

Update



Proven leaders.
Lifelong learners.
Changing lives.

www.acfas.org

A New Look

ACFAS Launches Fully Redesigned ACFAS.org

There's something big at ACFAS. Something very big that can change the way you engage with your colleagues, care for your patients and manage your professional development. In short, the perfect tool to simplify and fortify your professional life.

The best part? All these resources and tools are housed in one familiar place: ACFAS.org.

The College has launched a redesigned web site that is certain to solidify ACFAS.org as the preeminent resource for foot and ankle surgeons. The new site features an updated, cleaner look, with easily navigable menus for audience segments: Physicians, Students, Patients, Healthcare Community and Media.

Each of those tabs links to a landing page customized for that audience, with an abundance of resources to help users find what they need quickly and easily. In addition to the traditional article format, the new site offers cutting-edge multimedia tools, such as videos, podcasts and easy links to ACFAS social media pages, such as Facebook and Twitter.

Members will be able to select their own passwords, which will allow access to all content on the site. Non-members will have only limited access. On the physician page, for example, the feature "What Would You Like to Do Today?" offers the resources physicians are most likely to use regularly in one simple list of links:



All users will arrive at the new home page when they visit ACFAS.org.

- Link to JFAS.org to read the latest *Journal of Foot & Ankle Surgery*
- Find a career in podiatric medicine
- Collaborate with colleagues
- Register for an educational program or event

continued on page 2

Discover Foot & Ankle Surgical Intelligence

2010 Annual Scientific Conference Offers Top-Notch Opportunities

When you arrive at the Mandalay Bay Hotel in Las Vegas for the 2010 ACFAS Annual Scientific Conference, February 22–26, you'll find a dazzling array of educational as well as entertainment choices. Thanks to careful planning, members attending the conference can expand their skills and knowledge through an exciting kaleidoscope of educational programs.

Debates, Video Instruction, Research and More

Here's a sampling of the high-quality sessions slated for the upcoming conference.

Rapid Fire—This fast-paced debate will probe today's hot topics, giving you a unique opportunity to hear both sides of each controversial issue as argued by experts.

Research manuscripts—In two dynamic sessions, selected manuscripts will be presented, with insightful feedback provided on the spot to extend the manuscript's value.

Video instructional courses—Back by popular demand, the 2010 conference will offer two courses that use video to capture

Inside This Issue

Avoid common claims errors.

[Full article on page 4](#)



surgical techniques: **Heel Pain** and **Soft Tissue Correction**. Members rave about this learning format!

continued on page 7

What's New at ACFAS e-Learning?

Wherever you are, any hour of the day or night, you have access to the finest online educational experiences in the field of foot and ankle surgery. Audio podcasts, scientific session videos, and the three-volume ACFAS Surgical Techniques video series promote your life-long learning. Do yourself...and your patients...a favor by logging on to acfas.org/elearning for one of these new offerings.

Podcasts:

- Evaluation of Plantar Fasciitis Treatment

- Evolution: From Resident to Clinician
- When To Walk
- Financial Statement Basics (release date: October 15)
- Perioperative Vascular Assessment of the Diabetic Foot (release date: November 1)

Scientific sessions:

- Monday Morning Quarterback: A Retrospective Look at Difficult Cases
- Surgical Techniques Caught on Video: Forefoot (release date: November 1) ■

Quick Reference Guide to ACFAS E-Learning Resources

	Media	Cost	Frequency	CE Credit?
Podcasts	Audio	Free	New podcast 1st of each month	No
Scientific Sessions	Online Video	Free	New session every two months	Yes, members only
Surgical Techniques Series	Online Video or DVD-R	Visit site for fee structure	Complete set now available	Yes, with purchase of complete set

A New Look continued from page 1

- Join ACFAS
- Renew your membership

There also are resources on CME, Health Policy & Advocacy, and Practice Management. In addition, one simple click on “Find a Colleague” leads you to a directory so you can contact other ACFAS members.

One of the many highlights of the new acfas.org is the Member Center, your link to ACFAS members and the place to manage your membership. Learn about ACFAS Regional Divisions, find out how to get involved, watch videos from your colleagues. Non-members who click on Member Center can get information about becoming a member, as well as watch videos about the many benefits of belonging to ACFAS.

