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COMMITTEE:
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DISTRICT OFFICE:
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HUTCHINSON, KANSAS 67501

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

March 15, 1966

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X

Honorable John W. Byrnes
House Ways and Means Committee
Room 1102 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D. C.

70-9
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misc.
(Hargreaves)

Dear Mr. Byrnes:

This has reference to the interest of Dr. G. Warren Hargreaves, Chairman of the Kansas Veterans' Commission, in having the services of podiatrists included in the Medicare Program.

I will greatly appreciate your views on the possibility of amending the Medicare Act at the present session of Congress to make the inclusion of podiatry services eligible for payment.

Sincerely yours,

BOB DOLE
Member of Congress

BD:bl

Dr. G. Warren Hargreaves wants us to write to the Ways and Means Committee and we'll write a letter to John Byrnes, if anyone, but first I want to check with the Minority Staff member on the Ways and Means Committee and tell them that we have a letter of request to write each Republican ~~and~~ about including service of podiatrists in the Medicare Program. See if there is anything being considered on this now in the Committee and if not, are there any bills ^{none} pending. Try to find out some information so I'll know what to write Mr. Byrnes so that I can satisfy the request of Dr. Hargreaves.

Bob

Bob

I have contacted Mr. Qualley, minority clerk of the Committee who indicated that as far as she knows, no Republican on the committee has indicated any interest in including podiatrists, in fact they

seemed pretty well agreed that they should not be included any more than dentists. He said he feels certain it would be the position of the minority members that Medicare is enough of a mess as it is and that if any amendment would be in order it would be one to provide for the inclusion of prescription drugs.

Dr. Hargreaves.

Have each Kansan Congressman write to each Republic member
of the Ways and Means Committee of the House of Representatives
endorsing the inclusion of the services of podiatrists in the
Medicare Program. Send a copy of the letter to me personally.

Dr. G. Warren Hargreaves
Kansas Veterans' Commission

Junction City

AMERICAN PODIATRY ASSOCIATION

3301 SIXTEENTH STREET, NORTHWEST
WASHINGTON 10, D. C.

November 5, 1965

MEDICARE AND PODIATRISTS

Current Status

The Medicare Act is the only nation-wide health insurance plan for people over 65 which does not specifically provide the services of podiatrists for covered benefits.

President Johnson considers the exclusion of podiatrists a defect in the program. The prepared remarks issued by the President when the Bill was signed in Independence, Missouri, on July 30 included the following: "...the benefits under the law are as varied and broad as modern medicine itself...and if it has a few defects--such as the method of payment of certain specialists, or the exclusion of podiatrists--those, I am confident, can be quickly remedied..."

The Recommendation

Amend Public Law 89-97 to assure older people that the needed services of podiatrists will be available when the program becomes effective July 1, 1966.

What Would This Change Cost?

There will be no increased cost because the schedule of services available will not be changed. Claims for services of podiatrists, as with other health benefits plans, would only be submitted for those services covered by the contracts. Patients should not be penalized for selecting a podiatrist to provide a covered service.

Is the Care of the Foot Included?

Yes. The treatment of injuries, deformities and some other conditions of the foot are covered services. In other words, the plan includes some services normally provided by the podiatrist but excludes the use of the podiatrist for these covered services.

What is One of the Problems Older Persons Will Encounter When They Become Eligible for Medicare Benefits?

Health insurance carriers have stated that people who have subscribed to health benefits plans before they become 65 will find that the services of podiatrists for covered benefits will no longer be available when they become enrolled in the supplemental health benefits plan for Medicare beneficiaries.

What is the Incidence of Foot Problems of Those Over 65?

Older people have three times the incidence of foot problems as the general population. Forty percent of the patients treated by podiatrists are over 65.

What are Podiatrists Doing to Decrease the Cost of the Medicare Program?

Keeping the older person ambulatory is not only beneficial both physically and mentally, but has definite economic advantages. Foot disability contributes to accidents and encourages inactivity. The cost of caring for ambulatory patients is one-third that of bed-ridden patients. Seventy-three percent of all podiatrists have institutional affiliations such as hospitals, clinics, nursing homes and homes for the aged.

In Philadelphia, a three-year Public Health Service-supported podiatric health educational, screening and treatment program called "Keep Them Walking" attracted over 1500 older persons. Foot conditions averaged 7.8 per patient. None of those under treatment required hospital or bed confinement for a foot infection; no patient lost a foot, limb or part of a foot due to amputation. Also, no patient had an accident while attending the podiatry clinic sessions or limited his activities due to a painful foot.

What Training Does the Podiatrist Receive and Where is He Licensed?

The training program is six years--with two years of pre-podiatry courses followed by a four-year degree conferring course. Podiatry colleges are accredited by the Council on Education of the American Podiatry Association. The Office of Education recognizes the Council on Education as the official accrediting agency for podiatry colleges.

Podiatrists are licensed in every state and the District of Columbia by state examining boards. Laws in each state provide for the medical and surgical care of the foot by doctors of podiatry.

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Are the Services of Podiatrists Recognized for the Federal
Employee Plans?

Yes. Podiatrists are defined as a "physician" and "doctor" by the Government-Wide (Blue Shield and Aetna) health benefits plans for active and retired federal employees.

Also, all the federal employee organization plans recognize the services of podiatrists for covered benefits which their various plans provide.

For additional information, please contact:

Dr. Seward P. Nyman, Executive Director
American Podiatry Association
3301 Sixteenth Street, N.W.
Washington, D. C. 20010

Telephone no. - 667-4587

REP. JOHN W. BYRNES
8TH DISTRICT, WISCONSIN
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20515

COMMITTEE ON
WAYS AND MEANS
JOINT COMMITTEE
ON INTERNAL REVENUE
TAXATION

March 24, 1966

Honorable Bob Dole
243 House of Representatives
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. Dole:

Thank you for writing in regard to covering podiatrists under the medicare program.

The Republican alternative to the medicare plan would have defined podiatrists as a doctor. To the extent foot treatments normally provided by podiatrists were covered, a podiatrists' services would have been treated on the same basis as other doctors. However, in accordance with the prevailing practice in the insurance industry, my bill would have excluded payment for routine care of the feet.

The Administration's plan did not cover podiatrists, and they did not see fit to amend the bill to include them. Although I see no objection to an amendment that would cover treatments by podiatrists when they involve covered services, it is doubtful that the Committee will consider amendments to the program until we have had more experience with its operation.

Sincerely yours,

