

# FTC Opposes State Legislation Restricting Access to Online Vision Testing

In a letter to the Washington State Legislature, the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) warned that state legislation under consideration restricting access to online vision care “would limit competition, access, and choice in vision care, and potentially increase costs.”

According to the FTC, the bill would:

- 1. DENY CONSUMERS THE BENEFITS OF INNOVATIVE EYE CARE TELEHEALTH TECHNOLOGIES**
- 2. POTENTIALLY REQUIRE UNNECESSARY SERVICES**

## THE FTC EMPHASIZED:



Many health care professionals and expert bodies support the use of telehealth because it expands access to care.



Legislation restricting online vision care would limit access to care for:

- Adults age 18-44 who don't require an in-person eye care visit;
- Disabled individuals who have difficulty making a trip to obtain in-person care; and
- Individuals in the 24% of U.S. counties with no optometrists or ophthalmologists.



Refraction tests taken at home and evaluated by a remote ophthalmologist may reduce transportation costs and be less costly to consumers.



In-person examination requirements prevent qualified, licensed telehealth providers from providing appropriate care.



Rigid comprehensive eye exam requirements for every prescription appear inconsistent with expert guidelines, and may result in unnecessary procedures and increased health costs.



The Department of Veterans Affairs has successfully used telehealth for eye care to screen for ocular disease and prescribe glasses.

The American Academy of Ophthalmology (AAO) reached a similar conclusion with respect to the potential benefits of the use of various technologies for remote eye care. [We urge the legislature to] avoid restrictions that override the judgment of practitioners and are not narrowly tailored to address well-founded patient safety concerns.”

**- THE FEDERAL TRADE COMMISSION**

*Source: FTC Letter to Washington State Legislature Concerning Substitute Senate Bill 5411/H.B. 1473, February 9, 2018*

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