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Testimony on House Bill 33
Mike Mathy, Executive Director
Ohio Foot & Ankle Medical Association
March 29, 2023

Chairman Edwards, Vice-Chairman LaRae, Ranking Member Sweeney, and members of the House Finance Committee, my name is Mike Mathy and I serve as the Executive Director of the Ohio Foot & Ankle Medical Association (OHFAMA), the statewide association for Ohio's podiatric physicians and surgeons.

On behalf of our over 600 members, I am here today to testify requesting your support for a modest investment in Ohio's Medicaid patients through increased reimbursement rates for Ohio's podiatric physicians and surgeons.

My ask of you today is to support a 5% to 10% increase in Medicaid reimbursement rates for podiatrists within the Medicaid system, as these rates have not been increased for quite some time. Based on feedback from our members, this reimbursement increase would help play a significant role in enabling Ohio's podiatrists to remain an important part in delivering quality, cost-effective services to our state's Medicaid recipients.

OHFAMA was recently informed by the Department of Medicaid that allocations have been made within the 525 line item in the department's budget proposal that contain a 5% increase in our reimbursement codes. For that, our association is appreciative of the efforts of Director Corcoran and her collaborative team at Medicaid and the value they place on the services of podiatric physicians and surgeons. However, our members believe more in the area of reimbursement can and should be done, and we strongly believe the value and return on investment for both the Medicaid program and its beneficiaries will far outweigh the minor additional investment we are requesting.

Through the years, Ohio's podiatric physicians and surgeons have embraced serving Medicaid beneficiaries in their local communities and we believe our community-based services have provided value and a positive return on investment for Ohio, especially through the treatment of diabetes and diabetic foot ulcers.

The impact of diabetes is profound and growing in our state. Over 1 million Ohioans, or 12.4% of the population, have diabetes and the state spends \$76 million annually on diabetes-related hospital admissions and emergency department visits for Medicaid beneficiaries, according to 2015 data from the Ohio Department of Medicaid.

To make matters worse, 1 in 4 diabetics will develop a foot ulcer, which can lead to amputation. Across the country, 100,000 lower limbs are amputated annually due to diabetes complications at a cost of over \$70,000 per limb. The five-year mortality rate after a lower leg amputation stands at an astonishing 50%, which exceeds the five-year mortality rate of all cancers (31%).

The care of diabetic patients requires a focused, interdisciplinary team. Thankfully, one routine evaluation from a podiatrist results in a 24% decrease in hospitalizations. Moreover, including a podiatrist on the care team of a diabetic patient reduces amputations by more than 50%.

In addition to our cost-effective work with patients with diabetes, OHFAMA's members fill a significant area of need in the Medicaid patient population, as our important services have long provided elderly patients an enhanced quality of life and have significantly reduced the need for expensive emergency room or institutionalized care.

Podiatry has always been a very important part in the team concept of care in Ohio's Medicaid system, but like other providers, costs to administer this care have significantly gone up for our members yet reimbursement levels have not. Our members would appreciate your support of Medicaid's initial 5% reimbursement increase for podiatric physicians and surgeons contained in House Bill 33 and strongly consider building on that "good start" by allocating an additional 5% in reimbursement levels for our valued providers.

Thank you for your time today and your past support of Ohio's podiatric physicians and surgeons. I will be happy to try to answer any questions that members of the committee may have regarding my testimony.