



STATE OF CALIFORNIA  
BOARD OF  
**PODIATRIC  
MEDICINE**



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# Message from the Board President



As President of the Board of Podiatric Medicine (Board), it is my pleasure to introduce the 2015–2018 Strategic Plan.

The strategic planning process was truly a collaborative effort on the part of Board members, Board staff, licensees, and consumers. I am grateful to everyone who committed to the strategic planning process by providing valuable input, remaining engaged, and staying the course to create a renewed mission, vision, and values for the Board that will guide the Board’s work over the next four years.

The Board will focus on the following objectives:

- Protecting consumers by preventing violations and effectively enforcing laws, codes, and standards when violations occur.
- Promoting licensing of those practicing podiatric medicine by maintaining examination standards.
- Enhancing legislation, regulations, policies, and procedures to meet the challenges of the evolving industry, while protecting consumers.
- Continuing effective leadership to proficiently use its resources and personnel to meet its objectives, in an effort to achieve regulatory efficiency, excellent customer service, and consumer protection.
- Enhancing organizational relationships and partnerships while striving to improve the quality of customer service, and supporting collaboration and cooperation between stakeholders.

While endeavoring to meet the aforementioned objectives, the Board will uphold the mission of the organization, which is “to protect and educate consumers of California through licensing, enforcement, and regulation of Doctors of Podiatric Medicine.” As a consumer protection program, I look forward to continuing our efforts in making sure that all California-licensed podiatric physicians will provide safe and competent foot and ankle care.

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# Message from the Board President *(continued)*

The Board is committed to operating in an environment that is open as well as transparent while meeting its mandates. This plan will provide the opportunity for both consumers and licensees to provide input on issues related to podiatric medicine.

We welcome input from all of our stakeholders and hope you will join in our efforts to work toward achieving the goals and objectives outlined in this strategic plan.

**Kristina M. Dixon, MBA**  
**Board President**



# About the Board

The Board of Podiatric Medicine (Board)—functioning semi-autonomously as one of 36 regulatory entities under the guidance of the Department of Consumer Affairs (DCA)—has historical roots that can be traced back to as early as 1957 when State licensure of Doctors of Podiatric Medicine (DPMs) was separately handled by a legislatively created podiatric examining committee under the auspices of the California Board of Medical Examiners. To this day, the Board continues to independently carry out its primary mission of public protection through its close statutory association with the Medical Board of California.

Headed by a professional majority, the Board is composed of seven members serving four-year terms with no more than a maximum of two consecutive terms permitted. The Governor appoints four professional members and one public member, while the Senate Rules Committee and the Assembly Speaker each appoint one of the two remaining public members of the body. To avoid conflicts of interest during their service to the people of the State, no member of the Board may own or acquire any interest in an institution engaged in podiatric medical instruction.

The Board's important mission for advancing public protection is carried out by its Executive Officer who is appointed by the Board and serves at its pleasure. Through faithful execution of the laws and regulations governing the practice of podiatric medicine, the Board's Executive Officer diligently carries out the Board's mission and directives in the administration, licensing, and enforcement of a licentiate base consisting of approximately 2,000 DPMs.

Existing solely to serve the public, the Board's mission is accomplished without reliance on taxpayer monies from the State's General Fund. Through careful fiscal and budgetary discipline, the Board operates well within funding levels generated exclusively from fees set by State statute and collected from licensees and applicants.

# How the Board Accomplishes its Mission

The California Board of Podiatric Medicine (Board) strives to provide effective licensing and enforcement of podiatric physicians as a means to protect the public from any unfit and incompetent doctors practicing in this specialty field.

Through the years, these efforts have been greatly assisted by a number of unique initiatives advanced and adopted by the Board that have sought not simply to maintain entry-level standards for podiatric physicians, but also to elevate professional competency standards, reduce medical error, and prevent patient harm.

The Board accomplishes these mission objectives by:

- Requiring candidates for licensure to possess a Certificate of Podiatric Medical Education, representing a minimum of 4,000 hours of academic instruction from a Board-approved school.
- Requiring applicants to pass Parts I, II, and III of the national board exam for assessing a candidate's knowledge, competency, and skills.
- Requiring applicants to complete two years of graduate medical education residency for licensure as a podiatric physician rather than just merely one year as is standard for other physicians.
- Annual review of California-based podiatric graduate medical education residency programs.
- Requiring licensed Doctors of Podiatric Medicine (DPMs) to complete 50 hours of approved continuing medical education every two years.
- Requiring DPMs to demonstrate compliance with Board-mandated continuing competency requirements; the only doctor-licensing board in the country to implement such a program over and above continuing education alone.

