

March 1, 2018

The Honorable Shane E. Pendergrass
Chair
Health and Government Operations Committee
Maryland House of Delegates
House Office Building, Room 241
Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Chair Pendergrass:

On behalf of the American Medical Association (AMA) and our physician and medical student members, I write in **opposition to Maryland House Bill (H.B.) 1430**. This bill would inappropriately authorize podiatrists to use the term “physician.” The AMA opposes this bill because it would add to patient confusion about who is a medical doctor – and who is not.

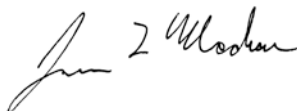
According to AMA survey data, while most patients correctly identify physician specialties as medical doctors, many patients incorrectly identify non-physician health care professionals as medical doctors. In particular, **74 percent of patients incorrectly believe that a podiatrist is a medical doctor**. This is a particularly crucial mistake, as 94 percent of patients also reported that they believe only a medical doctor should be able to amputate the foot.

Allowing H.B. 1430 to proceed would thus not only exacerbate patient confusion, but may also cause false expectations among patients and impair their ability to make informed health care decisions. In addition, most patients would oppose the goals of H.B. 1430. According to AMA survey data, 94 percent of patients believe that only medical doctors should be able to use the term “physician.”

Maryland’s patients deserve clarity and transparency when they seek out health care services. For this reason, we urge you to **oppose H.B. 1430**.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit these comments. If you have any questions, please contact Kristin Schleiter, JD, Senior Legislative Attorney, Advocacy Resource Center, at kristin.schleiter@ama-assn.org or (312) 464-4783.

Sincerely,



James L. Madara, MD

cc: MedChi, The Maryland State Medical Society
American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons
Willarda V. Edwards, MD, MBA