

Mary Kay Forrester
101 Abbotts Way
Powell, OH 43065

Re: Senate Bill 26 Revise the Law Governing the Practice of Optometry

March 10, 2025

Dear Chairman Huffman, Vice Chairman Johnson, Ranking Member Liston, and Members of the Senate Health Committee:

My name is Mary Kay Forrester, and I underwent a YAG capsulotomy last year in both eyes to remove a secondary cataract, which is a film that developed over my intraocular implants a few years after my cataract surgery. I started developing blurry, cloudy vision, and returned to the office where I had cataract surgery. I saw an ophthalmologist who did not seem concerned and told me I was seeing well enough. To me, it seemed like I was living in a thick fog. I could not drive or read street signs and relied on my husband to help me. I was not satisfied and sought another opinion.

I saw my husband's optometrist on March 4, 2024, for a second opinion. The doctor promptly diagnosed the secondary cataract in both eyes, let me know that I would need a YAG laser procedure to remove the film, and referred me back to the ophthalmologist that did my original surgery. I was told by the ophthalmologist's office they would need to re-evaluate me first before performing the procedure even though I was just seen by my optometrist. I scheduled the consultation back with the ophthalmology practice on March 11, 2024, a week after my visit at the optometrist. After more testing, the ophthalmologist agreed with the diagnosis from my optometrist. She confirmed I would need an in-office procedure called a YAG to remove the film. The staff then told me the ophthalmologist was scheduling months out for the procedure because they were booked. The YAG laser procedure for my first eye was scheduled for May 1, 2024. I had to wait almost 2 months just to get one eye done. My second eye procedure was scheduled 2 weeks later on May 14, 2024. I explained that I could not see to drive, but they said that was the soonest availability, even as an established patient.

After having the laser procedure done on my first eye, I went back for the second eye procedure 2 weeks later. The staff prepared me and dilated my eye. After waiting for over an hour with my eye dilated and already prepped for the procedure, the staff told me that my ophthalmologist was at another appointment and would not be in the office for another hour. I had the option to wait for the ophthalmologist, or reschedule for even further out. As I was already dilated and ready, I chose to wait that same day as I did not want to reschedule to another day. When the doctor did arrive 2 hours later to do the laser, she did not apologize for the excessive wait time in the office. The procedure was straightforward and took less than a minute, but I had been in the office for a few hours waiting. Thankfully, I won't have to have this done again. Not because the procedure was difficult - it was very easy and done right in the office, but because it took 2 months to get on the ophthalmologist's schedule, 3 office visits, plus the excessive in-office wait times.

After visiting my husband's optometrist, (who has now become my optometrist) and returning to her for my post-operative care, I don't understand why this procedure couldn't have been done in my optometrist's office. My optometrist was the one to diagnose the problem and saw me for my post YAG procedure follow up. This procedure easily could have been done in the optometrist's office in a more timely manner. I understand that a more invasive, operating room surgery, like my cataracts, should absolutely be performed by the ophthalmologist. However, the optometrist I saw was the one who diagnosed the problem and really listened to my concerns about the decline in my vision. I think the ophthalmologist was just too busy to take the time and had more difficult patients on the schedule.

I have no doubt that my optometrist is highly qualified and educated to have been able to perform both the laser procedure and the follow-up care. I did ask her if she could perform the YAG procedure, but she explained that Ohio law currently prohibits optometrists from doing so, despite it being part of the curriculum at the OSU College of Optometry. She added that some of the surrounding states like Kentucky, Indiana, or Virginia, as well as other states around the country do allow optometrists to perform procedure because those states have updated their laws. It would have been far more convenient to have my optometrist handle this in-office procedure, reducing the need for extra visits to the ophthalmologist. After waiting 8 weeks, I was starting to become depressed due to my decreased vision. This was a minor procedure that took 30 seconds that an optometrist should be able to do. I ask that you pass SB 36 so others do not experience the visual frustration and delay in care that I encountered.

Sincerely,



Mary Kay Forrester