



Podiatric Medicine: Expertise in Foot and Ankle Care

By: Senator Juan Hinojosa SB. No. 1373
By: Representative Janie Lopez HB. No. 3435

Doctors of Podiatric Medicine (DPM) are highly skilled physicians and surgeons specializing in diagnosing, treating, and preventing conditions affecting the foot, ankle, and lower leg. The podiatric foot and ankle surgeon has advanced education, rigorous clinical training, and hands-on experience, DPMs deliver comprehensive care that includes both surgical and non-surgical options to address a wide range of foot and ankle disorders.

Who is TPMA?

The Texas Podiatric Medical Association (TPMA) is a non-profit professional association representing more than 640 licensed podiatric physicians in Texas. TPMA's mission is to unify and empower podiatric physicians to deliver excellence in foot and ankle care for all Texans.

What is the problem?

Podiatric foot and ankle surgeons play a vital role in providing comprehensive foot and ankle care across Texas, serving both urban and rural communities. As integral members of hospital medical teams, DPMs perform advanced surgical procedures in hospitals and licensed ambulatory surgical centers. Medical specialists in primary care, endocrinology, rheumatology, geriatrics, vascular surgery, plastic surgery, and orthopedic surgery frequently refer patients to DPMs for expert evaluation and specialized treatment, including surgical intervention.

Despite the critical need for quality foot and ankle care in underserved areas of Texas, the state's physician shortage further exacerbates limited access to care. A significant barrier arises from certain hospitals—primarily in urban regions—where privileges are unfairly denied or restricted for podiatric foot and ankle surgeons. This is often the result of an inconsistent and biased credentialing process that is not applied equitably to all medical staff members. As a consequence, patients face unnecessary delays and obstacles in accessing the specialized care they need.

How can you help?

Protect Access to Podiatric Care

Current Texas law provides that *“a hospital's bylaw requirements for staff privileges may require a physician, podiatrist, or dentist to document the person's current clinical competency and professional training and experience in the medical procedures for which privileges are requested.”*

In 2025, TPMA will ask the Texas Legislature to amend this provision to clarify that “the decision to grant or deny a privilege, or to renew an existing privilege, must be an objective process. The hospital's privilege granting or denial criteria must be consistently applied for each requesting member of the medical staff.”

Preserve Texas' Investment in Podiatry

Texas is facing an increasing demand for podiatric physicians due to the rising prevalence of age-related conditions, diabetes, obesity, and their associated complications. In response, the 2021 Legislature allocated state funding to establish the first School of Podiatric Medicine at the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley. Starting in 2026, the first cohort of Texas-trained Doctors of Podiatric Medicine will begin their residency programs. It is essential to ensure these physicians remain in Texas, where they can practice to the full extent of their training, experience, and licensure. Protecting equitable access to hospital privileges will not only support these new practitioners but also help retain a strong and sustainable podiatric workforce in the state.