

VMS RESOLUTION
PRESCRIBING AUTHORITY FOR OPTOMETRISTS

As passed by VMS membership October 17th, 2003

WHEREAS, optometrists are not physicians and have very limited pharmacology education and training, especially when compared to ophthalmologists;

WHEREAS, ophthalmologists are specifically trained and educated to utilize fully the science and art of medicine, including pharmacological agents, to provide comprehensive medical and surgical eye care to the public;

WHEREAS, a significant percentage of patients with eye disease also suffer from heart, lung or other systemic disease:

WHEREAS, many of the pharmacological agents used in the treatment of eye disease have potential systemic side effects;

WHEREAS, comprehensive medical education and training is directly related to the ability to provide the highest quality care for eye disease or eye conditions requiring medical or surgical care;

WHEREAS, optometrists have sought to legislatively expand their scope of practice to include prescribing of all pharmaceutical agents for the diagnosis, management and treatment of the eye and adnexa, without the comparable education and training to that of an ophthalmologist; therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Vermont Medical Society work with the Vermont Ophthalmological Society, the American Academy of Ophthalmology and the American Medical Association to oppose proposed legislation that would expand authorization of optometrists to prescribe pharmaceutical agents for the diagnosis, management, and treatment of the eye and adnexa. This resolution clarifies and supercedes the 2002 resolution on this subject.