[REDACTED]

From: Ashley Kettler [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, February 10, 2017 11:25 AM
Subject: Please Support Optometry HB 103

My name is Ashley Kettler and I was born and raised in Wrangell, Alaska. After **8 years of college education to receive a doctorate in optometry**, I have returned to my home state and kindly request that you support HB 103

- Optometrists treats the majority of eye patients all over Alaska including remote areas.
- The optometry board should have the authority to regulate its practice the same as the other prescribing health professions such as dentistry, medicine and nursing

Thank you for your time,

Ashley Kettler, O.D.

Pacific
CATARACT AND LASER INSTITUTE

February 9, 2017

House Health and Social Services Committee
House Labor & Commerce Committee
Alaska State Legislature

Dear Representatives Spohnholz, Kito, Edgmon, Wool, Tarr, Eastman, Johnston, Sullivan, Josephson, Stutes, Birch, Knopp, Chenault, Claman, and Saddler,

My name is Dr. Paul Barney, I am an optometrist who practices in Anchorage, AK. I am also the Chair of the Alaska Board of Examiners in Optometry. I am writing to you to respectfully ask for your support of HB-103, an Alaska House bill which would allow the Alaska Board of Examiners in Optometry to regulate the profession of optometry, just as medicine, dentistry, and advanced nurse practitioners are regulated by their respective Boards.

This legislation will update the definition of Optometry to be consistent with what is taught in the schools and colleges of optometry in the United States; the current definition in statute was written over 40 years ago. HB-103 will put the details regarding the practice of optometry in regulation allowing the Alaska Board of Examiners in Optometry more flexibility with advancements in technology, pharmaceutical agents, and education, while at the same time ensuring public safety. This bill will also bring Alaska optometry statutes more in line with dentistry and advanced nurse practitioners, and just like the statutes concerning dentistry and advanced nurse practitioners, HB-103 will not allow the Optometry Board to expand scope of practice beyond current education and training.

As a current member of the Board of Examiners in Optometry, I take my duty and my oath to protect the citizens of Alaska very seriously. I know from my several years of experience on the Board that the other members take that oath equally seriously. Our Board consists of cautious, conservative optometrists all with several years of practice experience, and one lay person. We're also overseen by an Assistant Attorney General appointed by the state. I can assure you that the Board can be trusted to fulfill their primary purpose of protecting the public, and that the passage of HB-103 would not put the citizens of Alaska at risk.

Again, I respectfully ask for your support of HB-103.

Sincerely,


Paul M. Barney, O.D.

Chair, Alaska Board of Examiners in Optometry
Center Director, Pacific Cataract and Laser Institute

Robert Ford, MD
President, CEO
Debbie Eldredge
Executive VP, COO

DIRECTORS

Bruce Alves
Building & Equipment
Marlin Gimbel, MBA
Professional Relations
Bob Jasa, NCP
Healthcare Informatics
Gordon Johns, MD
MD Director
Kathy McWilliams, MBA
Finance Director
David Stanfield, OD
OD Director
Zane Bischoff, RN
Site Director
Michelle O'Hara
Assistant Site Director
Larry Roth, MS
Information Technology

PHYSICIANS

Alex Archibald, OD
Brien Arvidson, OD
Paul Barney, OD
Frank Barnhart, OD
Sarah Bortz, OD
Aaron Bronner, OD
Kimberly Browne, OD
Rick Busk, OD
Kim Cahlan-Holt, OD
Brian Carey, MD
Joyce Choe, MD, MPH
Paul Chung, MD
Shaun Coombs, OD
Melissa Dacumos, OD
Mark Everett, OD
Bruce Flint, OD
Marshall Ford, MD
Robert Ford, MD
David Gano, MD
Robert Gibbs, OD
Michael Glanzer, OD
William Gruzensky, MD
James Guzak, MD
Aml Halverson, OD
Doug Hansen, OD
Gordon Johns, MD
Brian Johnson, OD
Myung Jung, OD
Oliver Kuhn-Wilken, OD
Jason Leng, MD
Bradley Lightfoot, OD
Reid Maruya, OD
Mark Maraman, OD, MS
Jeffrey Maltson, OD
Abigail Neal, OD
Maynard Pohl, OD
Jenny Ramsey, OD
Victoria Roen, OD
Daniel Schrampp, OD
Loren Seery, MD
David Stanfield, OD
Ronald Sugiyama, MD
Michael Van Brocklin, OD
Sally Williams, OD