# Whom the Board Regulates

The California Board of Podiatric Medicine regulates licensed Doctors of Podiatric Medicine (DPMs).

DPMs are highly specialized independent medical practitioners with unmatched training and education in diagnosing and treating podiatric conditions affecting the lower extremity comprised of the foot, ankle, and related structures governing their function. With intense expert knowledge and expertise in the care of the lower extremity, some podiatric physicians specialize in conservative care while others practice mostly as surgeons. DPMs practice in areas as varied as sports medicine, biomechanics, or the care and management of diabetic foot, among others. Whether practicing as generalists or specialists, this highly elite cadre of physicians is unsurpassed in its knowledge and understanding of the human foot and ankle.

Podiatric physicians are in high demand to assist other physicians and surgeons in performing nonpodiatric surgeries of any kind as codified in the State Medical Practice Act since 2004. This high demand is due to DPMs' close doctor-patient relationships, specialized skills, and training, while embracing lifelong learning and prevention of patient harm.

DPM State licensure requires:

- 1) Graduation from a Board-approved podiatric medical school that not only meets prescribed medical curriculum guidelines that closely parallel general medical schools but that also includes added emphasis on biomechanics and conditions affecting the lower extremity;
- 2) Completion of two years of postgraduate medical and surgical training as opposed to merely one year as required by other physician licensing boards; and

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## Whom the Board Regulates *(continued)*

- 3) Satisfaction of not only 50 units of biennial continuing education requirements but also completion of peer-reviewed continuing competency requirements.

No other licensed medical professional in the State of California receives more intensive foot and ankle training or meets higher licensure and renewal requirements than licensed California DPMs.



# 2011–2014 Accomplishments

The California Board of Podiatric Medicine (Board) has accomplished the following since the adoption of the 2011–2014 Strategic Plan:

- 1) Successful participation and implementation in 2013 of Release 1 of the Department of Consumer Affairs' (DCA's) BreEZe online database system for the Board's licensing and enforcement functions. The Board was one of the first consumer-regulatory boards to successfully adopt and migrate to the new BreEZe system, which has offered both consumers and licensees improved data quality, technology, and customer service, including enhancements to the Board's licensing and enforcement efficiency.
- 2) Because the development of podiatric medicine and science continues moving forward, the Board successfully worked with stakeholders to raise the four-year cap on postgraduate medical education for Doctors of Podiatric Medicine (DPMs) to eight years in order to increase the health, safety, and welfare of consumers by enabling podiatric physicians and surgeons to move forward educationally in lockstep with advancements of the field.
- 3) In an effort to enhance the Board's responsibility and effectiveness for its statutory function as a jury in deliberation of licensee disciplinary matters, the Board successfully achieved amendments to section 2335 of the California Business and Professions Code to permit one vote of the Board—rather than two—to defer a final disciplinary decision until consideration and discussion by the full body.
- 4) Guided both by the statutory scope of practice and the standards of professionalism by which DPMs are required to adhere, the Board successfully worked to amend section 2472 of the California Business and Professions Code, removing confusing and obsolete language prohibiting podiatric physicians and surgeons from performing admitting history and physical (H&P) examinations. As a result, California law fully and unquestionably recognizes a podiatric physician's unrestricted authority to independently perform full-body H&P examinations for any patient in any setting.

# MISSION

To protect and educate consumers of California through licensing, enforcement, and regulation of Doctors of Podiatric Medicine.

# VISION

All California-licensed podiatric physicians will provide safe and competent foot and ankle care.

