



July 27, 2026

The Honourable Doug Ford

Premier of Ontario

The Honourable Sylvia Jones

Deputy Premier and Minister of Health

Re: Improving Access to Chiropody and Podiatry Services in Northern Ontario

Dear Premier Ford and Minister Jones,

On behalf of the **Federation of Northern Ontario Municipalities (FONOM)** and the **Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association (NOMA)**, we are writing to request immediate action to address the longstanding shortage of foot care specialists serving Northern Ontario.

FONOM is the unified voice of Northeastern Ontario, representing 110 municipalities across the region. NOMA represents the municipalities of the Kenora, Rainy River and Thunder Bay districts, advocating on behalf of 37 municipalities across Northwestern Ontario. Together, our organizations represent virtually every municipality across Northern Ontario and the hundreds of thousands of residents who call the North home.

For decades, Northern Ontario has experienced disproportionately high rates of diabetes and diabetes-related complications. Research consistently demonstrates that residents of Northern Ontario experience significantly higher rates of lower limb amputations than those living in Southern Ontario, with diabetes being a leading contributing factor. Studies have shown that up to **85 percent of lower limb amputations are preventable** through timely intervention, specialized foot care, and ongoing clinical management.

Unfortunately, access to qualified chiropodists and podiatrists remains severely limited across much of Northern Ontario. Many communities have no local providers, forcing residents to travel significant distances or simply go without preventative care. The result is avoidable hospitalizations, increased pressure on the health care system, higher long-term health care costs, and, most importantly, poorer health outcomes for Northern Ontarians.

One of the barriers contributing to this shortage is the restriction contained within Ontario's **Chiropody Act, 1991**, which states:

Section 3(2): *"No person shall be added to the class of members called podiatrists after the 31st day of July, 1993."*

This provision has effectively prevented qualified Doctors of Podiatric Medicine (DPMs) from registering as podiatrists in Ontario for more than three decades. During that same period, Ontario has continued to experience shortages of specialized foot care professionals—shortages that are felt most acutely in rural, remote, Indigenous and Northern communities.

We respectfully request that the Province remove Section 3(2) of the **Chiropractic Act** and permit qualified Doctors of Podiatric Medicine to register and practise in Ontario to the full scope of their education and training.

Expanding access to highly qualified podiatrists would strengthen Ontario's health workforce, improve preventative care, reduce avoidable amputations, and support better health outcomes for patients across Northern Ontario.

We recognize that existing OHIP funding arrangements for podiatry services are an important policy consideration. However, we do not believe funding questions should delay the removal of this legislative barrier. The Province could remove Section 3(2) immediately, allowing qualified DPMs to register and begin practising in Ontario, while separately determining the most appropriate long-term funding model. Removing this outdated restriction would immediately expand the potential workforce without requiring immediate changes to physician billing structures.

Northern Ontario deserves equitable access to specialized health care services. Removing unnecessary legislative barriers that prevent qualified health professionals from serving our communities represents a practical, evidence-based step toward improving health outcomes while supporting the sustainability of Ontario's health care system.

We respectfully request the opportunity to discuss this issue further and work collaboratively with the Province on solutions that improve access to specialized foot care throughout Northern Ontario.

Thank you for your consideration of this important matter. We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



Mayor Dave Plourde

President

Federation of Northern Ontario Municipalities (FONOM)



Mayor Rick Dumas

President

Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association (NOMA)