SPECIALIZING IN
Cataract Surgery and
Laser Vision Correction

OFFICE LOCATIONS IN

ALASKA · IDAHO · MONTANA · NEW MEXICO · OREGON · WASHINGTON

[REDACTED]

From: Kara Frank [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, February 09, 2017 9:00 PM
To: Rep. Ivy Spohnholz; Rep. Sam Kito; Rep. Bryce Edgmon; Rep. Adam Wool; Rep. Geran Tarr; Rep. David Eastman; Rep. Jennifer Johnston; Rep. Colleen Sullivan-Leonard; Rep. Andy Josephson; Rep. Louise Stutes; Rep. Chris Birch; Rep. Gary Knopp; Rep. Mike Chenault; Rep. Matt Claman; Rep. Dan Saddler
Subject: Request of support for HB 103

Good evening,

Thank you for taking the time to read this email. I am writing on behalf of myself and my husband, Jacob Frank, OD. We own a practice in Palmer and would like to request your support in HB 103.

This bill is important to our profession as it allows optometrists to practice within the full scope of our training and education. We went to school for eight years and completed two years of residency training in ocular disease. Our current legislation limits our abilities to practice to our full potential, which means we're not as useful to the public as we could be. This is especially true because optometrists treat the majority of eye patients all over the state, particularly in rural areas. The Alaska optometry law needs to be updated.

HB 103 is also important because it grants the optometry board to regulate the practice, just as other prescribing health professionals are allowed to regulate their own professions. The optometry board deserves the same respect.

We believe this bill is beneficial to our family, our business, and our community, and we appreciate your consideration to this matter.

Respectfully,

Kara Reynolds, OD & Jacob Frank, OD

Kara Reynolds, OD
Clinical Director

Lodestar Family Eye Care, PC
625 South Cobb St | Suite 101
Palmer | AK | 99645
907.745.2273
www.lodestareye.com

[REDACTED]

From: Andrew Peter O.D. [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, February 09, 2017 6:47 PM
To: Rep. Ivy Spohnholz
Subject: HB103

Ivy,

Thank you for sponsoring HB103.

Soon, you will hear details on HB 103. I ask that you support this bill.


Technology in medicine is changing at an ever increasing rate; statistics show rates of change are almost exponential...with no sign of slowing up. These changes in medicine include imaging, medicine, and pathology diagnosis. For example, optometrists uses retinal laser imaging that -only a few years ago- was available only in academic institutions. Radiofrequency technology is chosen for lesion removal near eyes and lids. Injectable medications are commonly used for treatment of inflammation and diabetes. Lasers are used for treatment of secondary cataracts and preventative treatment of glaucoma. This makes a difference; it provides convenience to patients, allows access to quality of care in rural areas, and reduces costs. A win-win. Some of these techniques are being performed in Alaska...some are currently only allowed in other rural states.


Thus, as change continues, I want access to the best in technology and medicines for my patients. It is only right that optometry be regulated like every other medical profession, and allow our board to regulate and allow us as providers to be nimble with emerging technologies. Populations are getting older. Costs are expanding. We must be prepared to provide appropriate care, in a timely manner, at reasonable cost.

If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to me on my mobile; 907.299.6520.

Andrew Peter O.D.


Homer Eyecare



From: Nicole Berhow 
Sent: Thursday, February 09, 2017 12:25 PM
To: Rep. Ivy Spohnholz; Rep. Sam Kito; Rep. Bryce Edgmon; Rep. Adam Wool; Rep. Geran Tarr; Rep. David Eastman; Rep. Jennifer Johnston; Rep. Colleen Sullivan-Leonard; Rep. Andy Josephson; Rep. Louise Stutes; Rep. Chris Birch; Rep. Gary Knopp; Rep. Mike Chenault; Rep. Matt Claman; Rep. Dan Saddler
Subject: Please Support Optometry HB 103

Hello Representative,

I am an Optometrist practicing in Anchorage since 1997. Please Support Optometry HB 103. The optometry board should have the authority to regulate its practice the same as the other prescribing health professions such as dentistry, medicine and nursing. Optometrists should be able to practice within the full scope of our training and education. The bill ensures that no licensee may perform any procedure beyond the scope of the licensee's education, training, and experience as established by the board. This allows for future new and improved diagnostic and therapeutic procedures as determined by the board, while not having to return to the legislature for every new technological advance, which is currently the case and unnecessarily burdensome.

