


Alabama State Board of Podiatry

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MEMORANDUM

TO: Active Alabama DPMs and Potential Applicants

FROM: Keith E. Warren, *Executive Director* 

DATE: October 1, 2023

RE: New State Scope of Practice to include the Ankle

On May 3, 2023, Governor Kay Ivey signed Senate Bill 28 into law, expanding the scope of practice for Podiatry to include the ankle. The Board would like to extend its gratitude to the Alabama Podiatric Medical Association for its continued efforts to extend the scope of practice in the State. The Board hopes that the new law will encourage potential podiatrists to consider becoming licensed in Alabama, so its citizens will have more resources in obtaining Podiatric medical care, especially in rural areas.

Currently, all podiatrists can treat the ankle up to the distal one third of the leg. This is approximately the myotendinous junction of the Achilles tendon. In determining the limits of your license, it would depend on the level of your residency training (not the type of board certification).

The two (2) different levels of training identified in Podiatry's scope of practice are those with the following:

1. Thirty-six (36) or more months of residency training.
2. Those with less than thirty-six (36) months.

Please note: Thirty-six (36) months' residency does not have to be obtained at a single institution. For DPMs, who completed training prior to 2013, he/she may have done an RPR or PPMR with a PSR 24, which qualifies as meeting the 36 months of training. Some DPMs may have completed multiple twelve- (12) month programs at different institutions.

If the total training is thirty-six (36) months, a podiatrist is able to perform osseous ankle surgery (ankle fractures, osteotomies, osteochondral lesions, etc.). The only new procedure **prohibited** by the practice act is any amputation above the Chopart joint or

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total ankle arthroplasty or the administration of any anesthetic other than local. With thirty-six (36) months or more of training, a podiatrist is permitted to remove a failed total ankle implant and convert to arthrodesis, **but are prohibited**, currently, to perform total ankle arthroplasty.

If a podiatrist has less than 36 months of residency training, he/she is still able to perform non-osseous procedures in the ankle up to the distal one third of the leg. For example, it is within the podiatrist's scope of practice to treat soft tissue pathology in the distal 1/3 of the leg including venous leg ulcers, to perform nerve biopsies, to perform skin biopsies on suspicious lesions, to perform tendon repairs, including the Achilles tendon, and to even perform Achilles tendon lengthening. The only restriction is on the surgical treatment of osseous ailments of the ankle.

Most osseous procedures are performed in an ambulatory surgery center or hospital setting. Therefore, the licensee will need to reach out to the surgery center or hospital's credentialing department about having the privileges for podiatry expanded to include the ankle. Please be aware that this is a new process for the departments as well and we ask that the licensed podiatrist provide them with the credentials that it may request to assist in obtaining the proper hospital privileges. A credentialing department's main goal is to ensure that podiatrists are properly trained and qualified to provide services as requested.

Please note the State Board is not part of the credentialing process. Individuals who wish to apply for a license in Alabama will now be required to provide proper evidence of training with the ankle, but the Board understands that such evidence would generally be provided by providing evidence of completion of residency in the normal course.

Please be aware that the Alabama Podiatric Medical Association is working diligently with insurance providers to have new services added for coding.

Additional resources are available from the Alabama Podiatric Medical Association, www.apma.org and the American College of Foot and Ankle Surgeons, <https://www.acfas.org/>.

If you have any licensing questions, please reach out to the Board at 334-420-7237 or hope@alstateboard.com.

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