

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2014 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

Senate Bill 162 (Senator Conway, *et al.*)
Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

Health Occupations - Licensed Podiatrists - Scope of Practice

This bill expands the scope of practice for podiatrists to include the surgical treatment of acute ankle fracture.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Potential minimal increase in special fund revenues and expenditures for the State Board of Podiatric Medical Examiners to the extent that expansion of the scope of practice encourages podiatrists to seek or maintain licensure in Maryland.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: Meaningful for podiatry practices that are small businesses.

Analysis

Current Law/Background: Maryland, along with all other states, regulates the practice of podiatry. Doctors of podiatric medicine, commonly known as podiatrists, are licensed in the State to diagnose or surgically, medically, or mechanically treat the human foot or ankle, the anatomical structures that attach to the human foot, or the soft tissue below the mid-calf. The license does not authorize a podiatrist to surgically treat an acute ankle fracture or administer anesthesia, other than a local anesthetic.

Podiatrists treat a variety of ailments, ranging from bunions to tendon strains. Podiatrists also perform surgery, fit corrective devices, prescribe drugs, and administer physical therapy. In addition, they may identify early manifestations of systemic disorders such as heart disease and diabetes for referral to a medical doctor.

There are 436 full-license and 43 limited-license podiatrists in Maryland. Although podiatrists in this State are not licensed to perform surgery on acute ankle fractures, this type of surgery is taught in podiatry school and is part of a podiatrist's scope of practice in several other states.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: SB 541 of 2013 received an unfavorable report from the Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee. Its cross file, HB 746, was heard by the House Health and Government Operations Committee and was subsequently withdrawn. Likewise, SB 598 and HB 323 of 2012 received a hearing and were subsequently withdrawn.

Cross File: HB 272 (Delegate Reznik, *et al.*) - Health and Government Operations.

Information Source(s): Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - January 27, 2014
mc/ljm

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