 Thank you for your support,

Nicole L Berhow, OD

[REDACTED]

From: Joshua Cook [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, February 09, 2017 9:26 AM
To: Rep. Ivy Spohnholz; Rep. Sam Kito; Rep. Bryce Edgmon; Rep. Adam Wool; Rep. Geran Tarr; Rep. David Eastman; Rep. Jennifer Johnston; Rep. Colleen Sullivan-Leonard; Rep. Andy Josephson; Rep. Louise Stutes; Rep. Chris Birch; Rep. Gary Knopp; Rep. Mike Chenault; Rep. Matt Claman; Rep. Dan Saddler
Subject: Please Support Optometry HB 103

Dear HSS and L&C Committee Member,

I would like to extend my support for HB 103.

I believe this to be a great bill that would affect how Optometry is practiced and regulated in the state of Alaska. This bill updates the Alaska Optometry statutes in several areas, making it similar to the dental and nurse practitioner statutes, whereas the board determines the regulatory details of practice. This allows more flexibility as technology advances, but in no way allows us to perform anything outside of our scope of practice. This is a very simple bill and simply allows us the same respect as other boards in our state and will enhance the care of our patients.

I thank you for your consideration of HB 103.

Best regards,

Joshua Cook, OD

[REDACTED]

From: victoria blower [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, February 08, 2017 5:50 PM
To: Rep. Ivy Spohnholz; Rep. Sam Kito; Rep. Bryce Edgmon; Rep. Adam Wool; Rep. Geran Tarr; Rep. David Eastman; Rep. Jennifer Johnston; Rep. Colleen Sullivan-Leonard; Rep. Andy Josephson; Rep. Louise Stutes; Rep. Chris Birch; Rep. Gary Knopp; Rep. Mike Chenault; Rep. Matt Claman; Rep. Dan Saddler
Subject: HB 103

Dear Members of HSS and Labor and Commerce Committees,

I encourage you to consider the merits of HB 103 and vote for it's passage.

Optometry is a noble healthcare profession with extensive specialized training in the health, performance and treatment of ocular conditions. Doctors of Optometry have 8 or more years of education. The profession has a long track record of safety, sound professional judgment and service to the Alaskan citizenry. Optometrists are the primary eyecare providers within our state, both in urban and rural settings.

The optometry board should have the authority and respect to regulate its practice the same as the other prescribing health professions such as dentistry, medicine and nursing. Let's update the Alaska optometry law.

Thank you for your support of this important legislation.

Victoria Blower, O.D.
Accurate Vision Clinic
Care as Personal as it is Effective
207 E. Northern Lights Blvd
Suite 101
Anchorage, AK 99503
907-272-9800
victoria_blower@hotmail.com

[REDACTED]

From: Jessica Giesey [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, February 08, 2017 4:57 PM
To: Rep. Ivy Spohnholz; Rep. Sam Kito; Rep. Bryce Edgmon; Rep. Adam Wool; Rep. Geran Tarr; Rep. David Eastman; Rep. Jennifer Johnston; Rep. Colleen Sullivan-Leonard; Rep. Andy Josephson; Rep. Louise Stutes; Rep. Chris Birch; Rep. Gary Knopp; Rep. Mike Chenault; Rep. Matt Claman; Rep. Dan Saddler
Subject: Please Support Optometry HB 103

Dear Representatives,

I am an optometrist practicing in Anchorage and I am writing in support of HB 103. Optometrists play a vital role in delivering eye care to patients all over the state. I believe that myself and my Alaskan colleagues have worked earnestly to deliver the best care possible to the people of Alaska and have thereby earned the trust of the communities we serve. We should have the ability to regulate our own board just as many other health professions in the state do like medicine, nursing, and dentistry and we should be able to practice the full scope of our training and education. Thank you for your time and consideration of HB 103 and have a wonderful day.

