



March 1, 2021

Chair Bronna Kahle
Vice Chair Luke Meerman
Members of the Michigan House of Representatives Health Policy Committee
124 North Capitol Avenue
Lansing, MI 48933

Dear Chairwoman Kahle, Vice Char Meerman and the distinguished members of the Michigan House Health Policy Committee,

Our coalition, [Americans for Vision Care Innovation](#), is writing to express our strong support for HB 4356, a critically important piece of legislation that will help save time and money for contact lens and glasses wearers as well as increase access to vision care for Michiganders across the state. This bill, which was introduced by Rep. Luke Meerman on February 24, 2021, will allow Michigan consumers to get their prescriptions renewed via telemedicine.

Americans for Vision Care Innovation is a bipartisan coalition of taxpayer advocates, consumer groups, think tanks and innovative companies, working with leading eye doctors and health care experts, 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.

Our mission is simple. We give voice to millions of consumers and taxpayers who deserve the benefits of safe new vision care telemedicine technologies that will make their lives easier and healthier. We seek to inform legislators, local community leaders and the broader public about how online vision tests can improve access to eye care for eligible consumers and reduce costs for taxpayers and public agencies. We also want to dispel the myths about online vision tests that are being spread in a troubling misinformation campaign by those who stand to financially gain from outlawing these services

Passing this law would allow ocular telemedicine in Michigan and ensure that Michiganders have the right to get prescriptions for contact lenses and glasses renewed 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. Michigan contact lens and glasses consumers deserve the right to lower costs, more convenience and easier access to vision care. 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 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.

We have heard many reports from across the country that state legislators have been given incorrect information about the use of telemedicine for vision care and online prescription renewal services; therefore, we think it is important for you to consider all the aspects of this issue before acting.

Here are the key facts you should know:

- Consumers must have a prescription from an eye doctor in order to use telemedicine services initially. **These new, 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 new 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 **renewals are 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) recently 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 believe that Michigan legislators who understand about online prescription renewals and online vision checks will make the right choice for their constituents and 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.

We are more than happy to speak with you and your staff at any time if you have questions about online prescription renewal or the information we present in this letter. Please feel free to contact us in this regard.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

