



June 7, 2022

Good morning, members of the Technical Review Committee. My name is Dr. Dave Watts, retired physician from Omaha and current President of the Nebraska Medical Association. I am here today to express the NMA's opposition to this credentialing review proposal by the Optometric Association. The mission statement of the NMA is to advocate for physicians and the health of all Nebraskans. It is this latter goal in which our opposition is based.

The NMA and our member physicians believe this proposal would have a harmful impact on patient safety in Nebraska. While the applicant group may be painting the picture that this is a simple and harmless procedure, we still have to call it what it is, surgery. With surgery comes inherent risks that Optometrists are not properly educated and trained on how to respond and react to. There are also risks to consider before the procedure is even performed; risks which are best suited for only those with medical education and training to consider and eliminate prior to surgery. Our concern for patient safety is exacerbated by the fact that Optometrists rarely treat and interact with actual patients during their education and training.

While Optometrists are valuable partners in access to care for routine eye exams and eye health, we disagree that this proposal would increase access to this particular type of treatment in rural areas. This is a specialized treatment that requires a costly machine to perform, we sincerely doubt that every Optometrist office will be staffed with this machine. Not even every Ophthalmology office has one of these machines. Thus, patients will still be required to drive a distance to wherever the machine ends up being placed.

For these reasons the Nebraska Medical Association opposes this proposal, and we look forward to working with the Committee in the meetings to come.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David J. Watts". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

David J. Watts, MD.
NMA President