

The Fairness in Vision Care Act

- Elevating medical best practices and patient choice over Vision Plan profits and market control
- Eliminating predatory Vision Plan mandates
- Creating a responsible and fair regulatory environment for a previously unregulated business model



Vision Plans market to patients as providing discounts on eye exams, glasses, and contacts. Unfortunately, these unregulated multi-billion dollar corporations bully optometrists by forcing them to use only labs from which Vision Plans profit. Also, Vision Plans fix prices on services and materials that they don't even cover. Vision Plans push patients to buy glasses from businesses they own, creating a de facto monopoly. This bill stops Vision Plan abuses."

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Background:

An unregulated Vision Plan landscape in Oklahoma is contributing to predatory market practices that hurt patient health while treating doctors of optometry unfairly.

Each year, hundreds of thousands of Oklahomans rely on local doctors of optometry for their comprehensive vision and eye health care needs. While some patients have coverage for medical eye care through a health plan (Blue Cross Blue Shield, Aetna, etc), a majority instead rely on supplemental benefits through a Vision Plan (VSP, Eyemed, etc).

Vision Plans play an important role in the vision care landscape. A properly regulated Vision Plan, acting as a good actor in the marketplace will:

- Reduce the cost of many vision-care services for Oklahomans;
- Encourage preventive care and regular vision exams;
- Allow doctors to practice eye care based on patient need and best medical practices.

Unfortunately, vertically integrated Vision Plans in Oklahoma are taking advantage of an unregulated marketplace to boost their own profits, limit consumer choices, and abuse their market position to unfairly leverage doctors. Vision Plans are notorious for:

- Forcing doctors and their patients to use specific laboratories (owned by the Vision Plan) to produce finished prescription eyewear products;
- Setting prices for non-covered services and threatening to remove doctors from their network who do not comply;
- Changing the terms of their contracts with doctors without their consent and with little or no warning;
- Setting reimbursement rates at such a low level that they discourage high quality care and incentivize medical "shortcuts" that are contrary to best practices.



The Solution:

The Fairness in Vision Care Act creates a responsible and fair regulatory environment that places patient safety and consumer choice over Vision Plan profits.

The Act:

- Provides cost of living increases for reimbursements.
- Removes restrictions on which optical labs a doctor may use.
- Prohibits Vision Plans from attempting to set prices on services or materials that Vision Plans do not cover.
- Prohibits Vision Plans from directing patients to entities owned by the Vision Plan.
- Prohibits Vision Plans from marketing certain providers or otherwise steering patients to those providers;
- Allows a provider to participate with medical insurance without being forced to participate in a Vision Plan;
- Prohibits Vision Plans from changing the provider agreement without allowing the provider to agree or disagree. The Vision Plan may not remove provider for not accepting the changes to the agreement.

Support the Fairness in Vision Care Act to ensure that patients receive the best medical eye care, eye care practices are treated fairly, and Vision Plan profits are not placed above best practices.