

Testimony of Dr. Allie Dunham, Resident Physician in Orthopaedic Surgery
Johns Hopkins Department of Orthopaedic Surgery
In opposition to HB 428
adunham@jhmi.edu

Good day, chairman and esteemed members of the committee. My name is Allie Dunham. I am a proud Marylander, born and raised, and also happen to be an orthopaedic surgery resident at Johns Hopkins. Having first attended a local community college and University of Maryland, then ultimately graduating from Johns Hopkins for undergraduate school, and later graduating from Johns Hopkins School of Medicine in 2016, my journey to orthopaedic surgery has been rigorous and certainly well worth it. I thank you for this opportunity to humbly testify on behalf of my fellow physicians-in-training who have similarly worked hard to earn the title of “physician”.

The bill currently presented (HB0428), which would allow podiatrists to be fashioned as “physicians” gives me concern. My colleagues and I have reservations regarding the implications in broadening of the “physician” title. We believe passing the House Bill 0428 as it would be a detriment to our patients, our healthcare system, and the Maryland public trust.

In today’s world, misinformation is at our fingertips. Patients often arrive at our clinic with misinformation about their diagnosis, their treatment, and of their providers. This set of misinformation frequently complicates medical care and confuses even the savviest of patients. Broadening the title of “physician” to include podiatrists further misinforms patients who seek the excellent medical care we Marylanders have grown to know, love, and deserve. Our patients justly deserve clarity in information, and trust in what “physician” means.

As resident physician, I have had the privilege of working with and learning beside some of the finest physicians, advanced practice providers, nurses and therapists. Each group is critical to provide comprehensive care. Each group’s roles are clearly defined, easily recognized, and uniquely poised to facilitate teamwork. As such, there is an understanding that a “physician” is a MD or DO-trained provider. Orthopaedic MDs and DOs have each been trained in operative and non-operative care with emphasis on six core competencies- medical knowledge, patient care, practice-based learning, professionalism, interpersonal and communication, and systems-based practice. Our patients understand our resident training is capped by passing an internally regulated board exam, and our patients are assured that our training is kept fresh with regularly recurring recertifications.

A “doctor” is a distinction befitting all who have completed graduate-level education. Doctors are physicians, philosophers, scientists, psychologists, and podiatrists. However, “physician” is a distinction that is befitting to those who complete an in-depth training in all facets of medicine and the body. Our “physician” title is treasured to myself and my MD and DO colleagues. More importantly, a “physician” garners a trust by our patients in that training.

Sirs and Madams, legislation is not the way to earn a title, rather it should be through education and training. I respectfully request that you oppose and vote NO on House Bill 0428 (HB0428).

Thank you.