



OHIO PODIATRIC MEDICAL ASSOCIATION, DBA
OHIO FOOT AND ANKLE MEDICAL ASSOCIATION
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TO: Members of the Senate Government Oversight & Reform Committee
FROM: Michael Mathy, Executive Director
DATE: Ohio Foot and Ankle Medical Association
RE: March 24, 2021
Support for House Bill 6

On behalf of the podiatric physicians and surgeons that make up the Ohio Foot & Ankle Medical Association (OHFAMA), I am writing to request your support for House Bill 6, legislation sponsored by Representative Bill Roemer. We applaud Representative Roemer's continued desire to address certain important issues for health professions during the COVID-19 pandemic.

While House Bill 6 has many important facets to it, our association would like to focus mainly on language contained in the bill that would simply allow podiatric physicians and surgeons to administer the COVID-19 vaccination to their patients. You may recall that last session, the General Assembly, without opposition, approved legislation (Senate Bill 178) that allows podiatrists to administer flu shots. While podiatric physicians are indeed physicians and licensed by the State Medical Board under Chapter 4731 of the Revised Code, SB 178 was needed to simply clarify in law the ability of our members to provide flu shots. OHFAMA also believes the language in HB 6 is also necessary to clarify the law in the same manner regarding administration of the COVID-19 vaccine.

Much like we informed the legislature regarding flu shots, our members often treat patients who fall in the higher risk categories for contracting COVID. Patients who have been in the offices of our members have been constantly asking them if they can obtain the COVID vaccine in the podiatrist's office while they are receiving other services. Unfortunately, much like flu shots, we have had to inform our patients that a clarification to Ohio law is first needed to allow our physician members to be able to provide this crucial service. This simple law change would be better for patients and allow Ohioans, if they so choose, to receive the COVID vaccine from another qualified health care provider.

As members of this committee and the General Assembly know, Doctors of Podiatric Medicine and Surgery undergo vigorous training and education, including four years of college, four years of medical school and three-year residencies in hospitals. DPMs train and work right alongside many Doctors of Medicine (MDs) and Doctors of Osteopathy (DOs). In addition, our profession and the State of Ohio is extremely fortunate to have one of only nine accredited Colleges of Podiatric Medicine in the country through the Kent State College of Podiatric Medicine.

House Bill 6 will simply add another venue for a qualified health care provider to administer to COVID-19 vaccine at the personal request of the patient, much like this legislation is seeking to do with pharmacists. Our members also work in Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHC's), Mobile Units, hospitals, long-term care facilities and other patient locations in which our physicians interact with patients who are already requesting the vaccine from them. The language in HB 6 will simply allow our members to meet the request of their patients for this important vaccination.

As always, Ohio's podiatric physicians and surgeons appreciate your consideration of our requests to better serve our patients and your constituents on important health care issues. We genuinely appreciate Representative Roemer's desire to allow our members to best serve their patients in these trying times through the inclusion of this crucial language in House Bill 6.

Please feel free to contact me directly or Dan Leite and Courtney Saunders of Capitol Advocates if you should have any questions.