Sincerely,

Jessica Giesey, O.D.

[REDACTED]

From: David Karpik [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, February 08, 2017 4:44 PM
To: Rep. Ivy Spohnholz
Subject: Thank you for HB 103, Optometry

Representative Spohnholz,

I'd like to express my appreciation to you for sponsoring HB 103, which will optimize patient care and access to optometry services! This statute will allow for regulations that are always current in an ever-evolving and advancing health care environment.

Sincerely,
David Karpik, OD
Kenai Vision Center
Past President, Alaska Optometric Association
Medical Director, Vision Source Alaska <http://visionsource.com/alaska/>

[REDACTED]

From: Damien Delzer [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, February 08, 2017 12:42 PM
To: Rep. Ivy Spohnholz
Subject: Support Optometry HB 103

Dear Chairperson Spohnholz,

Thank you for your sponsorship of HB 103.

HB 103 will modernize and update the Alaska Optometry Statute. This bill will allow the optometry board the authority to regulate its practice the same as the other prescribing health professions such as dentistry, medicine and nursing.

As a member of the Alaska Board of Optometry, I take my responsibilities to protect and safeguard the citizens of Alaska very seriously.

This bill, along with the Alaska Board of Optometry and oversight from the Attorney General's office, will ensure that no licensee may perform any procedure beyond the scope of the licensee's education, training and experience.

Thank you for your support. I am available by e-mail at akdelzer@gci.net or my personal cell number 907-590-0777, should you have any further questions.

Sincerely,

Damien R. Delzer, O.D.

Secretary, Alaska Board of Examiners in Optometry

Diplomate, American Board of Optometry

Senior Clinical Examiner, The National Board of Examiners in Optometry

[REDACTED]

From: victoria blower [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, February 08, 2017 11:13 AM
To: Rep. Ivy Spohnholz
Subject: HB 103

Dear Representative Spohnholz,

Thank you for recognizing the merits of SB36 and your willingness to sponsor HB 103 in the House. Optometry is a noble profession with extensive education of it's members that has a long track record of safety, sound professional judgment and service to the to the Alaskan citizenry. We, as a profession are the primary eyecare providers of this state, both urban and rural.

It is about time that we are recognized and respected as the well-trained professionals that we are and given the authority to monitor our own profession as our other healthcare colleagues in dentistry, medicine and nursing do.

Victoria Blower, O.D.
Accurate Vision Clinic
Care as Personal as it is Effective
207 E. Northern Lights Blvd
Suite 101
Anchorage, AK 99503
907-272-9800
victoria_blower@hotmail.com

[REDACTED]

From: Ladd Nolin [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, February 08, 2017 10:07 AM
To: Rep. Ivy Spohnholz
Subject: Thank you for supporting HB 103

Hello Representative Spohnholz,

I am writing to thank you for your support and introduction of House Bill 103, which would provide the Alaska Board of Optometry the ability to regulate its profession, just like the other prescribing professions in the state. This would allow optometrists to practice to their full scope of education and training, thereby creating better patient care for the state of Alaska.

Sincerely,

Ladd Nolin O.D.

[REDACTED]

From: Jeff Gonnason [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, February 08, 2017 10:06 AM
To: Rep. Ivy Spohnholz
Subject: Thank You for HB 103

Representative Ivy Spohnholz,

Thank you for supporting Alaska optometry and sponsoring HB 103. I am the Legislative Chair of the Alaska Optometric Association and look forward to working with you on this legislation. I will be in Juneau next Wednesday February 15.

I was the first Alaska Native doctor of optometry, born and raised in Ketchikan, and licensed in Alaska for 40 years. I have twice served as a member and Chair of the State Optometry Board under two different governors, and Past President of the Alaska Optometric Association. I also spent 22 years representing Alaska for the American Optometric Association, and as a member of the Alaska Health Fair Advisory Board. I also am a director on the board of CIRI in Anchorage.

