



AMERICAN PUBLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION
For science. For action. For health.

July 14, 2015

The Honorable Chuck Grassley
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Charles Schumer
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Renee Ellmers
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Diana DeGette
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Senators Grassley and Schumer and Representatives Ellmers and DeGette:

On behalf of the American Public Health Association, a diverse community of public health professionals who champion the health of all people and communities, I write in support of the Helping Ensure Life- and Limb-Saving Access to Podiatric Physicians Act (S. 626 and H.R. 1221). This important legislation would ensure access to foot health professionals for millions of Medicaid beneficiaries.

Foot health is an essential component of overall health and quality of life. Having the option to see a podiatric physician for needed foot care will help contribute to better health outcomes. APHA has therefore long supported legislation that would require podiatric care to be included as an essential service. The HELLPP Act would amend the definition of “physician” in Title XIX of the Social Security Act to recognize podiatrists as physicians to ensure that Medicaid patients have access to the most appropriate and best trained providers of foot and ankle care. The legislation would bring the Medicaid program in line with the Medicare program which has recognized doctors of podiatric medicine as physicians for more than 40 years. Additionally, the HELLPP Act includes clarifications to Medicare’s Therapeutic Shoe Program for persons with diabetes, which would improve coordination of care for patients and result in fewer Medicare office visits – a program that helps prevent foot ulcerations and amputations among at-risk patients with diabetes with the use of therapeutic shoes.

Thank you for your commitment to improving patient access to quality foot and ankle care.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Georges C. Benjamin". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped "G" and "B".

Georges C. Benjamin, MD
Executive Director