



OHIO PODIATRIC MEDICAL ASSOCIATION, DBA  
**OHIO FOOT AND ANKLE MEDICAL ASSOCIATION**  
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Chairman Burke, Ranking Member Antonio and members of the Senate Health, Human Services and Medicaid Committee, my name is Doctor Richard Schilling and I am here today testifying in support of Senate Bill 178, legislation sponsored by Senator Kirk Schuring that will give Ohio's podiatric physicians the opportunity to administer flu vaccinations. As a podiatric physician, I am not only representing myself but also the members of the Ohio Foot & Ankle Medical Association (OHFAMA), an organization made up of Ohio's podiatric physicians and surgeons who advocate on behalf of our patients. I have had the honor of serving as Past President of OHFAMA and working with members of the General Assembly on important public health issues.

Senate Bill 178 is a very simple public health issue that came about when many of our patients discovered that podiatric physicians are not allowed under current Ohio law to administer flu shots. As you know, podiatric physicians are considered "physicians" under Ohio law and are regulated under Chapter 4731 of the Revised Code by the State Medical Board. Because of a quirk in Ohio law, our members are unable to administer flu shots even when our patients ask us to do so while receiving other treatments in our offices. Senate Bill 178 will simply allow us to provide this crucial service to our patients, thereby improving public health by permitting podiatric physicians to serve as another point of contact for Ohioans and reducing the potential of negative impacts of the flu virus for everyone.

As members of this committee may know, Doctors of Podiatric Medicine and Surgery undergo vigorous training and education, including four years of college, four years of medical school and three-years residencies in hospitals. DPM's train and work right alongside many Doctors of Medicine and Doctors of Osteopathy. In addition, our profession and the State of Ohio is very fortunate to have one of only nine accredited Colleges of Podiatric Medicine in the country through Kent State University. You have also received a letter of support from the College regarding Senate Bill 178.

Ohio's Podiatric Physicians and Surgeons strongly believe Senate Bill 178 is sound public policy to increase access to flu shots by qualified health care providers. By giving patients, many of which might be your constituents, greater access to flu shots, Ohio can take additional steps to reduce hospitalizations, loss of productivity due to lost time at work and unfortunate deaths that are attributed annually to the flu. As you may be aware, over an estimated 200,000 people are hospitalized each year in our country because of the flu and, even worse, more than 20,000 people die each year from the flu. Senate Bill 178 will simply continue the General Assembly's willingness to grant this flu shot privilege to other providers in an effort to address this important public health issue.

On behalf of the members of our association and our patients, we would like to thank Senator Schuring for sponsoring this bill and ask for the committee's support for this important legislation. I would be happy to take any questions the committee may have.