

RESOLUTION 37

Resolution to Prevent Discrimination Against Doctors of Podiatric Medicine

Submitted by Office and Professional Employees International Union
Referred to the Legislation and Policy Committee

WHEREAS, Office and Professional Employees International Union (OPEIU) represents over a third of the licensed Doctors of Podiatric Medicine (DPM) who practice medicine in the United States; and

WHEREAS, Doctors of Podiatric Medicine are specialists who medically and surgically treat conditions of the foot and ankle and manifestations of systemic diseases in the foot and ankle; and

WHEREAS, Doctors of Podiatric Medicine are defined as “physicians” along with Medical Doctors (MDs) and Doctors of Osteopathy (DOs) in Title XVIII of the Social Security Act governing Medicare, but Doctors of Podiatric Medicine are not similarly defined as “physicians” in Title XIX of the Social Security Act governing Medicaid; and

WHEREAS, failure to recognize Doctors of Podiatric Medicine as “physicians” in Title XIX allows states to prevent podiatrists from treating patients under Medicaid, thereby causing unnecessary interruption of ongoing care provided by podiatrists and resulting in potential harm and injury to patients; and

WHEREAS, several states, including California and Michigan, have dropped access to Doctors of Podiatric Medicine for Medicaid beneficiaries this year; and

WHEREAS, the transfer of those patients from Doctors of Podiatric Medicine to other medical providers potentially increases the cost of treatment and decreases a patient’s access to critically needed medical or surgical care; and

WHEREAS, the transfer of patients to other medical providers constitutes discrimination, in that provision of the medical services under Medicaid is not eliminated, but instead the services are provided by other, often less qualified, providers; and

WHEREAS, this discrimination eliminates the sole unionized providers of these medical services from a government-created, supported and financed national medical program servicing the underprivileged populations of the United States; and

WHEREAS, this elimination and de facto discrimination prevents Medicaid patients, many of whom are victims of diabetes, from gaining access to Doctors of Podiatric Medicine who are union members; and

WHEREAS, this discrimination can be abolished by the Congress of the United States through the health reform legislation that is currently being created and debated;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the AFL-CIO and its member unions support the efforts of Doctors of Podiatric Medicine to be defined as physicians in Title XIX of the Social Security Act.