



Physicians Caring for Texans

**House Public Health Committee
Testimony on HB 2340 by Diana Fite, MD
Mar. 31, 2021**

Chair Klick and members of the committee:

I am Dr. Diana Fite. I am emergency physician in Houston, and I am president of the Texas Medical Association. On behalf of our 55 thousand members, we are opposed to HB 2340.

Every two years, groups come to this Texas Legislature trying to convince you that they can do what physicians do without having done what we have done... successfully complete a rigorous medical school education and several more years of residency training.

HB 2340 would expand optometrists' scope of practice to an alarming degree. They do not have the training to handle anything listed in this bill and especially not surgery. I am absolutely certain that this expansion would result in patient harm.

There is no shortcut to becoming a physician and surgeon. It takes hundreds of hours of proctored training and thousands of patient encounters just to form the foundation. There is no faster way – there is no substitute.

Physician-led, team-based care is what works best, and it is already the model in place. It allows optometrists to practice optometry and it allows physicians to practice medicine and surgery. That is what is best for the patients. There is no access to care crisis when it comes to quality eye care, especially when ophthalmologists and optometrists work together as a team.

Patients are already confused about the differences between optometrists and ophthalmologists and this bill would only deepen that confusion. It is up to you as our lawmakers to draw that line for them and protect patients from harm.

Just as you uphold seatbelt laws, drinking age laws, etc., you must uphold our strong standards for medicine and surgery in Texas. None of these safety laws make everyone happy but they are what must be upheld to protect citizens from harm. Patients are counting on you.

I urge you to oppose HB 2340. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Dan Finch, Vice President, Advocacy, by email at dan.finch@texmed.org or by phone at (512) 370-1355.