

TESTIMONY OF

**Michael Q. Davis**

**ON BEHALF OF THE PENNSYLVANIA PODIATRIC MEDICAL  
ASSOCIATION**

**BEFORE THE HOUSE PROFESSIONAL LICENSURE  
COMMITTEE REGARDING HB 2015 AND THE NEED FOR  
LICENSURE OF THE O & P PROFESSION**

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 19, 2008  
418 Main Capitol Building

Mr. Chairman Sturla and members of the Committee, my name is Michael Davis. I am the executive director of the Pennsylvania Podiatric Medical Association. We count as our members over eighty five percent of the Doctors of Podiatric Medicine licensed in the state of Pennsylvania.

I am appearing here today in order to support the licensure of Pedorthists, Orthotists and Prosthetists under the terms of House Bill 2015.

The profession of podiatry enjoys a virtually unlimited scope of practice within a limited part of the anatomy. That scope, focusing on the foot and ankle, is an area in which the podiatric physician often sees the first symptoms of diabetes. The lower extremity exhibits the results of the vascular compromise that often accompanies diabetes.

That disease, as well as other degenerative conditions, often results in wounds, structural failure and can lead to amputation. In these areas, our Association members work closely with the Pedorthists, Orthotists and Prosthetists who would be covered by this legislation.

It is important to our profession, as well as the patients that we serve, that the professionalism of the Pedorthists, Orthotists and Prosthetists be codified by licensure and receive the safety and transparency that licensure provides. One of the issues that licensure will provide is a type of "quality assurance." That quality assurance is a current demand of both the healthcare system and the public.

We can not overemphasize the importance of quality and patient safety. The areas in which Pedorthists, Orthotists and Prosthetists work, relates directly to continued mobility, continued productivity and an elevated quality of life. These are not tangential subjects. Every statistical analysis relating to ambulation demonstrates that the ability to maintain ambulation is a key element in limb salvage, limb retention, delayed morbidity and

delayed mortality. Accelerated morbidity adds costs to the medical system at an almost logarithmic rate. Limb compromise and loss requires the services of these professionals. Without them, limb compromise or loss leads to loss of ambulation and accelerated mortality with its attendant end of life cost. Although the Prosthetist works with all areas of the body, a substantial percentage of the work of Pedorthists, Orthotists and Prosthetists relates to the foot and ankle.

This is one of the reasons that we welcome this legislation.

The profession of podiatry rests on the degree of Doctor of Podiatric Medicine which is granted after a four year post graduate education offered in eight schools around the country. One of the premier schools is the Temple University School of Podiatric Medicine located in Philadelphia. I speak to this because the Temple school curriculum includes orthotics and pedorthics which are required subjects for each medical student.

Additionally, Temple offers review courses in orthotics and pedorthy to orthotists and pedorthists who are preparing for certification by the orthotics and pedorthy certifying boards. The school also offers courses to orthotists and pedorthists who are already certified and who must maintain continuing education in their field.

However, while offering our support, we do have a technical insertion that we would like to see. In order to avoid issues that could arise through a strict construction of Section 6 of the language.

Section 3 (h) of the proposed legislation states that nothing in the legislation prevents a podiatrist from engaging in the "...practice in which the podiatrist is licensed."

Later, in Section 6 the legislation provides that it shall be unlawful for any person who is not a licensed Pedorthist, Orthotist and Prosthetist from practicing orthotics, pedorthics or as a prosthetist ..."except as provided in Section 3(e)..."

We need to have the words "and Section 3 (h)" inserted in Section 6 directly after the words "Section 3 (e)."

The Doctor of Podiatric Medicine, upon the conferral of the degree, has the education, training and ability to practice as an orthotist as that profession relates to the foot and ankle. We can also practice as a pedorthist without additional certification or license. We feel that the suggested additional language would eliminate restrictive interpretations and avoid issues which would cause confusion. This proposed licensing should apply to those who do not have degree of Doctor of Podiatric Medicine.

In conclusion, our Association has worked with members of POP's in trying to craft a pragmatic structure under which these professionals can become licensed and regulated. Our profession works with Pedorthists, Orthotists and Prosthetists on a regular basis and will continue to work with their Association in the promotion of their profession.