

safety or welfare of the public." That's what makes me nervous. That's the reason for my amendment. When he talks about if we're going to go beyond topical medications that's where the Director of Health said he has a fear for safety. Now, there are very, very good optometrists out there, as I've said before. We don't legislate for the best. As a policymaker, somewhere you've got to make the distinction of who do I really legislate for? Do I legislate to protect the people from the best of the profession, the top end, or do I have some fear or concern and try to place a floor that you have minimum standards? I choose the minimum because that's where the safety issue lies for me, and those minimums are the internship, the experience and the training that you have through that medical education with pharmacology, toxicology, human anatomy, physiology and all those other things. Can I stand up here and give you a medical definition of how the eye works and the drug interaction? Of course, I can't, so I have to look somewhere else and I guess I have to use a bottom line judgment. And my bottom line judgment is this. I don't see the long line of people coming to the Legislature as citizens saying, I'm not getting good eye care. I don't see that. And then I suppose I have to ask myself, if I had an eye disease, something that needed to be treated other than just by a drop or a topical medication, where am I going to go for myself. I'm going to go to the medical doctor. I'm going to go to the ophthalmologist. I'll probably have gone to my optometrist first but if it is serious enough, an eye disease is terribly serious, those eyes are close to the brain, those infections are near. We're not talking about getting a sty in your eye and waiting a couple of weeks for it to get better. There are serious diseases of the eye, perhaps 90, 95 percent of the cases can be handled by the optometrist, what I'm worried about is the other 5 to 10 percent, and that if you're going to have to prescribe complicated, dangerous drugs for drug interactions and for antibiotics, I guess the protection that I want in there...

SPEAKER BAACK: One minute.

SENATOR KRISTENSEN: ...is that protection from internships, experience and training in seeing the vast number of them. Again, I want to state that this is not, from my point of view, an ophthalmologist trying to beat up on the optometrist, not the optometrist trying to horn in on the area of the ophthalmologist. What my amendment does is merely allow them to do things legally, to remove foreign bodies, to prescribe pain