# VALUES

- Consumer Protection
- Effectiveness
- Fairness
- Transparency
- Professionalism
- Service

# Strategic Goal Areas

- **Enforcement:** The Board of Podiatric Medicine (Board) protects consumers by preventing violations and effectively enforcing laws, codes, and standards when violations occur.
- **Licensing:** The Board promotes licensing of those practicing podiatric medicine by establishing examination standards. This includes continuing education, initial applications, and renewals.
- **Legislation/Regulations:** The Board enhances legislation, regulations, policies, and procedures to meet the challenges of the evolving industry, while protecting consumers.
- **Administration:** Through effective leadership, the Board efficiently utilizes its resources and personnel to meet its objectives. It achieves regulatory efficiency, excellent customer service, and consumer protection.
- **Organizational Relationships:** The Board enhances organizational relationships and partnerships and strives to improve the quality of customer service. It supports collaboration and cooperation between stakeholders.



# Enforcement Objectives

1. Reduce investigation cycle times in order to achieve performance measures for consumer protection set by the Department of Consumer Affairs.
2. Educate licensees about infractions and penalties concerning continuing education and compliance in order to be proactive in reducing future infractions.
3. Enhance reporting to the Board of Podiatric Medicine of mission-critical functions relative to enforcement.
4. Improve public awareness that Doctors of Podiatric Medicine are held to the same standard as medical doctors and doctors of osteopathy.
5. Streamline internal enforcement processes to improve workflow and quality.



# Licensing Objectives

1. Offer online renewal in order to facilitate efficiency and convenience.
2. Determine if the Board of Podiatric Medicine's (Board's) schedule of service fees is sustainable and research opportunities to cover operating costs required to implement Board mandates.
3. Investigate ways to increase the Doctors of Podiatric Medicine workforce to meet increasing public demand while maintaining California standards.
4. Evaluate the effectiveness of the current auditing regulation to meet the needs and standards of the profession.



# Legislation/Regulations Objectives

1. Facilitate and enhance awareness of legislation affecting the practice of podiatric medicine to achieve a proactive posture in addressing issues that protect consumers.
2. Assess methods to leverage contacts at the State Capitol, so that legislation benefits consumers and Board of Podiatric Medicine (Board) stakeholders.
3. Pursue elimination of current limitations on education to expunge outdated regulation that limits postgraduate medical education caps.
4. Assess the role of the Board in achieving parity licensing between medical doctors/doctors of osteopathy in conjunction with the California Podiatric Medical Association's Physician and Surgeon Task Force.
5. Increase stakeholder participation at Board meetings to improve communication between stakeholders and the Board concerning legislative priorities.



# Administration Objectives

1. Document clear guidelines for Board of Podiatric Medicine (Board) governance and operational continuity.
2. Assess and streamline operational workflow to increase efficiencies.
3. Identify and implement opportunities for Board training/professional development to enhance oversight effectiveness.



# Organizational Relationships Objectives

1. Increase outreach to Doctors of Podiatric Medicine (DPMs) and stakeholders to strengthen cooperation, answer questions, and provide transparency.
2. Increase outreach to consumers to strengthen consumer confidence in the effectiveness of the Board of Podiatric Medicine (Board), answer questions, and provide transparency.
3. Increase the Board's and DPM's presence at other Department of Consumer Affairs professional board meetings and events to establish the Board's position with stakeholders, and mitigate organizational, administrative, and/or governmental biases in an effort to further the Board's mission.



# Strategic Planning Process

To understand the environment in which the Board of Podiatric Medicine (Board) operates and identify factors that could impact the Board's success, the California Department of Consumer Affairs' SOLID unit conducted a scan of the internal and external environments by collecting information through the following methods:

- Interviews conducted with all seven members of the Board completed during the month of October 2014 to assess the strengths, challenges, opportunities, and threats the Board is currently facing or will face in the upcoming years.
- Interviews conducted with Board staff, including the Executive Officer, completed in the month of October 2014 to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the Board from an internal perspective. All Board staff participated.
- An online survey sent to 247 Board stakeholders in October 2014 to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the Board from an external perspective. More than 46 stakeholders completed the survey.

The most significant themes and trends identified from the environmental scan were discussed by the Board during a strategic planning session facilitated by SOLID on December 19, 2014. This information guided the Board in the revision of its mission, vision, and values, while directing the strategic goals and objectives outlined in this 2015–2018 Strategic Plan.



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This strategic plan is based on stakeholder information and discussions facilitated by SOLID for the Board of Podiatric Medicine (Board) in October through December 2014. Subsequent amendments may have been made after Board adoption of this plan.