The redesigned acfas.org is *your* new professional home. Be sure to bookmark the site – or make it your homepage – so you don’t miss a day of all the resources your College can provide. ■

Calendar

For information on upcoming programs go to acfas.org, or call (800) 421-2237.

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



Mandalay Bay Hotel • Las Vegas, NV

February 22, 2010

Pre-Conference Sessions

- **Coding and Billing Workshop** (full-day)
- **Advanced Techniques in Diabetic Reconstruction** (half-day, morning)
- **Advanced Techniques in Trauma Reconstruction** (half-day, afternoon)
- **Current Concepts in Ankle Pathology** (half-day, afternoon)
Non-CME program sponsored by SBi.

February 23–26, 2010

- **40 sessions and workshops**
- **Exhibition** (Feb. 23–25)
- **200 posters**
- **Special events**
- **And more!**

Register online at acfas.org/lasvegas or call 800-421-2237 for the complete brochure.

FootHealthFacts.org to Launch in November

The ACFAS consumer web site will have a new name and a new face in November. The Consumer Education Committee recommended the change to a more “patient-oriented” name, FootHealthFacts.org. The site’s design will mirror that of the new acfas.org site, launched in October.

Since its inception in 2004 the College’s consumer web site (originally FootPhysicians.com) has grown exponentially, as has its number of visitors. In addition to information on 80+ foot and ankle conditions, the site also features videos and podcasts, and a physician search function. The site has more than 270,000 unique visitors each month—consumers who are looking for reliable foot health information for themselves or family members.

All ACFAS Fellows and Associate Members are listed in the physician search directory, used by consumers to locate a nearby foot and ankle surgeon. The basic listing includes name, practice name, address and phone numbers. Members may also provide additional information, such as office hours and a web site address, to help potential patients select a member to contact.

Watch the *This Week @ ACFAS* e-newsletter for news of the launch of FootHealthFacts.org, and enjoy the new features on offer for your prospective patients.

Market Your Practice with FOOTNOTES

Looking for a way to share helpful foot and ankle health information with your patients and promote your practice? FOOTNOTES – the ACFAS patient newsletter – is provided free to all members. It can be sent out in billing statements, displayed in waiting rooms, posted on your web site or blog, or used as a handout at health fairs or other events.

The fall issue of FOOTNOTES features articles on:

- Five Signs Your Child May Have a Foot Problem,
- Caring for Diabetic Feet, and
- Enjoying Fall Walks.

FOOTNOTES is available in English and Spanish. Download your copy at acfas.org/marketing/footnotes.

Join the Conversation

An ACFAS news release, “Five Signs Your Child May Have a Foot Problem,” received impressive coverage from online media, including news web sites, blogs and social media outlets such as Twitter, Friend Feed and Stumble Upon.

Twitter is a valuable tool used by ACFAS to disseminate its news and health information, with followers re-posting, or “re-tweeting,” links to our news releases on acfas.org and articles on FootPhysicians.com. Help us spread valuable foot and ankle health information by following FootHealthFacts on your Twitter account and re-tweeting our posts for your followers to read. Don’t forget to share your address with your patients, local media and potential patients. Get them involved in the conversation! ■

Get Your Money’s Worth!

Are you taking advantage of all that ACFAS provides to you as a member? The College is proud to support its members’ careers by continuing to keep them at the forefront of their field. Want to experience the best educational offerings for foot and ankle surgeons? Need support with parity issues in your hospital or state? Want ideas on how to increase awareness and revenue for your practice? These are just a few of the many valuable benefits the College has available to you.

- **Member pricing on ACFAS educational conferences and courses** – the gold standard in CME
- **Subscription to the *Journal of Foot & Ankle Surgery*** – the leading source for research on the surgical and medical management of the foot and ankle
- **Subscriptions to the College’s newsletters, *Update and ThisWeek @ ACFAS*** – keeping you abreast of latest news from the College as well as the world of podiatric surgical medicine
- **Support on issues of hospital privileging, scope of practice and professional parity** – acting as an unyielding voice for our members
- **Representation to CMS, insurance carriers and accreditors** – advocating to Medicare and private insurers on coverage and reimbursement issues
- **E-Learning opportunities with CMEs available 24/7** – through podcasts and videos of clinical sessions, surgical techniques and practice management information accessible at acfas.org/eLearning
- **Access to tools for managing and marketing your practice** – such as fill-in-the-blanks news releases and patient education information and newsletters
- **Networking and knowledge-sharing opportunities with other DPMs** – through College seminars, courses, and the Annual Scientific Conference
- **Use of the College’s credentials “FACFAS” and “AACFAS”** – allowing your patients and the medical community to recognize your proud accomplishments
- **Grassroots support through the ACFAS Divisions** – with local educational seminars, labs and meetings.

