

Testimony House Bill 6700
An act revising the scope of Podiatric Medicine
By Joseph R. Treadwell, DPM

I am here to speak in support of House Bill 6700, an act revising the scope of podiatric medicine to include ankle surgical privileges. As noted by Commissioner Gavin in his report, this agreement is to be endorsed by the Podiatric, Orthopedic and State Medical Societies. It specifically delineates the procedure for Podiatrists to obtain ankle surgical privileges. These procedures were developed through the efforts of arbitration, as overseen by the Department of Public Health with representatives from the orthopedic and podiatric communities.

A revision in the Connecticut Podiatric scope of practice to include ankle surgery will allow those Podiatrists with demonstrated education and training specific to the ankle to perform ankle surgery.

A change in the scope of practice would increase patient access to care, and reduce delays in treatment. A change to include ankle surgery in the Podiatric scope of practice would be reflective of the national standard of care as well as the current education and training of Doctors of Podiatric Medicine.

There are 41 states where Podiatrists perform ankle surgery. In New England, Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont and Rhode Island include ankle surgery in the scope of practice. Many states have had a Podiatric scope of practice that has included ankle surgery for decades. Never has a state scope of practice been reduced or repealed. Malpractice claims are not relatively increased in states that include ankle in the scope of practice for Podiatrists (Podiatry Insurance Company of America correspondence).

Podiatric medical education provides far more dedicated ankle course hours and patient contact hours as compared to allopathic and osteopathic medicine. They perform far more surgical procedures on the foot and ankle than any other specialty regardless of their length of training. They also take more competency exams, specific to their specialty, as compared to any other medical or surgical specialty.

In addition to scope of practice laws. Hospital credentialing mechanisms are designed to ensure the scope of surgical and medical practice be commensurate with the individuals medical training, experience and board certification and consistent with the scope of practice as defined by state laws. This requires evaluation of each practitioner on an individual basis. This mechanism is successful nationally and here in Connecticut.

There are many mechanisms that help evaluate competency of training and the proposed legislative wording is another mechanism that serves to protect the public.

I hope you will support this bill.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak before you today