

ACFAS 2021 Virtual Fellowship Fair: Get to Know the Fellow Questionnaire



American College of
Foot and Ankle Surgeons®

Fellow Name: Henry D. Spingola III DPM AACFAS

Fellowship Program: NOMS Ankle & Foot Care Centers Reconstructive Rearfoot and Ankle Surgical Fellowship

City/State: Youngstown, OH

Program Director: Dr. Lawrence DiDomenico DPM FACFAS

How many Attendings do you work with regularly? 2-3 routinely and there are approximately 15 doctors in the practice that the fellow has access and exposure with.

Describe the diversity of your cases so far in fellowship. (For example, has your experience included TAR? Is there an emphasis on: Pediatrics? Sports Medicine? Deformity correction? Complex reconstruction? What percentage of your cases are trauma? Rearfoot/ankle? Forefoot? Please be as descriptive as you'd like: A very diverse surgical case volume. A surgical week can consist of a variety of cases including flatfoot correction, incision and drainage, splits thickness skin graft application, total ankle replacement, ankle ORIF, and/or charcot reconstruction. The volume and types of pathology vary from week to week, but are consistent in their diversity.

How many days per week do you typically spend in the OR? In clinic? Do you have your own "fellow" clinic? Typically we are in the office 3 days per week. Tuesday and Thursday are full clinic days. Wednesday and Saturdays are half-day clinics. We are in the operating room the remainder of the week approximately 2.5 days. This does not include add-on evening or weekend cases.

How many surgical cases do you typically scrub per month? 30-40

What conferences have you attended/are you encouraged to attend? We are encouraged to attend any conferences and/or fellows courses as long as our clinic/surgical/in-patient obligations are covered or completed. I have attended a fellows course, AMOS CLESF Conference, and will attend the national ACFAS

How would you describe your director's teaching style? Dr. DiDomenico is a world-renowned educator and with that comes high expectations. He takes pride in teaching the next generation of foot and ankle surgeons to be the absolute best and therefore pushes his fellows beyond their self-perceived limitations. He is direct in his teaching style. Your success is his success and your

failures are his failures. He teaches his fellow to become a leader in the next generation of foot and ankle surgeons.

How is research incorporated into your experience? What resources are provided/available? Research is highly encouraged during your experience as a fellow. The fellow is expected to produce two publications as well as present at the ACFAS national conference. As mentioned above there is a lab associated with the fellowship that has the potential to be utilized for research topics.

Do you take any "call"? If so, how often? What type of call? (general vs. trauma, hospital vs. private practice?) Yes, we take call at 3 different hospitals. We are the only foot and ankle service in East Liverpool so we are available for any pathology that may come in . We are on-call once a month at two of the remaining hospitals in Youngstown and Boardman(suburb of Youngstown).

How many hospitals/surgery centers are you credentialed at? I am credentialed at 5 hospitals and one surgery center.

What is your didactic schedule like? What academic opportunities are available to you during fellowship? (Cadaver labs, journal club, radiology conference, etc.) There is a radiology conference with the residents every Tuesday morning. Journal Club is typically held on the last Monday of the month. Finally, the fellowship is also associated with a lab in which cadaver labs are held approximately once a month.

Is your fellowship affiliated with a residency program? If yes, what are your responsibilities? How often are you interacting with residents (What % of cases?)

Are you able to collect cases for board certification?

If the fellow is the provider of record on pre-operatively, the primary surgeon, as well as postoperatively it may be possible.

When should interested applicants visit? What does a visit look like?: I would recommend applicants submit their application late in their second year or early in their third year. After application submission a phone interview is typically held. An in-person visit is typically held after the phone interview. I would recommend that interested applicants visit early in their third year.

Do you have a co-fellow? What percentage of your cases are scrubbed with them? No, I am the only fellow

What support is available for finding post-fellowship employment?

Dr. DiDomenico is very open to advice and recommendations on post-fellowship employment. He will also make the fellow aware of any opportunities that come to his attention. In addition, our practice manager (MBA) is available to review potential offers and contracts as well as give his input. Both Dr. DiDomenico and our practice manager have many years of experience in both the hospital setting as well as the private practice setting. They are invaluable in their experience.

What qualities make an applicant a good fit for your program? The applicant should be hard-working, teachable, able to adapt in a high paced environment, and carry him/herself in a

professional manner.

Why did you apply for fellowship? And why did you choose your fellowship program? It goes without saying that one of the main reasons I chose this fellowship because of Dr. DiDomenico's reputation as a leader in our profession. He has trained under/with various surgeons throughout the world, published numerous publications, and is a renowned surgeon and educator. The fellowship offers a well-rounded experience with a diverse surgical volume, clinical experience, as well as billing and medical-legal exposure. Finally, the opportunity to work with and teach residents was a big draw for me as a potential fellowship experience.

Any advice for future fellowship applicants?

As Dr. DiDomenico says, "The more you read the more you know, the more you know the more you see, the more you see the more you can do". To prepare for fellowship read as much as you can, get as many patient touches as you can, and start to gain experience in research. You have three years to learn and see as much as possible. Think outside the box, learn to multi-task without allowing things to be missed, and lastly, treat every patient as if they are your family member.