Common Errors in Claim Submission

Doing It Right the First Time

By Christine E. Weikert, DPM, FACFAS

Most major insurance carriers publish a list of general common errors. Podiatry, one of the more difficult billing specialties, experiences not only the common medical claim submission errors but also errors that are specific to the billing requirements for podiatrists.

You and your billing staff are encouraged to listen to and discuss the ACFAS podcast on coding presented in January 2009. (Visit acfas.org/elearning.) This staff interaction will help to create awareness and, ultimately, move you closer to better billing practices with lower error rates.

Those over the age of 65 make up a fair amount of the patients in podiatry. There is a marked increase in Medicare patients transferring coverage from the standard Medicare plan to a Medicare Advantage Plan. It is important for the staff to be aware of the difference, and understand the plan differences. This may require the staff to contact the Medicare Advantage Plan and review eligibility, benefits, referral and pre-authorization requirements, especially as they render DME services. Some Medicare Advantage programs contract these services to DME suppliers and do not reimburse the podiatrist. These Advantage plans are supposed to provide at least the same level of coverage as regular Medicare, but can provide more. There have been instances where the coverage has not been the same and this should be reported to CMS. The HMO plans may require a referral to the specialists. When patients have this coverage Medicare is no longer billed, but audits reveal this continues to be a common billing error.

Front office staff will need to be proactive in updating patient demographic information and implement the requirement that the patient must show a health insurance card at each visit. This collective information is the most important piece in the billing puzzle. Without correct information, even a clean claim will not process. Claim submission errors begin with incorrect or insufficient information. Set your standard office policy and use this as a general rule for all patients, not only the Medicare patient.

Electronic filing of insurance claims has streamlined the effectiveness of the process, but it is equally important to understand this process. Claims are

initially submitted either to a clearinghouse or directly to the insurance carrier. Billing offices should receive confirmation reports that the claims have been received. A second report should be received stating the claims have been accepted and are processing. Any rejected claims will also be reported, indicating the reason for the rejection.

Being organized and monitoring submissions will ensure proper electronic filing. If a claim is rejected for timely filing, the first action should be to pull the initial e-file and confirmations. As long as your staff is reviewing the reports for acceptance you should be able to appeal this denial with proof of submission within the correct filing dates. Offices that fail to review submissions for acceptance, or to follow up on electronic denials, are losing revenue for the practice. Done properly, e-filing should be an asset to the office, allowing your claims to be processed more quickly and paid within 14 days.

It is also important that staff stay abreast of changes taking place regarding electronic filing. The insurance carrier's notification gives providers ample time to implement the necessary programming changes to avoid delaying billing, which causes lost revenue and delayed payments. Contact your billing service or vendor as soon as possible for assistance with any required changes. Waiting until the last minute or after the fact is costly to the practice. Billing managers should monitor these submissions and implement policies to ensure the staff is following proper submission instructions.

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

**INCREASE YOUR
BOTTOM LINE
BY
UP
TO
50%
PER YEAR**

and eliminate all your billing headaches at the same time.

Find out more about how we can help your practice thrive:
www.podbillspec.com/billing

THE
**PODIATRIC
BILLING™
SPECIALISTS**
877-POD-DOCS

New Practice Tools from ACFAS

Discover new practice management tools on the redesigned ACFAS web site, including:

- Improving patient collections: Improving your bottom line
- Tips for minimizing claims denials
- Office based surgery: Is accreditation in your future?
- Tips on managing administrative staff
- Complying with the Stark anti-self-referral laws: The basics

We'll be adding new content regularly, so check back often at acfas.org!

Survive the Recession with ACFAS Pre-Conference Coding and Billing Workshop

More than 100 foot and ankle surgeons and their staff attended the September ACFAS Coding and Practice Management Seminar in Chicago, with participants soaking up a wide range of practical tips to survive and thrive during the recession, including minimizing claims denials through correct coding. Presenters Douglas Stoker, DPM and Karen Zupko of Zupko and Associates received high marks from participants.

