

**Written testimony of Arielle Kane, Director of Health Care at the Progressive Policy Institute  
Michigan House Committee on Health Policy  
Consideration of HB 4356 and improving access to ocular telehealth**

Chairwoman Kahle and members of the Health Policy Committee,

I'm Arielle Kane, a health policy researcher and the director of health policy at the Progressive Policy Institute, a think tank in Washington, DC. I appreciate the opportunity to outline why I support HB 4356.

My research has primarily focused on health care cost and access issues. And as we've seen from the Covid-19 pandemic, telehealth can both [improve access and reduce costs](#).

Under current law, Michigan treats ocular health differently than other types of health care. Patients can see physicians remotely to renew drug prescriptions but not eyeglass or contact lens prescriptions because of language in the Michigan Eye Care Protection Act of 1978. It was by SB 853 (2014) to restrict the use of self-serve kiosks using automated technology in identifying vision problems. At the time, the concern was that patients/consumers would use the auto-generated vision prescriptions to purchase glasses and contact lenses without seeing a physician or optometrist. And thus the language restricted prescriptions being written by these kiosks.

But this language also limits consumers from renewing their contact lens or glasses through a telehealth appointment.

HB 4356 bill would rectify that issue.

The Covid-19 pandemic has laid bare how some parts of the health care system maintain barriers to access solely for revenue purposes. To reduce costs and improve access, we need to make it easier to access needed care – for now and for beyond the pandemic.

I hope the committee will vote to approve HB 4356 and make it easier for your constituents to get their eyeglass and contact lens prescriptions.

Arielle Kane  
Director of Health Care  
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