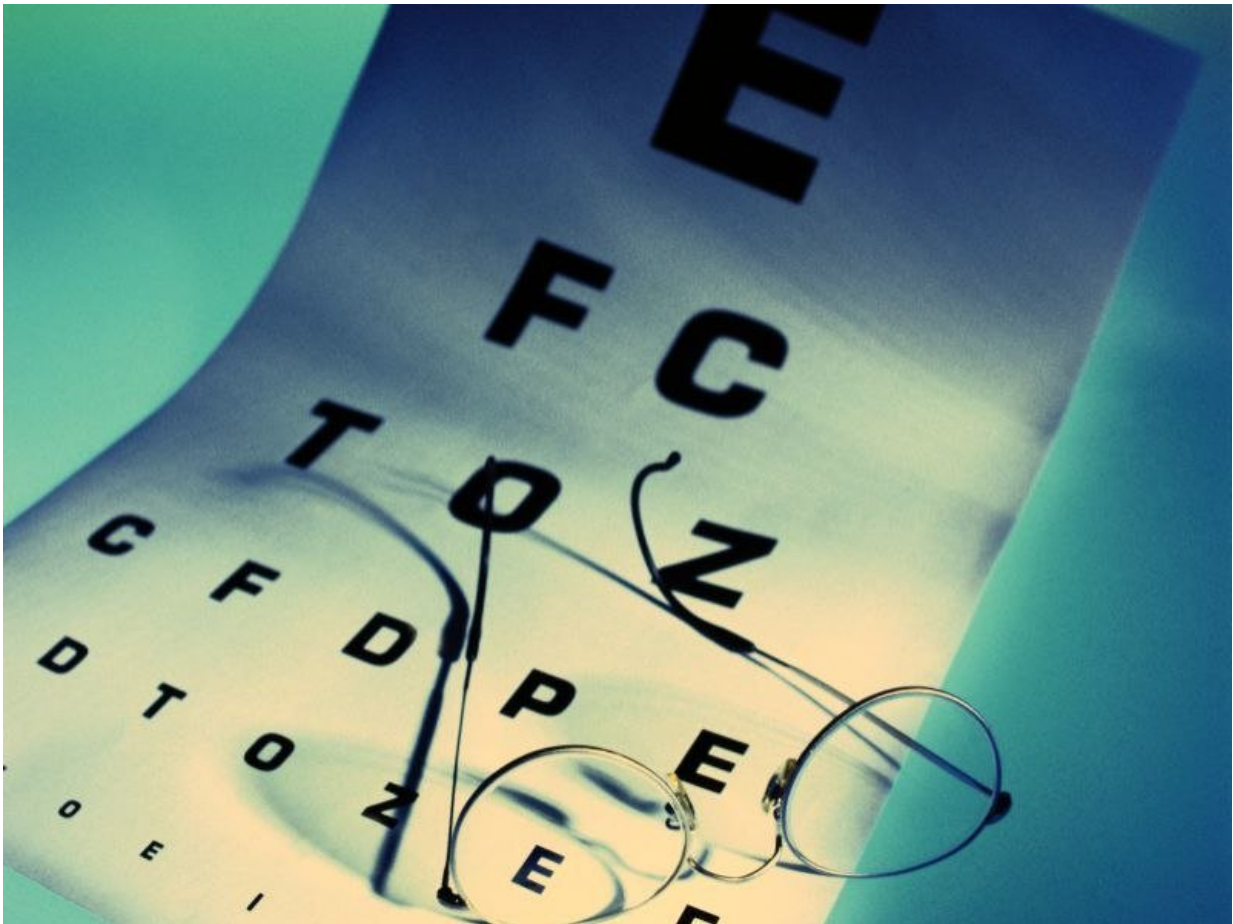


# Data may weigh on pros/Cons of expanded care optometry

November 23 2017

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(HealthDay)—More than three-quarters of residents living in states

where optometrists have been granted expanded scope of practice live within an estimated travel time (ETT) of 30 minutes to the nearest ophthalmologist office, according to a study published online Nov. 22 in *JAMA Ophthalmology*.

Joshua D. Stein, M.D., from the University of Michigan Medical School in Ann Arbor, and colleagues used data from the 2010 U.S. census, a 2016 American Academy of Ophthalmology member database, and a set of claims data for Medicare beneficiaries to determine the ETT to the nearest ophthalmologist office. Data were included for 4,339,367 Kentucky residents, 3,751,351 Oklahoma residents, and 2,059,179 New Mexico residents.

The researchers found that more than 75 percent of residents lived within an ETT of 30 minutes to the nearest [ophthalmology](#) office, and 94 to 99 percent lived within an ETT of 60 minutes. Overall, 58.3, 51.1, and 46.9 percent of Medicare beneficiaries who received surgery by optometrists in Kentucky, Oklahoma, and New Mexico, respectively, lived within an ETT of 30 minutes to the nearest office.

"These results can help inform policy makers when weighing the pros and cons of scope of practice expansion for optometrists," the authors write.

**More information:** [Abstract/Full Text](#)

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