

## Access to Diabetic Shoes

**Action Requested: Cosponsor H.R. 1616/S.1805, the *Promoting Access to Diabetic Shoes Act*. This bipartisan legislation would authorize PAs to certify a Medicare patient's need for diabetic shoes.**

PAs diagnose and treat illnesses, manage complex conditions, prescribe medications in all 50 states, and assist in surgery – but the current statute governing Medicare does not authorize PAs to complete the simple task of ordering diabetic shoes. With the aging U.S. population and increasing prevalence of diabetes, that a PA can manage a patient's diabetes and other complex chronic conditions but is not authorized to order diabetic shoes is an outdated policy not consistent with the way medicine is practiced today. **The Promoting Access to Diabetic Shoes Act will modernize current Medicare policy and authorize PAs to certify a patient's need for diabetic shoes.**

**Background:** Currently, PAs and nurse practitioners (NPs) can provide and manage the complex care needed to treat their diabetic Medicare patients. However, they must send their diabetic Medicare patients who need therapeutic shoes to a physician to certify need. Under current law, the certifying physician must then be the provider treating the patient's diabetic condition going forward. This disrupts the care and chronic disease management of a patient who may have been under the care of a PA for years. Delays in treatment caused by this burdensome statute jeopardize the health of patients and cause the Medicare program to incur additional costs by requiring the participation of an additional provider and unnecessary additional in-person visits to healthcare facilities.

A study published in the American Journal of Medicine in 2018 found that PAs perform as well as physicians at diagnosis and management of diabetes during four years of follow-up care. PAs are federally recognized primary care providers and frequently manage care for diabetics who may have multiple comorbidities. PAs can already certify the need for diabetic shoes for their patients outside of the Medicare program. **This is an example of Medicare statute not making common sense or keeping up with how medicine is practiced today.**

Modernizing Medicare to authorize PAs to certify a patient's need for diabetic shoes will improve the quality of care and access for diabetic patients, addressing the needs of our aging population and the physician shortage that is most acute in rural and medically underserved communities.

**AAPA Legislative Recommendation:** AAPA recommends Congress advance the Promoting Access to Diabetic Shoes Act (H.R. 1616/S.1805), which has been introduced by Representatives Darin LaHood (R-IL) and Nanette Barragan (D-CA) in the House, and Senators Susan Collins (R-ME) and Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH) in the Senate.

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