



## Truth in Advertising by Foot and Ankle Surgeons

*Approved by the Board of Directors November 2025*

Members of ACFAS must present their knowledge, skills and abilities in a truthful and professional manner as they also represent the profession. Foot and ankle surgeons are valued members of the healthcare team and are obligated to put their patients' needs first to help them make informed decisions regarding their healthcare needs.

ACFAS members subscribe to the highest ethical, professional and legal standards, which is paramount when members advertise or publicly discuss their healthcare services. Patients look to foot and ankle surgeons to be honest stewards who provide skillful and competent care. ACFAS members will not misrepresent their abilities or provide false information to healthcare consumers.

All healthcare providers are subject to the U.S. Federal Trade Commission regulations on advertising. Three main areas constitute false advertising: failure to disclose, flawed and insignificant research, and product disparagement. ACFAS requests its members comply with these federal regulations as well as all applicable state and local laws. Members should be aware that false statements/advertisement, including information appearing on behalf of colleagues, can be demonstrated through a variety of mediums, such as (but not limited to), books, periodicals, social media outlets, websites, newspapers, television, radio, marketing materials, magazines, videos, public presentations, etc.

Currently, ACFAS members may choose to enhance their training after residency in the form of a fellowship. Fellowships with ACFAS Status provide training consisting of at least 12 months of specialized training. This allows physicians to focus on acquiring further in-depth knowledge and skills, through a combination of surgery, clinical work, research, and mentorship. Foot and ankle surgeons who are fellowship trained should only advertise themselves as such when they have completed formal, specialized post-residency training for 12 months or greater.

Foot and ankle surgeons who are members of ACFAS need to be vigilant to the adherence of standards that achieve truth in advertising and hold all members of the healthcare staff to the same standards.

\*An additional recommended resource: *ABFAS Advertising Policies* <sup>1</sup>

1. <https://www.abfas.org/become-board-certified/advertising-policies/abfas-advertising-guidelines>

*The American College of Foot and Ankle Surgeons is a professional society of over 8,100 foot and ankle surgeons. Founded in 1942, the College's mission is to advance excellence in foot and ankle surgery to achieve superior patient outcomes.*