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Medical Association of Georgia

Building a Better State of Health Since 1849

April 19, 2017

Governor Nathan Deal
Office of the Governor
206 Washington Street
111 State Capitol
Atlanta, Georgia 30334

Dear Governor Deal:

As the leading voice for the medical profession in Georgia, representing nearly 8,000 physicians in every specialty and practice setting, the Medical Association of Georgia (MAG) would like to express its concerns with S.B.153, legislation that would allow optometrists to perform injections in and around a patient's eye.

While MAG applauds the efforts put forth by members of the General Assembly to ensure that all Georgians have access to quality care, MAG does not believe that expanding the scope of practice for optometrists is an appropriate solution. Allowing this bill to become law will not only pose a great threat to patients, but will also be detrimental to the practice of medicine overall.

Injecting a needle in or around a patient's eye is such an intricate procedure that many physicians are hesitant to perform it. One mistake could lead to an infection, blurred vision, hemorrhaging, or even loss of sight. When patients visit their health care provider, they assume that the provider has the requisite education and training to effectively treat patients. If the law lowers the standard that health care professionals must follow, then patient safety will be at risk.

MAG has consistently stressed the importance of patient safety and it was clear this session that many legislators took heed as the original bill failed to get out of the House Health & Human Services Committee on three occasions. To secure passage of the bill, the original language had to be added to another piece of legislation.

Georgians deserve to be treated by practitioners who are properly trained and educated to fulfill their medical needs. On behalf of all patients and physicians, MAG respectfully ask that you veto S.B. 153.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Steven M. Walsh, M.D.
President
Medical Association of Georgia

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