



Support HB224

Sponsor Representative Jim Dunnigan

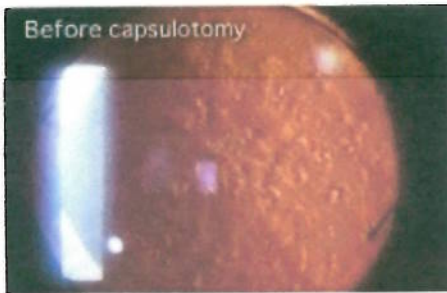
HB 224 is a bill to update the language of the Utah Optometry Practice Act to match the level of education and training currently offered in all accredited optometry schools in the United States including the Rocky Mountain University School of Optometry in Provo that will open in 2023.

HB224:

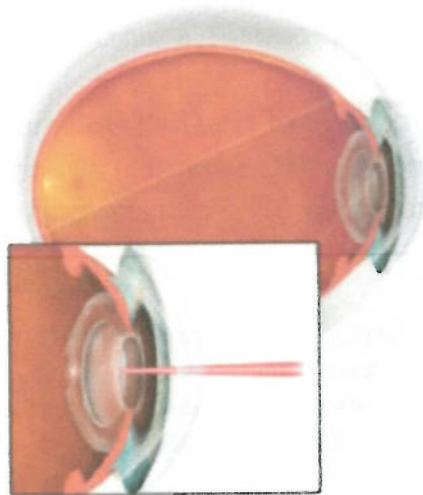
- **Allows** optometrists to perform three minor in-office ocular laser procedures (Laser Capsulotomy, Selective Laser Trabeculoplasty and Laser Peripheral Iridotomy) using the same gentle (Nd:YAG) lasers used by spa technicians for hair removal, sun spots, and spider veins, as well as by dentists in the mouth.
- Optometrists have performed over one hundred thousand of these laser procedures in other states for thirty years with no increased incidences of complications or complaints.
- **Does not allow** for optometrists to do complex surgical procedures. In fact, it clearly specifies that optometrists are only allowed to provide services and procedures they are trained to perform.

Other Facts:

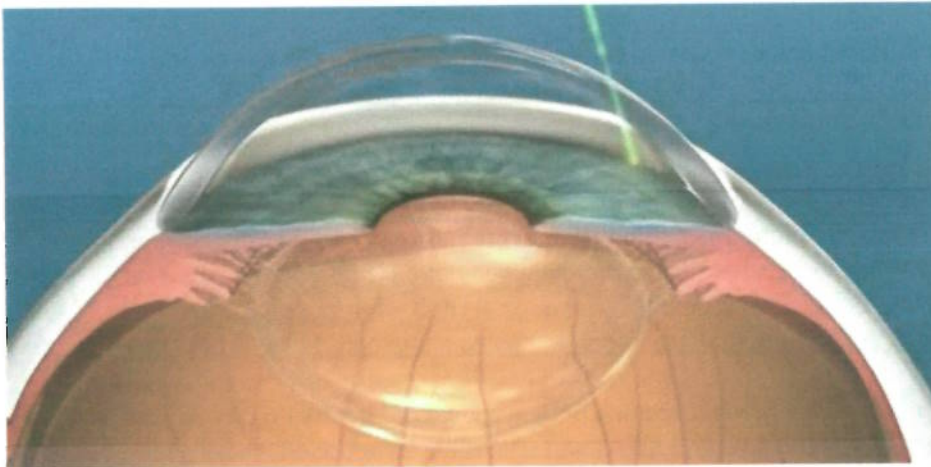
- **Provider Access:** Allowing optometrists to practice at the full level of their education and training will allow for greater provider access and continuity of care for your constituents and the people of Utah. Especially, for those living in rural Utah where optometrists are established in 26 of 29 counties compared to ophthalmologists in only 11 of 29 counties.
- **Cost Savings:** Providing these procedures in a patient's local optometry office will eliminate excessive travel, reduce repeat billing and ultimately save patients time and money. It will also allow patients to receive these treatments sooner.
- **Experience:** Optometrists have been trained and are proficient at minor in-office procedures. This is supported by current statute, insurance credentialing, and DOPL support for many years with no filed complaints.
- **Antiquated Law:** The Utah Optometry Practice Act has not been updated in close to 30 years. Yet, education and technology have changed significantly during that time.
- **Education:** The current statute will not allow graduates of Utah's New Optometry school, the Rocky Mountain University's School of Optometry, to provide the services they are trained to perform if they stay and practice in Utah.
- **Patient Safety:** Seventeen states, including Wyoming, have enacted or are in the process of enacting laws which allow optometrists to perform these lasers procedures.



YAG Laser Capsulotomy

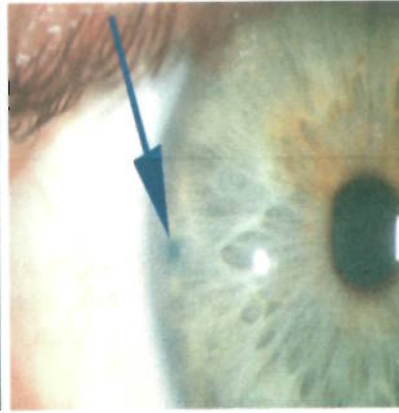
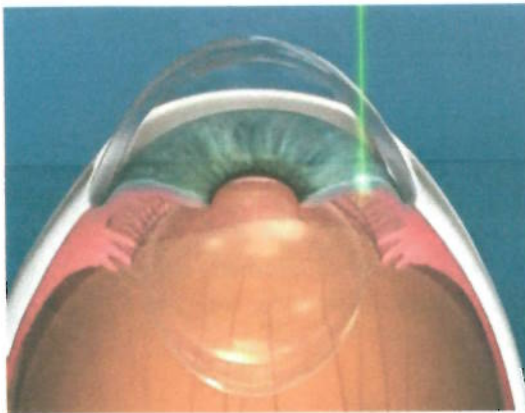


Laser Capsulotomy (YAG): After cataract surgery, many patients will develop an opaque membrane on their natural capsule located behind the new lens implant. This clouding will continue to opacify until it limits vision. A gentle Nd:YAG laser can be used in an optometry office to quickly and painlessly restore vision. The laser produces a micro shock-wave to create a small opening in the opacified capsule, similar to clapping one's hands to put out a candle. This opening in the opaque membrane allows light to reach the retina and permanently restores the patient's sight.



Selective Laser Trabeculoplasties (SLT):

Is an in office procedure using a Nd:YAG laser to reduce pressure inside the eye for patients with glaucoma. The laser is applied, through a special contact lens, to the drainage system of the eye where it stimulates the tissues to improve the outflow of fluid. SLT can lower eye pressure 20-30% with its effects lasting 3-5 years. It is a safe and effective treatment for those patients who may struggle with the expense or hassle of eye drop treatment for chronic glaucoma.



Laser Peripheral Iridotomy (LPI):

Is also done with a Nd:YAG laser for the treatment of rapidly elevated eye pressure from a condition known as closed angle glaucoma. The laser creates a small opening at the outer edge of the iris (colored part of the eye) allowing the built up pressure to flow directly into the drainage tissue. High eye pressure can cause permanently decreased vision. For this reason, an LPI procedure done promptly by an optometrist can prevent vision loss.