

Steven Sepe

From: Kate Clayton-Jones MS RN CFCN CFCS <kate@footcarebynurses.net>
Sent: Saturday, February 7, 2026 9:43 PM
To: House Health and Human Services Committee
Cc: Rep. Boylan, Jennifer
Subject: Support for H7029

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TO: Chair Donovan and members of the House Human Health Services Committee Email: HouseHealthandHumanServices@rilegislature.gov

Rep Boylan

FROM: Dr Kate Clayton-Jones

RE: Support for H7029

DATE: 2/7/26

Chair Donovan and honorable members of the House Health and Human Services Committee:

My name is Dr. Kate Clayton-Jones and I am a practicing foot care nurse, and business owner in your neighboring state - Massachusetts.

I am writing to urge you to support H7029 (Boylan), which would permit a nurse who has the appropriate knowledge and can demonstrate clinical competency to provide regular home foot care services for routine and maintenance purposes to prevent expensive adverse outcomes such as falls, wounds, pain and amputations that occur when feet are not well taken care of on a regular basis.

Background

For those who cannot reach their feet due to physical issues related to aging, health or mental status, for example dementia/alz regular routine foot care provided in home by a trained professional who can also assess wellbeing and risks (such as risk for falls, risk for neglect, risk for self harm) is a necessity.

Podiatry would have you believe that there is no money in care of feet in the home, they would also have you believe that they ought to be the only people besides a nail salon that can do care of feet. The reality is in every other state, except Rhode Island, care of feet is safely being performed in homes by nurses trained in the care of feet. This is not surgery, this is assessment, care, infection control and education. And if there is an issue a referral to a medical professional including podiatry.

Podiatry can treat feet. They can also do surgery, but their scope is limited to medical issues. Nursing is focused on the health of people and prevention and can also educate patients about preventative measures for example how to tie a shoelace, applying lotions suited for skin care, how to don compression socks, and even how a medication works. In an ideal world Nursing care should come in to support a patients wellbeing and prevent a medical issue- it's more humane and far less expensive.

Given the cost of health care I hope you understand that passing this bill would be a cost savings to the people of Rhode Island.

I stood up and spoke at the last hearing. I also heard testimony from the podiatry group. Overwhelmingly I heard from them that it was not good for their business to do home care or take care of feet that they considered to be lower risk because there wasn't any money in it.

I applaud rep Boylan for putting the wellbeing of her elderly and disabled constituents first. A fall with injury (20k-50k hospital visit) by a person whose nails are 3 inches long (and so cannot walk) may sound unusual, but to the nurses across Canada and the USA who regularly hear stories of people refused services by podiatry because they need their nails trimmed (which Medicare would reimburse podiatry \$15 for, so it makes sense), I promise you the story is all too common.

Ultimately we are all in the same page here - do no harm, prevent human suffering and provide care to those who need it. We also acknowledge professionalism and reimbursement for services rendered. There are not enough podiatrists in the country to provide care for all the older adults in Rhode Island, that is the stark reality of the aging boomers. Rhode Islanders deserve access to safe, professional care in their homes. This type of care is most often performed by trained nurses and caregivers. Many caregivers donut out of last resort because they currently cannot access care. Is backyard foot care what you want for Rhode Island elders?

Passing this bill and allowing nurses to fill this gap is the humane thing to do to promote the health and wellness of the most vulnerable in our state. Residents and their caregivers in RI deserve access to these services. Rhode Island is the only state in the country preventing trained nurses from providing this level of professional care. A nearly identical bill passed in the House unanimously in 2025. Please pass this bill out of committee and to the House floor with a recommendation for passage.

Sincerely,

Kate Clayton-Jones
PhD DNP MBA MSN RN CFCS CFCN
413.218.4418 (m)
413.367.8369 (w)

Kate@FootCarebyNurses.net

www.FootCarebyNurses.net

Our mission is prevention. Our passion is caring. We do our work because we believe that all people deserve great, evidence based, foot care.