

LOUISIANA STATE BOARD OF MEDICAL EXAMINERS

630 Camp Street, New Orleans, LA 70130
Mailing Address: Post Office Box 30250, New Orleans, LA 70190-0250
www.lsbme.la.gov



Telephone: (504) 568-6820
FAX: (504) 568-8893
Writer's Direct Dial:

April 19, 2016

(504) _____

RE: Advisory Opinion —
Podiatry; Scope of Practice

Dear :

During its April 2016 meeting the Louisiana State Board of Medical Examiners (the “Board”) considered your request for guidance as to “[W]hether a podiatrist with a basic DMP [Doctor of Podiatric Medicine] license is able to do a gastrocnemius resection when doing an Achilles tendon repair procedure.”¹ With the benefit of input from its Podiatry Advisory Committee, the Board asked that I acknowledge your inquiry and advise you that the scope of practice of a podiatrist with a basic DMP license does not include the performance of a gastrocnemius resection.

The Louisiana Podiatry Practice Act, La. Rev. Stat. §§37:611-628 (the “Act), which the Board administers and regulates, defines the scope of practice of *podiatry* in this state as:

[T]hat profession of the health sciences which deals with the prevention, examination, diagnosis, medical, surgical, and adjuvant treatment of *the human foot*. The “foot” is defined as that part of the human anatomy which consists of the tarsal bones, metatarsal bones, phalanges, and all supportive and/or connective tissue immediately adjacent thereto not to extend past the proximal end of the talus

Podiatry may also include treatment of the ankle, muscles, or tendons of the lower leg governing the functions of the foot and ankle by a podiatrist who has completed advanced training determined to be sufficient by the board at a program accredited by a nationally recognized accrediting association acceptable by the board²

Every podiatrist licensed by the Board may engage in the treatment of the foot.³ However, as made clear by the Act, the ability of a podiatrist to engage in practice beyond the foot is dependent upon advanced education and training deemed sufficient by the

¹Email, to La. St. Bd. Med. Exam. (Apr. 7, 2016).

²La. Rev. Stat. §37:611(3)(a)(i), (ii).

³La. Rev. Stat. §37:611(3)(a)(i); See also the Board’s Podiatry Rules, LAC 46:XLV.1304B.

Board. The scope of and corresponding level of education and training required to engage in such practice are set forth in the Act and the Board's rules.⁴

The gastrocnemius muscle is located on the posterior portion of the lower leg. The surgical treatment of the muscles or tendons of the lower leg that govern the functions of the foot and ankle is reserved to only to podiatrists licensed by the Board for the surgical treatment of the ankle.⁵ For these reasons, the scope of practice of a podiatrist with a basic DMP license does not include a gastrocnemius resection.

We trust that we have properly understood your inquiry and that the foregoing is responsive. If not, please let us know.

Sincerely yours,

By: 

Eric D. Torres
Executive Director

⁴See the Board's Podiatry Rules, LAC 46:XLV.1304-1307.

⁵The Board's rules for surgical treatment of the ankle provide: 'The scope of practice for surgical treatment of the ankle shall be limited to the following: 1. the scope of practice as described in this Section for the conservative treatment of the ankle; and 2. surgical treatment of the ankle and muscles or tendons of the lower leg governing the functions of the foot and ankle, limited to procedures listed by the Council on Podiatric Medical Education (CPME) and the American Board of Podiatric Surgery (ABPS) as found in the CPME 320 and ABPS 220 documents (and their successors) as being required for graduate podiatric medical education and board certification at the time that an applicant's application for initial licensure or annual renewal is filed with the board.' LAC 46:XLV.1307E.