

April 28, 2025

The Honorable John Marty
Chair, Senate Finance Committee
95 University Avenue W.
Minnesota Senate Bldg., Room 3235
St. Paul, MN 55155

Mr. Chair:

On behalf of tens of thousands of Minnesotans who require eye care annually, the Minnesota Optometric Association (MOA) urges you and the members of the Senate Finance Committee to support the Second Engrossment of the Senate Omnibus Health Finance Bill (SF2669) with the updated optometry scope language in Article 3, Section 21.

In the event that there are questions from committee members regarding this proposed update, MOA is also submitting a number of materials including:

- HF1011/SF1144 Handout detailing challenges to timely and accessible patient eye care and solutions to this problem, including maps which show a lack of ophthalmologists throughout the state compared to a larger number of optometrists;
- HF1011/SF1144 Maps which show Minnesota's ranking in administering oral steroids (45th) and injection authority (25th).
- A letter from the Oklahoma Optometry School Dean (Lighthizer) attesting to extensive optometric educational curriculum taught around the country; and
- An MOA "Education Credentials" letter and "optometry education" sample summary of optometry school coursework.

This information shows why it is necessary for Minnesota's significantly outdated optometric scope to be modernized. Optometrists are highly educated and trained to administer the medications and perform the injection medical procedures proposed in SF2669.

It is also important to understand that Article 3, Section 21 of SF2669 has been substantially vetted by the Senate Health Committee since 2020. In an effort to build bipartisan and stakeholder consensus without further jeopardizing patient safety, MOA has continued to offer bill language compromise in the following ways:

- Not including laser procedures as an option for optometrists;
- Time restrictions for the administration of oral steroids;
- Prohibiting optometrists from performing intravitreal injections; and
- Prohibiting optometrists from performing sub-Tenon and retrobulbar injections.

This has resulted in broad bipartisan support from the Senate Health Finance Committee and the entire Senate for the last three legislative sessions. This year, Sen. Maye Quade has introduced SF1144 and two additional “clone” bills for a total of 11 co-authors.

Finally, the Minnesota Board of Optometry (MBO) has also endorsed this legislative language. MBO representatives have even publicly testified that the current optometry scope in Minnesota has created a public health crisis. Without passing the language included in SF2669, the situation will only become worse for patients in need of critical and timely eye care.

Therefore, for the sake of patient safety and access, MOA asks for your support of the Article 3, Section 21 language in the Second Engrossment of SF2669. If you have any questions or concerns, please don’t hesitate to contact Shep Harris at 612-219-8531 or sharris@fredgov.com.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Dr. Thomas Elton
President, Minnesota Optometric Association

Cc: Sen. Maye Quade
Senate Finance Committee Members