

# State Medical Board of Ohio

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Executive Director

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April 18, 2008

Dear

This letter is in response to your inquiry into the scope of practice for podiatry pertaining to wound care with regards to the lower leg. You state that there is a difference of opinion at your area hospital/wound center as how proximal podiatric wound care privileges extend with regards to the lower leg. Specifically, you ask whether the podiatric scope of practice includes the treatment of leg ulcers.

At the April 9, 2008 meeting, the State Medical Board of Ohio [Medical Board] approved the following response:

The scope of practice of podiatry in Ohio is defined in Section 4731.51, Ohio Revised Code, to include the following:

- ❖ The medical, mechanical, and surgical treatment of ailments of the foot, the muscles and tendons of the leg governing the functions of the foot;
- ❖ The use of such preparations, medicines, and drugs as may be necessary for the treatment of such ailments; and
- ❖ Treatment of local manifestations of systemic diseases as they appear in the hand and foot, but the patient must be concurrently referred to a medical or osteopathic physician for treatment of the systemic disease itself.

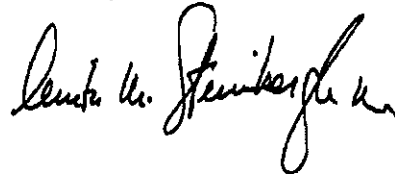
Podiatric medical education and training encompasses the anatomy of the leg and the muscles and tendons of the leg governing the functions of the foot. Podiatric physicians play a significant role in the delivery of medical and surgical services for the treatment of foot and ankle pathologies, especially for diabetic wound care. The required expertise to provide wound care is not dependent upon the site or etiology of the wound as the same knowledge and skills are required whether the site is above or below the ankle and no matter the etiology. For this reason it is clear that the podiatric physician may provide medical and surgical care, as medically appropriate, for the treatment of wounds that are located below the knee. On a related matter, you may find it helpful to know that the Medical Board has determined that while a podiatric physician may use hyperbaric oxygen therapy in wound treatment, a podiatric physician may not supervise the rendering of hyperbaric oxygen therapy. See attached March 16, 2007 letter to Ara E. Kallibjian, D.P.M.

Accordingly, it is within the scope of practice of an Ohio podiatric physician to treat wounds from the knee distally when the procedure is medically appropriate, except that the podiatric physician may not supervise the rendering of hyperbaric oxygen therapy when it is utilized for wound care. As with all medical procedures, the podiatric physician must perform the procedure in conformance with the minimal standard of care of similar practitioners under the same or similar circumstances.

Thank you for your inquiry. The Medical Board welcomes comments and inquiries relevant to the practice of podiatry in Ohio. Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact Sallie Debolt, Executive Staff Attorney, at (614) 644-7021.

*This letter is only a guideline and should not be interpreted as being all inclusive or exclusive. The Board will review all possible violations of the Medical Practices Act and/or rules promulgated there under on a case by case basis.*

Sincerely,



Anita M. Steinbergh, D.O.  
Chair  
Scope of Practice Committee

Enc.: Section 4731.51, Ohio Revised Code  
March 16, 2007 letter to

, D.P.M.

## **4731.51 Defining practice of podiatric medicine and surgery.**

The practice of podiatric medicine and surgery consists of the medical, mechanical, and surgical treatment of ailments of the foot, the muscles and tendons of the leg governing the functions of the foot; and superficial lesions of the hand other than those associated with trauma. Podiatrists are permitted the use of such preparations, medicines, and drugs as may be necessary for the treatment of such ailments. The podiatrist may treat the local manifestations of systemic diseases as they appear in the hand and foot, but the patient shall be concurrently referred to a doctor of medicine or a doctor of osteopathic medicine and surgery for the treatment of the systemic disease itself. General anaesthetics may be used under this section only in colleges of podiatric medicine and surgery approved by the medical board pursuant to section 4731.53 of the Revised Code and in hospitals approved by the joint commission on the accreditation of hospitals, or the American osteopathic association. The use of x-ray or radium for therapeutic purposes is not permitted.

Effective Date: 04-10-2001