

# Update



Proven leaders.  
Lifelong learners.  
Changing lives.

[www.acfas.org](http://www.acfas.org)

## Point, Click and Learn with ACFAS

Venture into ACFAS online learning, and you'll find a rich and growing assortment of topics in foot and ankle surgery.

Try all three types of e-Learning: scientific sessions, the surgical techniques series and podcasts. They cover a wide variety of surgical procedures and hot topics in foot and ankle surgery. Some are free, and many allow you to earn CME after completing a post test.

All three types of e-Learning offerings have been designed to provide useful, authoritative information in a compact time frame. In this plug and play world, they're available when you are.

### Two Types of Scientific Sessions

Scientific Sessions are recordings of Annual Scientific Conference presentations. If you didn't catch them live, they impart great information. If you did see them the first time, they serve as a welcome refresher.

(You can only receive CME credit for them once, however.)

Scientific sessions are presented by experts in two subject areas: clinical and practice management. The clinical sessions focus on topics in foot and ankle surgery, such as "Fix or Fuse" and "Bunion Complications." Some are debate forums, in which experts give their take on which approaches work for them and why. They usually include Power Point and other presentations.

The practice management topics feature presentations by experts in that sphere. Share these with your practice staff; they'll appreciate the insights and information.

The College offers eight Scientific Sessions, and a new one will be added every two months. They're brought to you in 60, 90 and 100-minute segments. They're free to members and non-members and offer CME credits to members



John Etcheverry, DPM, left, and Allen Jacobs, DPM, engage in a lively discussion during a podcast recording session.

after a post test is submitted.

### Surgical Techniques series

The Surgical Techniques series offers the most intensive learning experience. Noted experts take you along, via video, as they demonstrate various surgery techniques. ACFAS offers three for purchase:

- Reconstruction (2008 release)

*continued on page 5*

## What Keeps You Up At Night About Your Practice?

Would you like to benchmark your practice against other ACFAS members? If there were one thing ACFAS could do, or do better, what would it be?

These are the primary goals of the College's triennial Practice Census and Member Opinion surveys, which will be conducted online from mid-May through mid-June. Every ACFAS member will receive one of the two online surveys via random sample. You will also be notified of the survey by fax.

Examples of the Practice Census queries are:

- the percentage of your patients by etiology,
- hospital privileging and affiliations,
- whether you have or may be joining a group practice,
- reimbursement and insurance problems and
- where patient referrals come from.

Examples of the Member Opinion survey queries are:

- "what's in it for you?" (why you joined the College),
- what do you value the most ... and the least?

*continued on page 5*

### Inside This Issue

Deadlines are approaching for the ACFAS manuscript competition.

*Find out what to submit and when on page 5.*

## A Call for Research

By Paul J. Kim, DPM

I recently overheard one of my students remark about a basic science course “we’re not training to be scientists – why do we have to learn this stuff?” I agree that taking the didactic core of basic science courses may not seem directly applicable to the practice of podiatry. However, I believe medical students are training to be scientists.

The most important aspect of being a scientist is “thinking” like a scientist. A scientist formulates a hypothesis, tests the hypothesis, and formulates a reasonable conclusion based on the gathered evidence. In a similar way a clinician in daily practice sifts through, and makes sense of, information provided through the patient interview, physical exam, and laboratory tests in order to formulate a diagnosis and devise an appropriate treatment plan. Without the ability to critically evaluate information, we endanger the health and well-being of our patients.

An important component for the development of “scientific” thinking is conducting research. Research is important because adding to the body of knowledge propels our medical specialty forward. The complicit acceptance of established practices can endanger the safety of our patients. On the other hand, we may find that established practice algorithms are actually supported through research. Besides the benefit to elevating the quality of care as outlined above, the process of conducting research allows the clinician to better understand the nuances of research that has already been published. Hence, while reading a peer-reviewed publication, the strengths and weaknesses of that journal article become more readily apparent. In this way the significance or relevance of the conclusions can be judged more accurately.

A busy practitioner may foresee considerable barriers to conducting research. The most significant of these is the lack of knowledge on how to conduct research. The first step is to develop a research question. A research question may be something you have wondered about during one of your patient encounters. Simple or fundamental questions are often overlooked because people assume that these questions have already been answered. However, the answers to these simple or obvious questions often have the most impact.



