



MARYLAND PODIATRIC MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

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February 11, 2022

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

Re: HB 790 Podiatric Physician

Dear Delegate Pendergrass and Members of the Committee,
Re: HB 790 Podiatric Physician
Position: Support

Dear Senator Pinsky 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 790 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.

This bill does not change the scope of practice or any other aspect of practice, 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. They both follow the 4-4-3 model of education and training: four (4) years-undergraduate, four (4) years-medical school and three (3) years-residency/post-graduate training.

Notably, an M.D. is only required to have one (1) year of post-graduate training to be licensed in Maryland (Health Occupation Article, Section 14-307; COMAR 10.36.01.03D(1)). A Podiatrist is required to have two (2) years of post-graduate training to be licensed (Health Occupation Article, Section 16-302; COMAR 10.40.01.05). The standard required by the

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podiatric profession is now three (3) years of residency training. Thirty-six (36) states recognize D.P.M.s as “Physicians”: “Podiatric Physicians” (23), “Physicians who Practice Podiatric Medicine” (8), “Physician of the Foot and Ankle” or “Physician of the Foot and Leg” (5).

I would ask the committee to give HB 790 a favorable report.

Please contact me if you have any questions. Thank you.

Sincerely,
Richard Bloch

Richard Bloch