

Considering Eye Surgery in Washington? You need to have more faith in your doctor than the bank where you put your money advises Safe Eyes America.

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Safe Eyes America →
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PITTSBURGH, April 5, 2023 /PRNewswire/ -- Headlines in the recent news have reassured people in a banking system backed by the "full faith and credit of the United States." You should be able to trust your eye surgeon even more. If special interests in Olympia, Washington have their way though, individuals who have never completed the required medical education or years of surgical training may soon have the authority in Washington state to operate on your eyes or the eyes of your loved ones. SSB 5389 now under consideration in the Washington House of Representatives would allow non-surgeons (optometrists) to perform a host of delicate surgical procedures on patient's eyes which could have vision or life-threatening implications.

SSB 5389, if enacted, would allow optometrists to perform what they are trying to sell as "lumps and bumps" eyelid surgery. K. David Epley, MD, a Kirkland, WA ophthalmologist points out: "The eyelid "lumps and bumps" that the legislature is being told are common, harmless lesions can sometimes turn out to be cancerous lesions requiring very specialized delicate surgical techniques to ensure complete excision and potentially life-saving treatment. Although language in SSB 5389 prohibits optometrists from surgically removing cancerous lesions, determining whether a cyst or lesion is cancerous before operating is not an easy task and it takes years of experience and examining, treating, and operating on patients with a multitude of conditions to become a competent surgeon." As Dr. Epley points out: "What looks common, small, and benign could turn out to be something far more serious."

Optometrists are primary eye care providers who specialize in diagnosing and treating vision problems and eye diseases, prescribing corrective lenses, and providing non-surgical treatments such as eye drops. They are not trained medical doctors

Eye Surgery - Behind that mask, what are the medical education and surgical qualifications?

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nor surgeons.

In contrast, ophthalmologists are medical doctors who specialize in the diagnosis and treatment of eye diseases through any means, including surgery. They have completed four-years of medical school, a one-year hospital internship and a minimum three-year hospital residency in eye disease and surgery. Throughout their training they have examined, treated, and performed surgery on thousands of patients with problems ranging from the simple and common to the most severe and blinding or even fatal.

The lowering of the licensing requirements, that would allow a non-medical doctor to perform eye surgery as outlined in SSB 5389, to less than what the citizens of Washington, as well as most of the United States, currently are protected by is simply not in the best interests of the public. "It is imperative that Washington voters let their state Representatives know that eye surgery by non-medical doctors is not acceptable," said Kenneth Cheng, MD, Chair of Safe Eyes America. The clock is ticking. "Let your state Representative know that only medical doctors and surgeons should be allowed to operate on the only eyes you will ever have. Everyone should be able to have full faith that their doctor and potential surgeon have the education and training needed to provide them with the safest and best care."

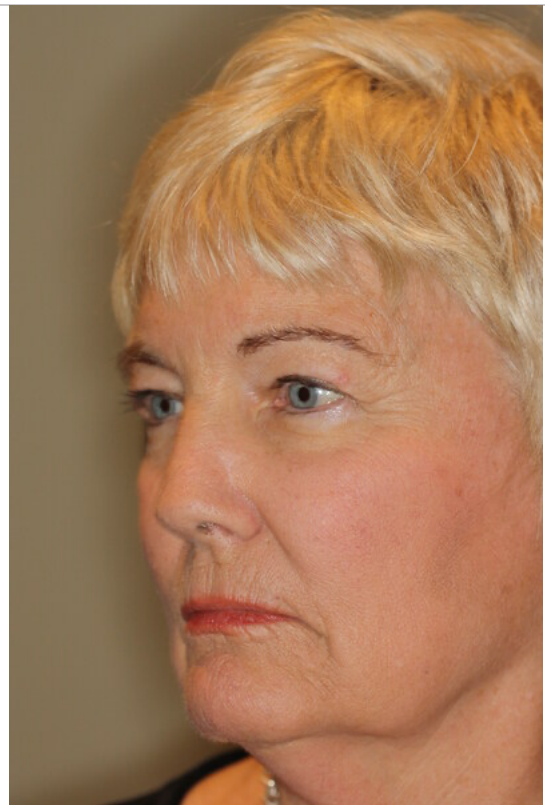
The Washington House could take final action on SSB 5389 any day now. It is imperative that Washington citizens contact their state House Representative NOW and urge them to Vote NO on SSB 5389. To find your state Senator click on the following link: (<https://app.leg.wa.gov/districtfinder/>). The Washington legislature is scheduled to adjourn on April 23, 2023.

About Safe Eyes America

Safe Eyes America is a 501(c) 4 non-profit organization dedicated to promoting the delivery of the highest quality medical and surgical eye care to the American public. [SafeEyesAmerica.org](https://www.safeeyesamerica.org)

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Lump or Bump - Benign or Cancer?



Cancer - Basal Cell

