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Advocates Urge Georgia Governor Brian Kemp to Continue Protecting Patients' Vision Health Amid Pandemic

Call comes as some groups seek to weaken safety regulations, jeopardizing patients' vision safety

(Alexandria, Va.) – The Health Care Alliance for Patient Safety (APS) [today sent a letter](#) to Georgia Gov. Brian Kemp urging him to protect his constituents' vision safety by maintaining Georgia's strong safeguards that ensure vision exams are conducted by doctors and that vision care decisions are made in close consultation between the patient and eyecare provider.

The call from APS comes as certain online contact lens retailers are attempting to use the coronavirus pandemic to loosen essential patient safeguards that are critical to dispensing accurate and safe contact lens prescriptions. Poor-fitting contact lenses or substitutions provided to patients by some online retailers can result in a wide range of visual or ocular harm, including eye pain, vision impairment, corneal neovascularization, keratitis and corneal ulcers.

“Telehealth, [which APS supports](#), is a critical part of our health care system, especially in rural areas. We are proud of optometrists across the country, and in Georgia, for deploying robust telehealth services amid difficult circumstances presented by the pandemic in order to care for their patients and strengthen the doctor-patient relationship,” said Dr. Deanna Alexander, O.D., Chairwoman of the Health Care Alliance for Patient Safety. “Unilaterally removing the doctor from being able to care for their patient, assess potential vision risks and advise on proper corrective vision treatment, as some have suggested to Governor Kemp, would be misguided. We appreciate Georgia's strong record on protecting patients' vision safety and respectfully ask Governor Kemp to remain steadfast in his commitment to protecting Georgians vision safety.”

In place of an in-person exam by licensed and trained optometrists, certain online contact lens retailers are actively marketing digital vision assessment applications. Often, these groups use the “results” from these inadequate applications to move patients into contact lenses that they were not prescribed, jeopardizing patient safety. These online retailers also falsely claim that their own brand of lenses are a “generic” version of the patient's prescribed lens.

What most patients don't know is that the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has specifically said¹ that there is “no regulatory pathway for marketing of generic contact lenses. The current clinical care paradigm does not support substitution of contact lens brands without a clinical evaluation.”

The Alliance was founded in 2018 to advocate for patient safety and to protect and defend the doctor-patient relationship – the essential foundation of personalized health care decision making. For more information, please visit www.PatientSafetyToday.com.

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¹ https://www.ftc.gov/system/files/documents/public_events/1285493/panel_ji_contact_lens_health_and_safety_issues.pdf