



## About WAO

The Wisconsin Academy of Ophthalmology (WAO) is a professional medical society comprised of Wisconsin ophthalmologists. The mission of the Wisconsin Academy of Ophthalmology is to promote quality eye care for the citizens of Wisconsin by providing its members with resources including professional education, legislative advocacy, and membership services to enhance the practice of ophthalmology in Wisconsin.

## Understanding Ophthalmology

Ophthalmology is a branch of medicine specializing in the anatomy, function and diseases of the eye.

An ophthalmologist is a medical doctor (MD) or doctor of osteopathic medicine (DO) who specializes in medical treatment and surgery. Ophthalmologists are the only eye care providers trained and licensed in Wisconsin to perform eye surgery, including eye laser procedures. Ophthalmologists differ significantly from optometrists and opticians regarding their level of training and what they are licensed to diagnose and treat.

## Key Issue: *Eye Surgery Performed by Non-Ophthalmologists*

Through their own admissions, optometrists are performing surgery and referring to themselves as “physicians” right here in Wisconsin. This puts patients in danger and both are prohibited by Wisconsin law. As a result, the Wisconsin Academy of Ophthalmology has submitted complaints to the Optometry Examining Board on these issues. Ophthalmologists are trained eye surgeons, optometrists are not. A weekend seminar and laser surgery simulators are no substitute for four years of clinical and surgical residency and additional years of fellowship completed by board certified Ophthalmologists. We ask all legislators to voice concerns to regulatory bodies about the practices of some optometrists in Wisconsin that are in violation of state.

## Contact WAO

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