Registration is now open for the full-day Pre-Conference Coding and Billing Workshop, February 22, in Las Vegas. Visit acfas.org/lasvegas for details.



"Give me 20 minutes of your time and I'll build you a website that will bring you new patients."

Glenn Lombardi
President
Officite

Officite

The new patient website people

Websites starting at
\$995

www.dpmwebsites.com
877.898.4043

Here's what doctors are saying about Officite.

"1,269 new patients!"
Greg Renton, Orlando, FL

"1,089 new patients!"
Robert J. Abrams, DPM, FACFAS, Newhall, CA

"724 new patients!"
Mitchell Waskin, DPM, FACFAS, Richmond, VA

Board of Directors Election Calendar Announced

In early September ACFAS Fellows were notified regarding the 2009 Board of Directors nominations process. Two 3-year director terms are open for nomination this year. The nominating process and elections follow the policies and time line set forth in the College's bylaws:

October 1: Deadline for submission of nomination applications

October 27: Nomination Committee announces recommended candidates to the membership

November 27: Deadline for nominations by petition

December 11: Candidate information and ballots mailed to all voting members

January 10, 2010: Deadline for receipt of ballots at the ACFAS office.

Pursuant to the College's bylaws, the Board of Directors has elected its 2010-11 officers.

President: Michael S. Lee, DPM

President-Elect: Glenn M. Weinraub, DPM

Secretary-Treasurer: Michelle L. Butterworth, DPM

Immediate Past President: Mary E. Crawford, DPM

New officers and directors will take office during the ACFAS 2010 Annual Scientific Conference on February 24, 2010 in Las Vegas.

For complete details on the nomination and election process, visit acfas.org/nominations or contact Executive Director Chris Mahaffey at 773-693-9300 x 1305, or mahaffey@acfas.org. Questions regarding eligibility criteria should be directed to Nominating Committee Chairman John M. Giurini, DPM at jgiurini@bidmc.harvard.edu or 617-632-7071.

ACFAS Student Clubs: New Presidents Chosen, Board Liaisons Visit

The school year is off to a running start and so are the eight ACFAS Student Clubs at podiatric medical schools throughout the country. New club officers have been chosen, and ACFAS Board members have been visiting the schools to:

- deliver the club's annual stipend check
- introduce the students to ACFAS
- help club officers with recruitment at the start of the school year
- answer questions on topics such as what students need to do to gain a residency spot upon graduation, surgical skills, the Board member's own career path, how to be a successful foot and ankle surgeon, and work/life balance, to name a few.

Following the recent updates to the strategic direction of the College, ACFAS

continued on page 8



**HealthCare Associates
Credit Union**

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



340 ©HACU 09/09

BY THE NUMBERS

ACFAS members provided a wealth of information in the surveys conducted earlier this year. Following are some interesting facts; even more can be found at acfas.org.

80%

of new practitioners (one to five years) are in a group practice (podiatric, orthopedic, or multispecialty). Fewer than half of those in practice 21 or more years are in group practice.

85%

of members are on active staff at one or more hospitals.

72%

are allowed to take ER calls.

57%

report they have had less than a 5% increase in medical malpractice insurance premiums in the past three years.

60%

are not yet using electronic medical records.

44%

conduct professional discussions online.

32%

are on Facebook...but only 2% use it for professional reasons.

7%

are on LinkedIn for professional use.

ACFAS Advocates for You

As a member of the Alliance of Wound Care Stakeholders, ACFAS participated in the successful effort to get the Medicare Part B carrier for WI, IL, MI and MN to rescind a non-coverage policy for negative pressure wound therapy.

ACFAS recently met with top Blue Cross Blue Shield Association (BCBSA)

clinical staff as part of its involvement in the Specialty Society Insurance Coalition. This was the first ever meeting between the Coalition, which was co-founded by ACFAS, and BCBSA senior staff. Coalition members and BCBSA staff are forming follow-up work groups on a number of important issues.

ACFAS is gearing up to support its

members in states with legislative scope of practice battles in 2010. ACFAS expects DPMs in MA, SC, and NY, among others, to continue their ongoing battle to expand scope to the ankle next year. ■

Watch for weekly healthcare reform updates in This Week @ ACFAS, the ACFAS e-newsletter.