I currently practice in Anchorage but also performed Bush clinics and volunteered at the Alaska Native Medical Center and Southcentral Foundation in my younger days. I will be presenting more detailed testimony at committee hearings.

Best regards,
Jeff

Háw'aa
JEFF GONNASON, OD

Office 907-276-2080
Cell 907-350-9000

From: Natalie Macke [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, February 08, 2017 9:53 AM
To: Rep. Ivy Spohnholz; Rep. Sam Kito; Rep. Bryce Edgmon; Rep. Adam Wool; Rep. Geran Tarr; Rep. David Eastman; Rep. Jennifer Johnston; Rep. Colleen Sullivan-Leonard; Rep. Andy Josephson; Rep. Louise Stutes; Rep. Chris Birch; Rep. Gary Knopp; Rep. Mike Chenault; Rep. Matt Claman; Rep. Dan Saddler
Subject: Support for HB 103

Dear Representatives:

Please support House Bill 103 for the following reasons:

- The optometry board should have the authority to regulate its practice the same as the other prescribing health professions such as dentistry, medicine and nursing.
- Optometrists treat the majority of eye patients all over the state including remote areas
- The Alaska optometry law needs to be updated and the optometry board deserves the same respect as other boards of medicine
- Optometrists should be able to practice at the full scope of their education to include 8 years of college with many who have 1-2 additional years of residency training

Thank you for considering supporting this bill.

Best Regards,

Natalie Macke
Doctor of Optometry

[REDACTED]

From: Ladd Nolin [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, February 08, 2017 9:51 AM
To: Rep. Ivy Spohnholz; Rep. Sam Kito; Rep. Bryce Edgmon; Rep. Adam Wool; Rep. Geran Tarr; Rep. David Eastman; Rep. Jennifer Johnston; Rep. Colleen Sullivan-Leonard; Rep. Andy Josephson; Rep. Louise Stutes; Rep. Chris Birch; Rep. Gary Knopp; Rep. Mike Chenault; Rep. Matt Claman; Rep. Dan Saddler
Subject: Please Support Optometry HB 103

I am writing to express support for House Bill 103. This would allow the Alaska Board of Optometry to regulate its profession just like the other prescribing professions do in the state, including Dentistry, Medicine and Nurse Practitioners. This would also provide Optometrists the ability to practice within their full scope of education and training.

Sincerely,

Ladd Nolin O.D.

[REDACTED]

From: Dr. Marilyn Holm [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, February 08, 2017 9:11 AM
To: Rep. Ivy Spohnholz
Subject: Please Support Optometry HB 103

Dear Representative Spohnholz,

I am writing to request that you support House Bill 103 to update our optometry statutes in the state of Alaska. Our state optometry board should have the authority to regulate the practice of optometry as to the other prescribing health professions. This allows the board to keep the practice of optometry in Alaska up to date with current practices while not being unnecessarily burdensome to board or the legislature. Thank you for your consideration.

Dr. Marilyn Holm, OD

Agape Peninsula Eye Care, LLC

Office: (907)262-2200

Fax: (907)262-2244

Email: drmholm@AgapePEC.com

[REDACTED]

From: John Shank [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, February 08, 2017 8:30 AM
To: Rep. Ivy Spohnholz; Rep. Sam Kito; Rep. Bryce Edgmon; Rep. Adam Wool; Rep. Geran Tarr; Rep. David Eastman; Rep. Jennifer Johnston; Rep. Colleen Sullivan-Leonard; Rep. Louise Stutes; Rep. Chris Birch; Rep. Gary Knopp; Rep. Mike Chenault; Rep. Matt Claman; Rep. Dan Saddler
Subject: Please support HB 103

Dear Representative,
Please support HB 103 and bring Optometry into the 21st century. This bill is long over due.
Thank you for your time and service.
John T Shank

[REDACTED]

From: Elizabeth Hunt [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, February 08, 2017 7:49 AM
To: Rep. Ivy Spohnholz; Rep. Sam Kito; Rep. Bryce Edgmon; Rep. Adam Wool; Rep. Geran Tarr; Rep. David Eastman; Rep. Jennifer Johnston; Rep. Colleen Sullivan-Leonard; Rep. Andy Josephson; Rep. Louise Stutes; Rep. Chris Birch; Rep. Gary Knopp; Rep. Mike Chenault; Rep. Matt Claman; Rep. Dan Saddler
Subject: Please support Optometry House Bill 103

Dear Representatives,

I wanted to touch base with you about House Bill 103. Some would have you believe that House Bill 103 would authorize an Optometrist to do surgery, and that the moment HB 103 is passed Optometrists will pick up the scalpel and begin performing all sorts of surgeries completely out of their scope of training. This is completely untrue, and had we as optometrists desired to become surgeons, we would have gone to medical school (and many of us very well could have).