Paul J. Kim, DPM, shown here in the lab, urges surgeons to conduct research in order to improve patient outcomes.

The next step is conducting a thorough search of the published medical literature. A good resource is [pubmed.org](http://pubmed.org), which is a searchable engine of key terms for published medical studies. Even if there already has been research conducted on your research question, there is value in conducting additional research. It is important that previously published studies be refuted or supported by independent investigators.

The next step is devising the methodology to test your research question. This

is the most important component of conducting research. Without sound methodology, the results may not be accurate and the conclusions unsubstantiated. Careful planning will limit these pitfalls. After data is collected, the results must be statistically tested. This is a good time to seek help from a biostatistician. Conclusions are drawn from the results and all of the components above are then synthesized and submitted to a peer-reviewed journal. Dissemination of the research findings through the medical literature is critical. In this way, the results will not only influence how you approach your patients, but how your colleagues approach theirs as well.

The practitioner in a nonacademic setting faces substantial challenges to conducting research. This includes time, money, and personnel. However, these barriers can be overcome with enthusiasm and a fundamental understanding of the research process. It is important that whether you are in an academic or nonacademic environment, the need for research should be appreciated. The purpose of research is not only to add to the body of knowledge, but to challenge established dogma. Ultimately, this leads to better and more predictable patient outcomes.

For more information on how to conduct research and other scholarly activities please visit [acfas.org/pubresearch/articles](http://acfas.org/pubresearch/articles). In addition, several upcoming ACFAS podcasts will focus on scholarly activities. ■

*Paul J. Kim, DPM, is Associate Professor at the Midwestern University College of Health Sciences in Phoenix, Arizona, and Chair of the ACFAS Evidence Based Medicine-Research Committee.*



## Diabetic Foot and Ankle Surgical Symposium *Surgery...Transformation...Healing*

Join noted faculty members and other experienced surgeons to focus on accelerated healing, cost effective management, best practices in patient management and more at the “Diabetic Foot & Ankle Surgical Symposium.” It will be held July 9-11 in Santa Rosa, Calif., in the heart of Sonoma County.

Instructors will explore the topic of incorporating flap principles to cover exposed bone, which provides a more sterile environment for healing. It’s also easy to incorporate into your day-to-day diabetic surgery.

Faculty members are experienced, accomplished and diverse in their surgical decision-making and procedure selection. They will offer different approaches to procedures that extend the possibilities of limb salvage. They’ll also discuss how to plan pre-operatively based on foot

structure, location of the ulcer, and bone involvement.

The wide-ranging program also includes such topics as anesthesia considerations, adjunctive therapies to optimize post-op healing, forefoot ulcer surgery and plastic surgery for limb preservation.

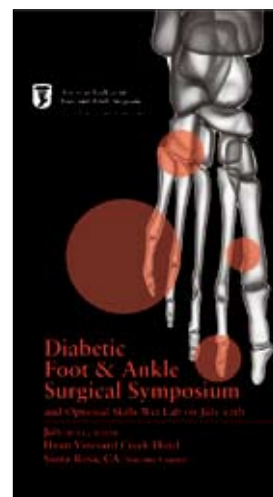
An optional skills wet lab will give participants an opportunity to immediately practice a variety of limb salvage procedures that include advanced plastic surgery techniques.

“This symposium is designed to maximize participants’ interaction with faculty and instructors, and allow time to enjoy wine country with friends and colleagues,” says Troy Boffeli, DPM, chair of the symposium. The Wine & Wisdom gathering on Friday evening will allow attendees to discuss controversial and challenging cases in a relaxed setting.

The event will conclude with a Charcot and sawbones workshop.

“Don’t miss this opportunity to learn advanced techniques from renowned leaders in the field of Charcot reconstruction,” Boffeli advises.

The conference runs Thursday-Saturday, with courses scheduled to allow participants to enjoy Sonoma County attractions during the afternoons. Find more details and register at [acfas.org/meetings/education+calendar](http://acfas.org/meetings/education+calendar). ■



### 2009 Education Programs Calendar

Online registration for Surgical Skills courses and Practice Management seminars is now open at [acfas.org/meetings/education+calendar](http://acfas.org/meetings/education+calendar).

