



MARYLAND PODIATRIC MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

The Adams Building, Suite 301
600 Baltimore Avenue
Towson, Maryland 21204

Telephone: (410) 332-0736

Facsimile: (410) 332-0885

February 14, 2020

Delegate Shane E. Pendergrass,
Chair, Health and Government Operations Committee
House Office Building, Room 241
Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: HB 428 Podiatric Physician

Dear Delegate Pendergrass and Members of the Committee,

I am Executive Director and General Counsel to the Maryland Podiatric Medical Association, which represents approximately 260 of the approximately 400 podiatrists licensed in Maryland.

This letter is in support of HB 428 to change the term "Podiatrist" to "Podiatric Physician". The original term for this profession was "chiropodist" and the level of education and training was significantly less than is provided and required today. A Chiropodist had a limited scope of practice providing only routine foot care. As the Podiatric Medical Schools revised and expanded their curricula and the training for the profession improved, the name changed to "Podiatrist". The scope of practice has expanded in conjunction with the recognition of the education and training of podiatrists. Numerous bills have been enacted over the past 20 years recognizing the level of skill and training and the equivalency of the Doctor of Podiatric Medicine degree (D.P.M.) to the M.D. and D.O. degrees. Others on this panel will describe this in further detail.

I must confess that I was involved as counsel to MedChi in the litigation that resulted in the limitation on the term "Physician" under Maryland law. In the matter of *Beverungen v. Briele*, 22 Md. App. 233 (1975), the Court of Special Appeals held that Chiropractors were prohibited from using the term "Chiropractic Physician", as it was defined under Maryland law term to include only those licensed to practice medicine.

This bill does not change that holding, but merely defines a D.P.M. as a "Podiatric Physician", thereby acknowledging the education and training that is now required to practice podiatry.

A Podiatrist attends four (4) years of Podiatric Medical School, which is virtually identical to Allopathic Schools of Medicine.

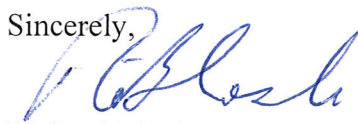
Notably, an M.D. or D.O. is only required to have one (1) year of post-graduate training to be licensed in Maryland (Health Occupation Article, Section 14-307). A Podiatrist is required to have two (2) years of post-graduate training to be licensed (COMAR 10.40.01.05). The standard required by the podiatric profession is now three (3) years of residency training.

Thirty six (36) states recognize D.P.M.s as “Podiatric Physicians”, “Physicians who Practice Podiatric Medicine”, “Physician of the Foot and Ankle” or “Physician of the Foot and Leg”. See the attached chart.

I would ask the committee to give HB428 a favorable report.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Richard Bloch', written in a cursive style.

Richard Bloch