Discover Foot & Ankle Surgical Intelligence *continued from page 1*

Surgery in the Advanced Age—What is a patient's chronological age versus physical age? Explore that distinction and see how it can impact treatment choices for today's older population.

21st Century Bone and Soft Tissue Healing—A panel will discuss evolving use of orthobiologics and techniques that surgeons use in the management of bone, ligament and tendon healing. In addition to foot and ankle experts, the panel will tap the experience of a spine surgeon on this ever-expanding topic.

Internet Marketing and Social Media—Search engines, internet access to information, social media—they're all tools of the new millennium. This session will explain how you can benefit from incorporating web-based marketing and communications into your practice.

First Ray Forum—The great debate on various aspects of first ray surgery raises many questions about these common procedures. In a lively instructional course, noted surgeons will advocate diverse opinions and positions.

Rethinking End-Stage Ankle Arthritis—As advanced options become available to surgeons, end-stage ankle arthritis is marked by new considerations and different perspectives. The views of

surgeons experienced in this area will be featured in this session.

Imaging—The imaging evolution continues, calling into question the appropriateness of various modalities. A panel will delve into current thinking regarding this dynamic area of diagnostics.

Not So Simple Trauma—Treatment of a puncture wound or ankle sprain or other common injuries may seem straightforward—but as most surgeons know, trauma is not always simple. Come to this enlightening session to explore how to handle situations in which the unforeseen occurs.

Best and Worst Cases of 2009—Attendees always enjoy hearing their colleagues describe their best and worst cases of the year. Join them at this riveting session.

Thursday Night Live!

A special event—**Thursday Night Live!**—promises to end your Las Vegas experience on a memorable note. The evening begins with a tour of the fascinating Titanic Artifact Exhibition, featuring a full-scale reproduction of the Grand Staircase and the outer Promenade Deck, complete with the frigid temperatures felt on that fateful April night. After walking through authentically replicated first- and third-class rooms, you'll move on to the gorgeous LAX Nightclub, a favorite watering hole of

the stars. Stay for an evening of socializing with your colleagues, while enjoying cocktails, food, music and dancing.

For more information on the 2010 Annual Scientific Conference, go to acfas.org/lasvegas. ■

Simple. Brilliant.
Your Scheduling Solution



Eppointments is the premier appointment scheduling software. It is flexible, fully customizable and extremely easy to use.

- In-Office and Web-Based Scheduling**
- Patient Online Features from your Web Site, including:**
 - complete patient registration information
 - online appointment scheduling
 - automatic email reminders

eppointments

Visit our Web site for more details or contact us now for a product demonstration and start seeing more patients today!

866.376.7070 | www.eppointments.com

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.



Update

Volume 16, Issue 6
This issue was mailed October 1, 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. *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 continued from page 6

is increasing outreach to the student clubs with greater support and visibility. At least one additional visit will be made to all eight student clubs within the year.

Student club presidents and ACFAS Board members, respectively, for the schools are:

- **Arizona Podiatric Medical Program** – Berkely Jensen and Jerome Steck, DPM
- **Barry University School of Graduate Medical Sciences** – Quynh Tram Nguyen and Jerome Noll, DPM
- **California School of Podiatric Medicine** – Gabriel Van Gompel and Glenn Weinraub, DPM

- **Des Moines University** – Douglas Croff and Michael Lee, DPM
- **New York College of Podiatric Medicine** – Nelya Lobkova and John Giurini, DPM
- **Ohio College of Podiatric Medicine** – Danielle Malin and Jordan Grossman, DPM
- **Scholl College of Podiatric Medicine** – Wendy Wu and Douglas Stoker, DPM
- **Temple University School of Podiatric Medicine** – Joe Pusateri and Michelle Butterworth, DPM

Dues Invoices to Mail

ACFAS dues reminders for 2010 will hit your mailbox in early November. We hope

your ACFAS membership has helped your career development—and we intend to be your professional partner for many years to come.

Just take a look at “Get Your Money’s Worth,” on page 3, to review all the value an ACFAS membership brings you! We hope you’ve taken advantage of all ACFAS has to offer, and will continue to do so in 2010.

In Memoriam

The College has recently received word of the passing of the following Fellow:

- Gary P. Ceresnie, DPM, Farmington Hills, MI ■