**June 19-20, 2009**  
(Friday-Saturday)  
**Foot and Ankle Arthroscopy Surgical Skills Course**  
**Sold Out**  
Orthopaedic Learning Center  
Rosemont, IL

**July 9-11, 2009**  
**Diabetic Foot and Ankle Surgical Symposium**  
Hyatt Vineyard Creek  
Santa Rosa, CA

**September 25-26, 2009**  
(Friday-Saturday)  
**Practice Management and Coding Seminar**  
Allerton Hotel  
Chicago, IL

**October 10-11, 2009**  
**Flatfoot Surgical Skills Course**  
Scientific Education and Research Institute (SERI)  
Thornton, CO

**November 14 or 15, 2009**  
**Complex Reconstruction Surgical Skills Course**  
Red Rock Casino/Wright Medical Mobile Lab  
Las Vegas, NV

**December 12-13, 2009**  
**Foot and Ankle Arthroscopy Surgical Skills Course**  
**Sold Out**  
Orthopaedic Learning Center  
Rosemont, IL

**February 22-26, 2010**  
**Mandalay Bay Hotel**  
**Las Vegas, NV**

## News You Can Use Members Reach Patients with ACFAS PR Tools

The entire profession benefits when ACFAS is mentioned in a national publication, as when ACFAS President Mary Crawford, DPM was quoted in the April issue of Family Circle Magazine. Because ingrown toenails are common among youth athletes, Crawford offered tips for prevention and treatment and explained that “Running, pivoting or kicking a ball can slam your kids’ toes against their shoes, aggravating these sores.” Readers were invited to obtain more information at the ACFAS consumer web site, FootPhysicians.com.

### Use this News for Your Practice

But ACFAS PR extends beyond such national publications down to the towns and cities where members practice. Members are leveraging the news distributed by ACFAS at the national level, using tools that are offered at no cost on acfas.org/marketing.

“I use the customizable news releases on my web site’s blog,” says San Diego-area member Phil Wrotslavsky, DPM. “By tracking use of my blog, I know the topics are frequently read. And patients who come into my office often ask about something that’s been on the blog.”

“You can also send the customized release, containing your name and contact information, to the hospital marketing department, or to local churches, synagogues, or mosques, which may use it in their newsletter.”

### A Ready-Made Newsletter...and It's Free!

“Our practice has been converting the FOOTNOTES quarterly patient newsletter into an e-newsletter for a few years now, and it’s been a great way to remind patients of our services and make sure they return to our office for future needs,” says Mike Vaardahl, DPM, of Greeley, Colorado. “Anyone who’s interested in foot health can subscribe online or via our office.”

Phil Wrotslavsky has been placing stacks of FOOTNOTES newsletters in his office waiting room, and finds they’re gone within a few days. He puts his practice information on the back of the newsletter, so anyone who reads it knows how to contact his office for an appointment.

“I started my practice about two years ago,” says Wrotslavsky, “and ACFAS marketing tools have definitely helped it grow.



Linking your practice Web site to FootPhysicians.com provides another patient outreach tool.

Using the tools is really a no-brainer, and there is nothing like free marketing done in a highly professional style to help a new practitioner.”

### Web Site Content Ready Made for You

Wrotslavsky and Vaardahl both use the ACFAS FootPhysicians.com web site’s information as a resource for their practice web sites.

“What better resource to provide our patients than the information developed by foot and ankle surgeons for foot and ankle surgeons?” says Vaardahl. “The list of topics on our practice site is linked to the information on the College’s site...we really don’t need to do a thing. I think this is a terrific benefit for ACFAS members as well as their patients.”

Wrotslavsky agrees. “I built my own web site, and being able to link my new site to the content on the FootPhysicians.com site has made it possible for me to offer so much more information to my patients than I could have created on my own.”

*ACFAS practice marketing tools are a member benefit available at [acfas.org/marketing](http://acfas.org/marketing).*



**HealthCare Associates  
Credit Union**

[www.hacu.org](http://www.hacu.org)

## Safe, Secure & We're Still Lending

If “banks” can’t help, it’s good to know... HealthCare can.

