



**Chicago Glaucoma Consultants  
and CGC Eye Center**

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Dear Senator Althoff and Representative Moeller:

We represent the Chicago Glaucoma Society (CGS), a group of ophthalmologists who have further subspecialized in glaucoma and write to urge you to remove provisions of surgery and injections in HB 6166 and SB 2899 to preserve patient safety of the citizens of Illinois.

As glaucoma specialists, following our undergraduate training, we proceeded to do 4 years of medical school, 1 year of medical/surgical internship, 3 years of ophthalmology residency and one year of glaucoma fellowship. This training and experience allows us to care for one of the most common, complex and irreversibly blinding ocular diseases known as glaucoma.

As glaucoma surgeons we routinely operate on the eye and perform injections in and around the eye. We strongly believe operating on any portion of the eye, including the eyelids and conjunctiva should be in the hands of surgeons. We have grave concerns regarding optometrists performing anterior paracentesis in case of elevated eye pressure. This is an extremely delicate procedure that requires significant training and is potentially permanently blinding if done incorrectly requiring multiple additional procedures potentially including removal of the eye.

Further, as glaucoma specialists we routinely perform a surgery known as trabeculectomy in an attempt to preserve vision. During this surgery we create a "bleb" which to an inexperienced observer can appear to be a "cyst" or "bubble" in the conjunctiva. If one attempts to cut into the bleb (which would be allowed in this legislation), the patient would suffer serious consequences, again up to and including permanent blindness and potential need to remove the eye.

Injections in any portion of the eye and its surroundings can lead to infection, bleeding, nerve damage and other vision and life threatening conditions.

While we are glaucoma specialists, we pride ourselves in being physicians and surgeons first. It is this foundation that allows us to do the meticulous work we do day in and day out to preserve the vision of citizens of Illinois. Bills introduced this session (HB 6166 and SB 2899) would by allow optometrists – who are not medical doctors and are not trained to do any surgery – to perform eye surgery and to give injections, including in and around the eye. This proposal alarms us greatly. For the safety of the citizens of Illinois, eye surgery should be performed by eye surgeons.

Thank you for your attention to this critical matter in an effort to preserve the vision and safety of our patients and the citizens of Illinois.

Sincerely,

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