

MedChi

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TO: The Honorable Peter A. Hammen, Chairman
Members, House Health & Government Operations Committee
The Honorable Kirill Reznik

FROM: Joseph A. Schwartz, III
Pamela Metz Kasemeyer
J. Steven Wise

DATE: February 15, 2012

RE: **OPPOSE** – House Bill 323 – *Health Occupations – Licensed Podiatrists – Scope of Practice*

The Maryland State Medical Society (MedChi), which represents over 7,600 Maryland physicians and their patients, opposes House Bill 323.

House Bill 323 removes the current statutory prohibition on podiatrists surgically treating acute ankle fractures.

MedChi opposes this measure for several reasons. First, podiatrists are not adequately trained to perform this type of surgery, which is indeed why the original prohibition exists. Podiatrists licensed prior to 1996 did not have any written residency requirement, and those licensed after 1996 through 2006 were only required to take a 1-year residency. This pales in comparison to an orthopedic surgeon, who must complete a 5-year residency program and perhaps an additional year of fellowship training in foot and ankle surgery. Further, podiatrists do not have to demonstrate performance of ankle surgery to be certified by the American Board of Podiatric Surgery, yet this legislation would permit every podiatrist to perform such surgery.

In addition, MedChi is not aware of any shortage of orthopedic surgeons available to perform ankle surgery. There is an adequate supply of well-trained physicians that can

The Honorable Peter A. Hammen, Chairman
House Bill 323
Page Two

conduct these surgeries, so there is no need to expand the podiatrist's scope of practice in this way, particularly given the significant differences in training and experience set out above.

For the reasons set forth here, MedChi strongly opposes House Bill 323.

For more information call:

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