- Practice acquisition & owner buy out
- Building: office, clinic, surgery center
- Equipment purchases
- Working capital lines of credit



Contact Norma Cantrell today at  
630.276.5730 or  
800.942.0158 x 5730



291 ©HACU 04/09

## 2010 Annual Conference Manuscript and Poster Competitions

Foot and ankle surgery thrives on research! If you're involved in a study that would benefit the profession, ACFAS encourages you to submit your manuscript or poster for the 2010 Annual Conference competitions.

Winners of the ACFAS Manuscript Awards of Excellence will divide \$10,000 in prize money provided to the College

by a generous grant from the Podiatry Foundation of Pittsburgh. The manuscript submission deadline of August 3 is just a couple of months away. Be sure to read and follow the *Instructions for Authors Submitting a Manuscript* and carefully review the information and policies published in the *2010 Call for Manuscripts* before preparing and submitting your paper. Online submission for manuscripts is available now at [acfas.org/meetings/NV](http://acfas.org/meetings/NV).



The deadline for submissions to the ScientificPoster Competition is October 1. Online submission for posters will be available June 1, along with poster policies and instructions. ■

## Point, Click and Learn continued from page 1

- Diabetic Surgery (2009 release)
- Common Foot & Ankle Procedures (2009 release)

You may purchase individual videos in a series, but CME is only available with the purchase of a complete set. The sets are available on DVD-ROM, designed to be viewed on a computer, or through an online downloadable format that is compatible with iPods, iPhones and Zunes.

### Sign Up for Podcasts

Listen to the new podcasts added at the beginning of each month, or tap into the

more than 20 titles available. They feature noted experts weighing in on such topics as "Calcaneal Fractures," "The Diabetic Foot" and "Electronic Medical Record Roundtable."

Podcasts are free to members and non-members. While they don't offer CME credits, they do offer a chance to hear your colleagues weigh in on hot topics in foot and ankle surgery. To assure you'll never miss one, visit [iTunes.com](http://iTunes.com) and sign up for automatic delivery of ACFAS podcasts to your computer, iPod or iPhone.

Bookmark [acfas.org/elearning](http://acfas.org/elearning) and visit often to see what's new. You'll also

get notices in "This Week @ ACFAS," the weekly e-newsletter, when additional offerings are posted to the site. Log on soon and start learning. ■

## Member Surveys

continued from page 1

- how do you prefer to learn? face to face, via print, or online? and
- how would you reallocate the College's budget to better meet your needs?

Results will be posted on [acfas.org](http://acfas.org) in August so you can benchmark your practice or opinions with other ACFAS members.

### Need an incentive to participate?

Your survey will take 15 minutes of your valuable time, so five lucky respondents will receive the new **4G iPhone** (due out later this year) or comparable technology of your choice. Just complete your randomly-assigned survey by the deadline to be entered into the drawing.

Watch for an e-mail or fax from ACFAS soon. ■

## We Have The Experience & Know What You Need!

PhysicianWebPages creates professional web sites specifically tailored for medical practices. Physicians know how much experience matters. At PhysicianWebPages we have the web site design experience that you need.

Our web sites will help you influence potential new patients as well as educate current patients. Additionally, a properly designed and integrated web site from PhysicianWebPages will help your staff save time.

We offer everything from concept development to implementation and maintenance. Contact us now for a FREE initial consultation to discuss your proposed web site project and to give you an idea of the vast possibilities that PhysicianWebPages can create for you.

**COMPLETE SITES FROM \$895**



[www.PhysicianWebPages.com](http://www.PhysicianWebPages.com)  
281.218.6286



## HIPAA Changes to Include Increased Penalties

The president's stimulus bill (American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009) makes several important changes with respect to HIPAA Privacy and Security Rules. While most stimulus bill provisions relating to the HIPAA Rules are effective next year, one change that is effective immediately is an increase in the civil monetary penalties that may be imposed on any person who violates the Rules.

In the past, such penalties were limited to \$100 for each violation of a provision up to a maximum of \$25,000 per provision per year. These civil monetary penalties are now tiered based on the severity of the violation and the covered entity's response.

Practices should begin immediately to review and revise their health information policies, procedures, training processes and business associates' agreements in light of these new requirements.

More information is available at [acfas.org/practicemang/compliance](http://acfas.org/practicemang/compliance).

