



MARYLAND PODIATRIC MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

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Bill: SB 169 /HB 182- Health Occupations- Podiatric Physicians

Position: SUPPORT

What Does it Mean to Practice Podiatry? The Maryland Health Occupations Code defines the practice of podiatry as— “to diagnose or surgically, medically, or mechanically treat any ailment of the human foot or ankle, or any ailment of the anatomical structures that attach to the human foot.” A Podiatrist is someone who practice podiatry. *See* HO §16-101(f).

What Does it Mean to Practice Medicine? Under the Maryland Health Occupations Code, practicing medicine means— “to diagnose, heal, treat, or [perform] surgery.” *See* 14-101 (o). A physician is someone who practices medicine. *See* HO §14-101(M).

Who Practices Podiatric Medicine? Doctors of Podiatric Medicine (DPM)

To become a DPM, a person must:

- Graduate from an accredited graduate school or college of podiatry (4 years);
- Pass a 3-part exam administered by the Council on Education of the American Podiatric Medical Association (similar to the USMLE/COMLEX exam for MDs and DOs);
- Complete 3 years of residency; and
- Be licensed by the State Board of Podiatric Medical Examiners.

Altering the title of “Podiatrist” to “Podiatric Physician”

- **Thirty-six (36) other states** recognize Doctors of Podiatric Medicine as “Podiatric Physicians” (23), as “Physician who Practices Podiatric Medicine” ((8) or “Physician of the Foot and Leg (or Ankle)” (5).

DPMs **share many core education and training with MDs**. DPMs are required to attend a four-year degree program (the first two years are the same as the first two years of allopathic medical school). In the next two years, DPMs begin to specialize in podiatric medicine. A DPM’s residency requirements include anesthesiology, internal medicine, infectious disease, surgery, emergency medicine, and pediatrics – some of the same rotations as MDs. These are virtually identical to the requirements for MDs. DPMs specialize in the lower limb, just like specialty MDs, such as OB-GYN, Urology, Anesthesiology, etc.

- Based upon the education and training for practicing podiatry, Maryland podiatrists should currently be considered physicians as they diagnose, treat, and perform surgery.
- Many hospitals in Maryland identify Podiatrists as “Physicians” on their ID Badges.

Terminology matters to patients seeking treatment and to professionals who want to advertise their expertise.

We respectfully request a favorable vote on SB 169/HB 182 and join the 36 other states recognizing Doctors of Podiatric Medicine as Physicians.