

Jamison Eye Care
Michele A. Jamison, MD

October 4, 2015

Senator Charles Schumer
322 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Schumer,

I am an Ophthalmologist who has been in practice for 17 years and am writing to you regarding your recent statements regarding glasses prescriptions. Every time that I check someone's glasses prescription I give them a copy. However, I have not once measured a pupillary distance because this is the responsibility of the dispensing optical shop. There are several apps that measure pupillary distance though I cannot comment on their accuracy. Online retailers should be able to embrace this technology and therefore take responsibility for this like other optical shops. Pupillary distance is actually only one of several factors that accomplish a correct fit of glasses to give people optimal vision. The size of the head, position of the ears including asymmetry, whether or not someone has hearing aids over the ears, and the nasal bridge size are just a few criteria that are assessed with the frame on the person's head. If bifocals are needed it gets even more complicated since neck position, lid position, and visual requirements at near and mid-range is factored when the frame is on the person.

All of these factors are why it is difficult to fit a pair of glasses online as correctly as in person especially bifocals. I had a patient who was going to return her online glasses but could only be reimbursed for the frame. Brick and mortar optical shops work hard to optimize people's vision including remaking lenses at no additional charge and if returned within a certain time frame, usually give a full refund. The fitting process is obviously worked in to the price of glasses. Online retailers actually encourage people to visit local optical shops if there is a problem with their glasses and the patients expect help for free. My optician sees several people a week who expect him to evaluate the problem with their glasses and want him to write detailed instructions to the online company. It is not my optician's responsibility to address other retailer's issues after I often reconfirm that the prescription information is correct which I perform for free. I cannot think of any other industry where it would be alright to purchase a product from one store and take it to another to fix the problem for free. It would be like you buying a suit online and going to a local suit maker and expect them to tailor it for free. The number of complaints regarding online glasses greatly out way complaints about other retailers.

I would also like to address the issue of the prescription being only good for a year. This has been the standard of care because often changes occur especially in children due to frequent growth, those 40 to 60 years old with near vision changes, and those over 65 that start to develop cataracts and other eye pathology. I think you would agree that it is important for people so see as well as they can. Several

times a year I see people who have noticed a change in their eyes and assume the prescription that they have been holding for 10 months is going to help. After they get the new glasses and find out they still cannot see properly, they come in for further assessment.

Additionally, I have had an optical shop for about 16 years and for eleven of those years broke even or took a small loss but I continue to keep it open for the convenience of my mostly senior patients. My biggest expense is actually the lenses and I use an independent lab. My patients also have many other local choices in addition to Lenscrafter affiliates to address their budgets including, Walmart, B.J's, Costco, Sam's club, America's Best, and Vision Works to name a few. I know online retailers will continue to exist but I feel sorry and frustrated for consumers that are disappointed with the final product and their vision.

Thank you for your consideration and if I can answer any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Michele Jamison, M.D.