



February 21, 2025

Dear Members of the Senate Health and Human Services Committee,

On behalf of the Minnesota Medical Association (MMA), representing more than 10,000 physicians and physicians-in-training across the state, I am writing to share the MMA's opposition to SF 1144, related to optometry scope of practice.

The limits on optometric prescribing included in the current statute serve a very important purpose in protecting the public. These are very powerful drugs that can have significant side effects when used improperly or for extended periods. Renal function, the body's immune response, respiratory function, and liver function can all be impacted when these drugs are incorrectly prescribed.

Optometrists are a critical part of the health care team and are well trained to provide many health services related to eyes and eyesight. However, they do not have the same training as physicians, and specifically of ophthalmologists. An ophthalmologist receives significantly more rigorous training through medical school and residency that includes extensive training on pharmacologic impacts of prescription drugs on the entire body, not just the eye. This extensive training gives ophthalmologists the experience necessary to safely prescribe drugs that can have significant side effects if used improperly.

The current statute related to optometric scope of practice is critical for patient safety. The MMA urges you to oppose SF 1144.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Edwin Bogonko, MD  
President, Minnesota Medical Association