House Bill 103 has nothing to do with granting privileges of surgery. **House bill 103 clarifies and simplifies the oversight of our profession and puts it in the hands of people who are most familiar with it. The purpose of the bill is to give optometrists equal rights to govern their profession, exactly like medical doctors, dentists and nurse practitioners govern their profession with the use of a board.** This means that our optometry board (which has members from both optometry as well as the general public)—instead of the legislature—would control our scope of care based on our training and what is in the interest of the public good. The board would never authorize Optometrists to perform procedures they were not well trained to perform, **and in fact the bill contains language specifically prohibiting Optometrists from performing the very surgeries the opposition is claiming it would authorize.** This is great, because, guess what? We do not want to become surgeons, and optometrists tend to be very conservative clinicians by nature which is reflected in our incredibly low malpractice premiums.

So why is the bill important? An easy example is the change of Vicodin from a schedule III to a schedule II drug by the FDA. Privileges at the time allowed optometrists to prescribe Vicodin in a very small supply over 4 days to patients with severe corneal abrasions for example. With the FDA change we had to actually put a bill through the legislature, which was very costly and cumbersome, simply to keep a privilege that we had already been granted and used responsibly.

Medical boards control the way the medical profession practices. Dentists and Nurse Practitioners have the same exact same privileges. All of these boards have done a tremendous job regulating the professions and protecting the public, and ours serves this same purpose. Our profession simply asks to be treated equally, and to be able to continue to provide innovative and quality care to rural Alaskans. Any innovations in care would be governed by our own board, a board that would never allow a non-surgeon to perform surgery. It would go against the very principle of the board's existence.

The sad part about the very expensive and very manipulative tactics used by the opposition is that it paints our profession in a negative light, and is spreading lies about what House bill 103 is all about. Anyone listening to their ads would say, "well of course I don't want an optometrist performing my cataract surgery, so I am telling my senator to vote no on HB 103 and I am going to speak out against it." If this were true, I would feel the same. But that is not at all what this bill would do, and the opposition amounts to unfounded scare tactics; we are asking for fair treatment under the law, not asking for the scalpel. Thank you very much for your thoughtful consideration.

Best,

Elizabeth Hunt, OD

Optometrist practicing in Juneau, Alaska

[REDACTED]

From: Benjamin Crawford [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, February 08, 2017 6:57 AM
To: Rep. Ivy Spohnholz; Rep. Sam Kito; Rep. Bryce Edgmon; Rep. Adam Wool; Rep. David Eastman; Rep. Jennifer Johnston; Rep. Colleen Sullivan-Leonard; Rep. Andy Josephson; Rep. Louise Stutes; Rep. Chris Birch; Rep. Gary Knopp; Rep. Mike Chenault; Rep. Matt Claman; Rep. Dan Saddler
Subject: Please support optometry HB 103

Dear Representatives,

Please support HB 103. I am a born and raised Alaskan optometrist. I returned to Alaska after attending school in the L48 and I now own my own practice in Anchorage. Luckily for me, Alaska has always been a great place to be an optometrist. I'd like to keep it that way, so that is why I'm asking for your support on HB 103.

The key point to the bill is to allow the State Board of Optometry to have the authority to regulate its practice the same as the other prescribing health professions such as dentistry, medicine and nursing. This will allow the Board to make changes to regulations without having to go through the laborious legislative process. Any changes would reflect changes that are occurring in our profession and will remain within our scope of practice.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,

Benjamin Crawford, O.D.

Accurate Vision Clinic

We've moved! Beginning January 30th our address will be;

3401 Minnesota Dr., Suite 200