

MedChi

The Maryland State Medical Society

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TO: The Honorable Joan Carter Conway, Chairman
Members, Senate Health, Education & Environmental Affairs Committee
The Honorable Ronald Young

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

DATE: February 27, 2013

RE: **OPPOSE** – Senate Bill 541 – *Health Occupations – Licensed Podiatrists – Scope of Practice*

The Maryland State Medical Society (MedChi), which represents over 7,500 Maryland physicians and their patients, opposes Senate Bill 541.

Senate Bill 541 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 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 Senate Bill 541.

For more information call:

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