## Red Flags Program Enforcement Delayed to Aug. 1

Medical practices often hold sensitive information about their patients. Because identity theft has become such a serious concern in the United States, the federal government has created rules to prevent and detect it (The Fair and Accurate Credit Transactions Act of 2003).

Foot and ankle surgeons who regularly bill their patients for services rendered

are considered "creditors" under these rules, known as the Red Flag Rules. The rules require "creditors" to develop a written identity theft prevention program to identify, detect and minimize the damage from identity theft.

The Federal Trade Commission was set to begin enforcing the Red Flag Rules on May 1, but has delayed enforcement until Aug. 1, 2009 to give creditors more time to develop written programs. The FTC also said it will soon release a template written program to help entities that have a low risk of identity theft comply with the Rule.

For more information, see [acfas.org/practicemang/compliance](http://acfas.org/practicemang/compliance). ■



**If you build it, they will come.**

Websites starting at  
**\$995**

## Websites That Deliver New Patients!

**"1,269 new patients!"**

— Greg Renton, Orlando, FL

**"724 new patients!"**

— Dr. Mitchell Waskin, Richmond, VA

**"1,089 new patients!"**

— Dr. Robert J. Abrams, Newhall, CA

**"447 new patients!"**

— Dr. James Petko, Falls Church, VA

**877.889.4001**

**Officite**

[www.dpmwebsites.com](http://www.dpmwebsites.com)



# Proper Coding will Net E-Prescribing Incentives for Your Practice

By Christine E. Weikert, DPM, FACFAS

With all the talk about electronic health records and stimulus packages many physicians are anxiously waiting to hear what the government is going to offer regarding implementation of electronic health records. The Electronic Prescribing or “E-Prescribing” Incentive Program is being overlooked by many practices. Electronic Prescribing has many benefits for today’s medical practices and offers definite incentives for increased revenues **now**.

Not only will E-Prescribing improve the quality of care for patients, it also improves patient safety. Medicare is currently offering a 2 percent incentive for all physicians to provide electronic prescriptions to their patients for calendar years 2009 and 2010. Implementing this in your practice now will allow you to take advantage of this incentive. The incentive will decrease to 1 percent in calendar years 2011 and 2012, and drop to 0.5 percent in calendar year 2013. Physicians who do not comply with E-Prescribing by 2014 may see their Medicare payment reduced up to 2 percent! There may be exceptions to the rule depending on a practice’s ability to participate.

Implementing E-Prescribing is a first step toward implementing electronic health records (EMR/EHR). There are many companies that have stand alone products that allow the physician to participate with E-Prescribing without becoming 100 percent electronic in terms of medical records. At the same time, there are add-on programs for current electronic health record and practice management programs. Your vendor can explain what programs work best with your system or what program they offer.

### Staff is Key to Success

Practices should have a plan in place for

implementing E-Prescribing. Staff should understand why this change is taking place and how it affects your office. Your staff is the key to making E-Prescribing work well and reaching your incentive goals.

Incentives are based on Medicare patients and your participation. You are required to submit the appropriate “G” code on at least 50 percent of your Medicare claims. These include:

**G8443** – All prescriptions created during this encounter were generated by e-prescribing.

**G8445** – No prescriptions were generated during the encounter. Provider does have access to a qualified e-prescribing system.

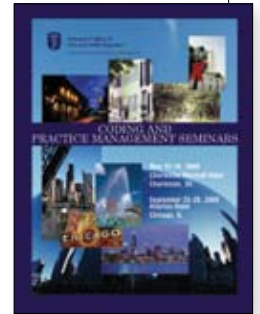
**G8446** – Some or all prescriptions generated during the encounter were handwritten or phoned in due to one of the following: required by state law, patient request, or qualified e-prescribing system temporarily inoperable.

After submission of the appropriate “G” code, Medicare determines your incentive. Report the G codes on all of your Medicare patients to ensure reaching reporting goals. The incentive payment is based on your practice’s total allowable and payable amount from Medicare for the calendar year. A practice receiving Medicare allowable payments on qualified E-Prescribing patients in the amount of \$100,000 for 2009 can look for a \$2,000 incentive payment. Incentive checks are expected mid-year 2010.

