



Board of Podiatric Medical Examiners

Larry Hogan, Governor · Boyd K. Rutherford, Lt. Governor · Dennis R. Schrader, Secretary

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2022 SESSION POSITION PAPER

BILL NO: SB 311
COMMITTEE: Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs
POSITION: SUPPORT

TITLE: Health Occupations – Podiatric Physicians

BILL ANALYSIS:

This bill will authorize the use of the name “Podiatric Physician” as an update to the present nomenclature of Podiatrist, in order to be aligned with the educational requirements for licensure that are in place and mandatory, as indicated in the Practice Act of the Board of Podiatric Medical Examiners and the respective COMAR.

POSITION AND RATIONALE:

The Board of Podiatric Medical Examiners supports Senate Bill (SB) 311 - Health Occupations - Podiatric Physicians. The term “Podiatric Physician” is defined when analyzing the verbiage and context. The definition of “Physician” means someone who can practice medicine, while the definition of “medicine” is the practice of the diagnosis, treatment and prevention of disease. Therefore, a “Podiatric Physician” is someone who can practice medicine in relation to the foot and ankle. By definition, a Podiatrist is a doctor who diagnoses and treats disorders of the foot and ankle, while also providing preventative care to patients.

To become a Podiatrist, an applicant has to complete a four-year college degree and then is required by the majority of the schools to shadow a Podiatrist before they can even apply to a Podiatric Medical School. During the four intense years of Podiatric Medical School, the first two years of training are the same courses that other medical school students are required to take like pathology, anatomy, histology, microbiology, etc. The only difference is that Podiatry students are actually required to take additional courses such as biomechanics and lower anatomy. After finishing comprehensive science courses in the first two years of Podiatric Medical School, the remaining two years are clinical rotations and scrubbing into a very large variety of surgical cases. Once the four-year Podiatric Medical School is complete, the graduates are awarded the degree of Doctor in Podiatric Medicine (DPM), and they must match into a hospital-based residency Program, and complete the mandatory 3 years of residency in podiatric medicine and surgery. Some residents continue in a fourth and fifth year advanced and specialized fellowship programs.

The Maryland licensed podiatrists with delineated hospital and Ambulatory Surgical Centers' (ASC) privileges, perform surgical cases in their licensed ASC's as well as in the operating room. Podiatrists are surgically trained to do amputations, bunion removal, hammertoe correction, cyst/mass excisions, ulcer treatments, lateral ankle stability, etc. Podiatrists are surgically trained to fix any foot and ankle pathology. There are some medical doctors who are not trained to do any type of surgery, yet they are classified as physicians.

Adding the term "Physician" to Podiatry, brings Maryland in line with the 36 other states which classify their Podiatrists as "Podiatric Physicians". The rigorous and extensive training, the grit, the hard work applies to the term "Podiatric Physician."

By passing SB 311, Maryland will become the 37th state to recognize its Podiatrists with the appropriate title that they deserve and have earned, through coursework and clinical training, as well as their everyday clinical and surgical practice.

Thank you for considering this testimony. The Board of Podiatric Medical Examiners is respectfully requesting a favorable report on SB 311. If you require additional information, please contact Eva Schwartz, Executive Director of the Maryland Board of Podiatric Medical Examiners at (410) 764-4785 or at eva.schwartz@maryland.gov.

The opinion of the Board expressed in this document does not necessarily reflect that of the Department of Health or the Administration.