



Controlling Foot Care Benefit Costs in Canada: An Open Letter to Insurers and other Third Party Payers

The Pedorthic Association of Canada (PAC) shares your concerns regarding the escalating use of this benefit, the increased costs incurred by plan sponsors and the inconsistent quality of foot care that your clients receive. It is our perspective that the increasing use of footcare benefits by subscribers has been strongly influenced by two major factors:

- an influx of non certified footcare providers who see financial benefit in providing foot care products; and,
- the lack of an independent gatekeeper to ensure the medical necessity of care, complicated by the fact that some prescribers are also service providers.

PAC recognizes the need to ensure quality of care, optimal standards and evaluation of practice and cost control. It is our position that:

- treatment should be reimbursed only if the care is provided by a recognized foot care specialist
- separation of the provider / prescriber relationship is critical in eliminating conflict of interest
- primary care and specialist physicians, trained in full body diseases, should be the prescribing/referring agents as they are best able to:
 - provide appropriate differential diagnoses
 - rule out global pathologies
 - determine if pharmacological, diagnostic or rehabilitative recommendations are necessary
 - determine whether orthotics are a reasonable medical expense based on the clinical evidence and an holistic consideration of the clinical findings
- pedorthists effectively assist physicians, through physical and biomechanical evaluation, to confirm the need for orthotics and determine the amount and type of correction and/or accommodation required

About the Pedorthic Profession

The practice and profession of pedorthics has matured in Canada over the last ten years, under the guidance of the Pedorthic Association of Canada. Certified Pedorthists (Canada) are trained and tested in the assessment, manufacture and dispensing of foot orthoses, as well as fitting and modifying footwear. The College of Pedorthics of Canada (the College) is the certifying and regulatory body for the profession and has established stringent standards of practice for certified members. Clinicians undergo rigorous written and practical testing processes and are required to comply with the pedorthic code of ethics. Complaint mechanisms are readily available to consumers and stakeholders (please refer to www.cpedcs.ca for more information).

Pedorthists are not physicians and are not trained in full spectrum global diagnosis. We do not prescribe treatment. Our code of ethics also prohibits Certified Pedorthists from establishing business partnerships with any referral source, such as a physician.

The Certified Pedorthic Clinicians play a critical role in supporting the health and wellbeing of Canadians. Accountability, standards of practice, and monitoring of ethical practices through the College along with education and training through our Association, (PAC) ensure high standards of pedorthic practice. We take great pride in our role in patient care in Canada and we would welcome any opportunity to discuss these issues further with your organization.