



North Carolina  
Foot & Ankle  
Society

Podiatric Physicians Providing  
Medical And Surgical Care

I would like to thank the Committee for this opportunity to speak today. It is my pleasure to represent the majority of podiatrists in North Carolina as the Foot & Ankle Society President.

Today, I come to you as a citizen of North Carolina and a practicing podiatrist to strongly request that you remove podiatry from this bill. Over the past 50 years the field of podiatry has evolved into a vital profession covering several facets of medicine and foot and ankle conditions. Podiatrists attend an accredited college or university and then matriculate into podiatry school for 4 years. This is then followed by no less than 3 years of surgical residency training and oftentimes followed by 12-month training fellowships. Podiatry has truly become a respected and viable surgical specialty with many trained in treating the most complex and challenging foot and ankle conditions in our country. We cover skin soft tissue and boney ailments of the foot and ankle and are in the forefront of treating and saving those Diabetic feet, which increase patient morbidity and unfortunately patient mortality. We are members or large multi-specialty groups, on staff at prestigious university healthcare systems and are members of some the largest profit and non-profit health systems in North Carolina. However, podiatry usually has our own hospital surgical section. Our Governor-appointed board of podiatry has efficiently and effectively given hospitals and surgical centers guidance credentialing and individual scope of practice guidance.

In an attempt to balance the state's budget, Medicaid considered cancelling podiatric services. After careful reconsideration, it was obvious that this would be catastrophic and would result in a large increase in amputation rates and could actually cost the state millions of taxpayer dollars. Take me for example. Thomasville Medical center reviewed the Below the Knee and Above the Knee amputation numbers the 5 years before my arrival and the 5 years after my arrival. By having a podiatrist like myself with privileges to perform complex limb salvage surgery, I was able to reduce major limb amputation rates by nearly 50%. Because of the research and efforts by the NC Board of Podiatry Examiners, my surgical training was confirmed after the board reviewed several hundred if not thousands of foot and ankle surgical cases. I also provided additional surgical documentation at their request, which I found to be fair and reasonable. It was the Board of Podiatry that had the ability to clearly recognize my training and abilities. I worry about the financial burden to our state and the resources needed to maintain a similar and fair system such as the one the Board of Podiatry currently provides.

The North Carolina Board of Podiatry Examiners has served our podiatrists, patients and communities well over the years. The Board has proven to be invaluable in its efforts to maintain consistency across our state and facilitate an intimate way of communication and governance without our podiatrists feeling disenfranchised. The state licensing examination held annually is fair and allows our state to attract some of the most qualified podiatrists in our country. I understand that many do not understand our profession and the training involved. Even though I myself completed an orthopedic foot and ankle fellowship and worked in one of the most prestigious hospital system in America. The Board of Podiatry in that state was needed to verify the extent of my training, because many in the orthopedics department did not and still do not understand podiatry.

Finally, this proposed legislation as currently written is the opposite of growth. The majority of podiatrists are small business owners. Should the draft legislation become law, hundreds of podiatrists and their office staff would face unemployment.

I stand before you as the North Carolina Foot & Ankle Society president and ask that you remove the North Carolina Board of Podiatry from this this draft legislation. Thank you.

Dekarlos Dial, DPM, President