



June 22, 2021

President Pro Tempore Nesbitt
Senate Majority Leader Shirkey
Senate Minority Leader Ananich
Distinguished Members of the Michigan Senate
201 Townsend Street
Room 1100
Lansing, MI 48933

Dear President Pro Tempore Nesbitt, Majority Leader Shirkey, Minority Leader Ananich and Distinguished Members of the Michigan Senate,

Our coalition, [Americans for Vision Care Innovation](#), has strongly supported legislation this year in the Michigan House and Senate to help hundreds of thousands of Michigan consumers and taxpayers who wear glasses and contacts save money and time by bringing online prescription renewal to Michigan. We supported HB 4356 when it passed the House earlier this year in March and we strongly support the amended version of HB 4356 that passed out of the Senate Health Policy Committee last week. This bill is in line with the principles outlined in the telemedicine law adopted by the legislature and signed by the Governor last year.

Passing this critical consumer and taxpayer legislation through the Senate, which now enjoys the strong support of the Michigan Society for Eye Physicians and Surgeons, will ensure Michiganders have the right to get prescription renewals for contact lenses and glasses online. Taxpayers, who help to fund state employee health insurance systems, will save money too, and will experience long-term benefits by the example that ocular telemedicine sets for other state health care programs.

More than 40 million Americans wear contact lenses and millions more wear glasses. Online prescription renewal tests have been offered for more than four years in this country. During this time, close to one million online prescription renewal vision tests have been performed using online platforms and at this time we are unaware of a single adverse event, medical malpractice claim or consumer initiated medical board complaint as a result of using these services.

There is no reason to continue to deny Michigan residents the opportunity to save time and money and have access to the latest vision care technology, especially for Michiganders who

live rural communities or urban communities that don't have easy access to optometrists and eye doctors.

The opponents of HB 4356 have been engaged in a massive disinformation campaign to protect their market share and discredit the technology. This bill is supported by leading Michigan consumer, taxpayer and advocacy organizations, the Michigan Society for Eye Physicians and Surgeons and leading vision care companies who compete against each other in the marketplace.

Here are some key facts about online prescription renewal that you should know:

- Consumers must have a prescription from an eye doctor in order to use telemedicine services initially. **These online technologies are designed to help get prescriptions renewed, not to replace comprehensive eye exams.** For millions of Americans, their prescription changes very little between the ages of 18-50, and the American Academy of Ophthalmologists recommends that healthy adults under the age of 40 receive an in-person eye exam every 5 to 10 years; among older patients, the recommended interval is 4 years or less. This means that for many of your constituents, there is no need to return to a provider's office on an annual basis simply to renew a contact lens prescription.
- **These services are easy to use and are available 24 hours a day.** Your constituents no longer have to rush across town, drive for miles to the nearest city or take off work to get a prescription renewed – or worse, travel for hours if they live in a community with no eye doctors. This is especially important during public health emergencies when offices may be closed. These services are also generally far less expensive for consumers than visiting an eye care provider in person.
- Customers who use these services go through eye health screenings as part of the process and their online prescription. **The clinical data is reviewed and approved by ophthalmologists and optometrists,** who are specifically licensed to practice in the state where the exam occurs.
- **The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) has weighed in with concerns about legislation in several states that attempted to ban ocular telemedicine,** saying that banning telemedicine limits a consumer's ability to access eye care services and could raise the cost of eyeglasses and contact lenses.

We strongly urge you to pass HB 4356. Michigan's contact lens consumers are entitled to the greatest possible degree of choice and convenience in the way they renew their lens prescriptions – and at the lowest possible prices.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Americans for Vision Care Innovation



Americans for Vision Care Innovation is a bipartisan coalition of taxpayer advocates, consumer groups, think tanks and innovative companies who have joined together to ensure consumers across the country have access to the latest cost-saving and time-saving eye care technologies. The companies that have joined our coalition compete against each other in the marketplace but are united in support of the use of telemedicine for vision care and online prescription renewal.