### Start Now!

All podiatric practices should look into how E-Prescribing can work for them. Podiatrists’ participation, or lack thereof, may affect future opportunities for the specialty. Be on the forefront and implement E-Prescribing now. Medicare

For cutting-edge information on e-prescribing, as well as technology, reducing overhead, marketing and PQRI, attend the ACFAS Coding and Practice Management Seminar Sept. 25-26 in Chicago. Find details at [acfas.org/meetings/education+calendar](http://acfas.org/meetings/education+calendar).



E-Prescribing Standards can be found at [cms.hhs.gov/EPrescribing](http://cms.hhs.gov/EPrescribing).

*Christine E. Weikert, DPM, FACFAS is a practicing podiatrist and President and CEO of The Podiatric Billing Specialists, LLC.* ■

**ADD  
POWER  
TO  
MediNotes**

Buy **PodiatryTemplates™** today and dramatically increase your time-savings and bottom line. See all its features and what other doctors say at [www.podbillspec.com/power](http://www.podbillspec.com/power)

**PodiatryTemplates™**  
**877-POD-DOCS**

# ACFAS Corporate Sponsors

**Platinum Level**  
Wright Medical  
Technology, Inc.

**Gold Level**  
PICA  
SBi (Small Bone  
Innovations)

**Silver Level**  
ACFAS Division  
Presidents Council  
Arthrex  
DePuy

**Bronze Level**  
BioPro, Inc.  
Integra Foundation  
Merz Pharmaceuticals, LLC  
OsteoMed Corporation L.P.  
Podiatry Foundation of  
Pittsburgh

**Pewter Level**  
ArthroCare Corporation  
Biomet Trauma  
DOX Podiatry  
NeuroTherm  
Officite

Smith & Nephew, Inc.  
– Orthopaedic  
Stryker Orthopaedics  
Synthes  
The Podiatric Billing  
Specialists



Get details about these member services at [acfas.org/membership/benefitspartners](http://acfas.org/membership/benefitspartners).



## Update

Volume 16, Issue 3  
This issue was mailed May 21, 2009

American College of Foot and Ankle Surgeons  
8725 West Higgins Road, Suite 555  
Chicago, IL 60631-2724

*Update* is published 8 times per year by the American College of Foot and Ankle Surgeons (ACFAS), 8725 West Higgins Road, Suite 555, Chicago, IL 60631-2724, phone (773) 693-9300 or (800) 421-2237, fax (773) 693-9304 or (800) 382-8270, e-mail [info@acfas.org](mailto:info@acfas.org). *Update* is provided as a benefit of membership in the College, and is not available by subscription. Copyright © 2009 American College of Foot and Ankle Surgeons. All rights reserved. No portion of the newsletter may be copied or distributed without permission.



*The ACFAS vision is to serve society as the preeminent source of knowledge for foot and ankle surgery. Our mission is to advance the competency of our members and the care of our patients.*



Prsrt Std  
US Postage  
**Paid**  
Chicago, IL  
Permit 9711

## NEWS FROM THE COLLEGE

### Supporting the Next Generation

Both the ACFAS Regional Divisions and BioPro, Inc. deserve applause for providing financial support so that future foot and ankle surgeons were able to experience the ACFAS Annual Scientific Conference March 5-8 in Washington, D.C. .

ACFAS Division 2, Northwest/Canada, awarded a \$500 scholarship to resident Jarrod Smith, DPM, to fund his poster presentation.

Division 4, Desert States, granted a \$1,000 academic scholarship to Ruth Peace, Past President of Midwestern University's ACFAS Student Chapter.

Division 14, Southeast, provided two \$1,000 conference scholarships to residents Pearce Futch, DPM, and Jonnica Dozier, DPM.

BioPro once again provided \$1,000 scholarships for each of the eight podiatry schools to send a student to the 2009 annual



BioPro, Inc. awarded \$1,000 scholarships for one student at each of the eight U.S. podiatry schools to attend the ACFAS Annual Scientific Conference, held March 4-8, 2009. The winners and BioPro representatives are pictured at the BioPro booth at the conference.

conference. The winners were: Benjamin Cullen, Nelya Lobkova, Jaclyn Schwartz, Erigena Baze, Ricardo Lundi, Rachel Collier, Kylin Kovac, Kathy Gurnevich, and Jeffrey McAlister.

Congratulations, students and residents! ■