

# South Carolina Society of Ophthalmology

P.O. Box 1508, Columbia, South Carolina 29202

Telephone (803) 254-6964

Website: [www.sceyemd.org](http://www.sceyemd.org) • Email: [information@sceyemd.org](mailto:information@sceyemd.org)

## Executive Committee

Edward G. Mintz, M.D., PhD, President  
James W. Culclasure M.D., Past President  
Todd D. Gwin, M.D., AAO Councilor  
R. Malcolm Edwards, M.D., Secretary/Treasurer  
C. Blake Myers, M.D., Chair, Members Council  
Kurt F. Heitman, M.D.  
Chair AAO State Affairs  
Ronald C. Scott, JD, MBA, M.A., Executive Director

C. Blake Myers, M.D.  
Chair, SCSSO Legislative Committee  
Edward G. Mintz, M.D., PhD  
Delegate to SCMA Inter-Specialty Council

AMERICAN ACADEMY OF OPHTHALMOLOGY  
RETIRED MODEL STATE SOCIETY AWARD (AAO)  
1988, 1989, 1990, 1992, 1994, 1995, 1996, 1999, 2000, 2001  
NATIONAL EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE YEAR - 2001, 2009  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SPECIAL RECOGNITION AWARD  
1998, 2001, 2009, 2010, 2013  
STATE PUBLIC INFORMATION PROGRAM OF THE YEAR - 2003  
AMERICAN ACADEMY STAR AWARD  
2003, 2009, 2010, 2013

## Board of Directors

John A. Wells, III, M.D.  
Joseph R. Bishop, III, M.D.  
Peter L. Goodwin, M.D.  
Todd A. Scott, M.D.  
William Caldwell, M.D.  
Mark R. Stokes, M.D.  
M. Edward Wilson, Jr., M.D.

R. Malcolm Edwards, M.D.  
Society Delegate to the SCMA  
Bradley B. Williams, M.D.  
Chair, Third Party Committee  
John A. Wells, III, M.D.  
Chair, Public Information Committee

SPECIAL RECOGNITION  
AWARD

19 98  
AMERICAN ACADEMY OF  
OPHTHALMOLOGY

MODEL STATE  
PATIENT ADVOCACY AWARD

1999, 2000, 2001, 2003, 2006, 2008, 2009,  
2010, 2011, 2012, 2013

AMERICAN ACADEMY  
OF OPHTHALMOLOGY  
The Eye M.D. Association

STATE AFFAIRS  
Star Award 2003  
& 2013

AMERICAN ACADEMY  
OF OPHTHALMOLOGY  
The Eye M.D. Association

25 July 2019

The Honorable Senator Danny Verdin  
Chairman, Senate Medical Affairs Committee

Dear Senator Verdin:

On behalf of the South Carolina Society of Ophthalmology, I write in opposition to S. 563, legislation that would permit Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists (CRNAs) to treat patients without physician supervision.

As surgeons, we work in varied facilities -- hospitals, outpatient surgery centers and in our offices. Safety has increased and, counterintuitively, so has our intolerance for complications. The days when poor outcomes were accepted as a matter of course are over; but the expectations of patients (and even doctors) border on perfection. In addition, we are able to do more surgeries in our offices and outpatient surgery centers. Most of the time, anesthesiologists are either personally performing the anesthesia care or supervising the nurse anesthetists in an anesthesia care team. In some outpatient centers and offices, we supervise the nurse anesthetists, without an anesthesiologist. In those cases, the ophthalmologist is physically present and able to address any emergency situations that may and do occur. Removing the physician from our vital role in the medical care of our patients would lower the standard of care that patients in South Carolina expect and deserve.

To promote and defend continuing care improvement, we encourage you and the Senate Medical Affairs Committee to keep in place the current law that has worked and is working to provide team-delivered, doctor-directed care throughout South Carolina.

Having been around the Statehouse for over two decades, I know the first question a good legislator will ask is, "Who's on the other side and what are their issues?" Looking at S. 563, I cannot see a statutory error being corrected. Neither is there is a problem with access to care nor current impediments to the nurses working to their full scope of practice. This bill is about allowing nurse anesthetists to practice medicine with a nursing license. For those who think this is a viable alternative, I encourage us to debate the question. New ideas are best discussed in the open and not via camouflage or euphemism.

Until the far-off day when such debates occur (I repeat that I've been around the Gervais-Sumter-Pendleton-Assembly block more than a few times), please keep the current South Carolina legal requirement that nurse anesthetists be supervised by a physician. I write in the spirit of the oath I took to protect patient safety; building teamwork and proper supervision of care is the responsibility of the physician. No where is it more important than in the operating room.

Respectfully yours,



C. Blake Myers, MD

Chair, Legislative Committee, South Carolina Society of Ophthalmology

cc Members of the Senate Medical Affairs Committee

Mr. Gene Hogan, Director of Research