A new partner project between the College and four ACFAS Regional Divisions is bringing something special to neighborhoods across the nation—convenient, local foot and ankle surgery continuing education contact hours!

Members have sometimes asked why the College doesn’t provide its unparalleled education courses in their backyards. Your College has listened, and is collaborating with the Divisions to provide the first-ever local series, “1st MTPJ A-Z Workshop and Seminar.”

These affordable hands-on courses will give foot and ankle surgeons an opportunity to enhance their skills and advance their current knowledge of surgical practice. The program will begin with a welcome reception and sharing of case presentations by both faculty and attendees. The next day will encompass lectures, demonstrations, panel discussions and a lab. Healthcare industry representatives will also be on hand with a full range of products and services to explore.

Take advantage of this local learning and sign up today at acfas.org.

ACFAS Comments Incorporated in CPME 320 Revisions

In February, the ACFAS Board of Directors made several recommendations to the Council on Podiatric Medical Education’s (CPME) proposed revisions to the document CPME 320, “Standards and Requirements for Approval of Podiatric Residencies.” The board made its recommendations in response to CPME’s call for comment from the residency community of interest.

In all, CPME reports it received more than 150 written comments, and held five open forums for input on the proposed changes. In late April, CPME unveiled revised proposed changes that incorporated suggestions offered by ACFAS.

Specifically, the board had recommended that:
- The word “surgical” be retained from the current PM&S terminology for residencies.
- In accordance with the standard practices of other accrediting bodies, professional membership recommendations should not appear as a residency program requirement.
- CPME reconsider the feasibility of future program directors being ABPOPPM-certified.

The requirement for number of clinic encounters be maintained and the minimum number of medical histories and physical examinations be substantially increased.

CPME has now issued a new call for comment on the revised changes to CPME 320, open until October 1, 2010. The ACFAS board will consider further recommendations at its July meeting.
Now, more than ever, we are in uncertain times. Our world is changing. These transformations affect us all in many ways. Some are positive, some are not, and many of them have not yet defined how they will impact our lives. As these matters become more defined, including healthcare reform, an economic recession and the digital age, ACFAS must continuously work to meet your ever-changing needs. All of these factors — and many more — affect your sociosphere.

One of the interesting and unique dynamics of membership associations like ACFAS is that the members (you) are the owners, the customers and the workforce of the organization. This has been referred to as the “Triple Helix” of professional associations. No other business has this unique “organizational DNA.”

The Board of Directors represents a very small segment of ACFAS’ volunteer workforce and an even smaller percentage of ACFAS’ owners and customers. But the board’s role is to position ACFAS appropriately in its own sociosphere, given all of the external and internal forces affecting the College.

Last year, along with ACFAS Executive Director Chris Mahaffey, I attended the Symposium for Chief Elected and Chief Staff Officers sponsored by the American Society of Association Executives, aka the “association of associations.” One of the more interesting discussions dealt with the many trends reshaping an association’s sociosphere … in other words, factors that will impact the College’s direction in the coming years. Here are just a few:

• **Reverse Mentoring** — Generation Y, the Millennial generation, and the Web 2.0 movement have forever changed how information is disseminated. In coming years this will affect how ACFAS provides e-learning, patient education and member networking. We must balance these new communications tools with the printed communications that many of our “seasoned” members still prefer. So, look for ACFAS to have an increased presence on Facebook and Twitter, increased e-Learning offerings, smartphone apps, discussion boards and similar tools.

• **Inverted Workforce** — Basically, Baby Boomers will be “retreading” rather than retiring. The young foot and ankle surgeon is better trained now than ever before, so our seasoned members will need to continually retread their skills with the most up-to-date training and techniques, online and in-person. You can’t teach experience — you must gain it — and in the CME programs we offer ACFAS must balance the needs of young, “better”-trained foot and ankle surgeons with those of experienced veterans.

• **Maturing Globalization** — The world is getting smaller, so increased collaboration with like-minded foot and ankle surgeons around the world will grow. As ACFAS has started its international efforts with relationships in Europe, Australia and Asia, we have learned the College is recognized and respected everywhere. The letters “FACFAS” are opening doors worldwide and surgeons around the globe are accessing ACFAS resources like never before. But, unlike other organizations, only board certified or qualified surgeons are invited into the College’s membership.

• **New Intermediaries** — As the ease of access and volume of information on the Internet increases, so does the need for quality assurance of that information. We have all experienced the patient who has received misinformation from the Internet. So, I often direct my patients to ACFAS’ consumer website, FootHealthFacts.org, for reliable patient education. This unique site is also “HON Certified” — the gold standard for trustworthy online health information. (PS: If you haven’t expanded your profile on this website, you should!)

• **Brawn & Bucks** — As the Baby Boomers age and their children reach middle age, the U.S. healthcare system will be challenged like never before. Add to this the uncertainty of healthcare reform, and the way ACFAS positions itself and its members will become increasingly important. One thing is for sure, ACFAS will continue to define and promote the specialty of foot and ankle surgery to patients, government, the media, and the healthcare community at large.

These trends, along with the College’s six strategic initiatives, will guide us through the next few decades and shape our collective sociosphere. We need your help; after all, you’re not only a member, but also an owner, a consumer, and the workforce!
Complimentary Membership for New Residents

The ACFAS Division Presidents’ Council will continue to support first-year podiatric surgical residents by providing complimentary first-year membership in the College. This month the College will begin informing new residents of this offer, which gives them the benefits of membership with dues waived for one year, beginning October 1. This is a direct value of $112, plus additional savings through member pricing on conferences, products and services.

“The Division Presidents’ Council is excited to be able to offer this to new residents. We believe that supporting our young residents is not only of benefit to them, but to our profession as a whole,” says council Chair Kimberly Eickmeier, DPM. “Access to the College will help start their career with a strong educational base, and provide a connection to a community of their peers – the best and brightest foot and ankle surgeons in the country.”

One of the council’s goals is promotion of the highest educational standards for residents, who are the future of the profession. “Some of the benefits that first-year residents will be able to access at no cost include our prestigious Journal of Foot & Ankle Surgery, and the College’s premiere website, which offers many educational opportunities including podcasts and literature reviews,” explains Eickmeier.

“I look forward to welcoming our first-year resident members!” adds Eickmeier. “I hope their journeys in podiatry and as a resident members of ACFAS give them many great and rewarding experiences.”

Find This Week @ ACFAS Online

Are you missing issues of the College’s e-newsletter, This Week @ ACFAS? Your IT service provider may sometimes update or change its e-mail spam filter settings, which could result in the e-newsletter not being delivered regularly, or at all.

If you are not receiving your issue of This Week @ ACFAS every Wednesday afternoon, you can find it on the ACFAS website. Don’t let spam filter issues keep you from the latest news of activities and research in foot and ankle surgery! Visit any time to get the latest issue or browse the entire archive at acfas.org.

New Employee Joins ACFAS Headquarters Staff

ACFAS welcomes a recent addition to the headquarters office. Kristin Hellquist Cunningham, MS, CAE, is the College’s new director of health policy, practice advocacy and research. She brings 19 years of experience in government relations and association management, having previously worked at the National Council of State Boards of Nursing, the American Academy of Dermatology, the Joint Commission and Abbott Laboratories. She will serve ACFAS members in all matters regarding practice management, scope of practice, credentialing and privileging, coding and reimbursement, and state and federal regulations, legislation and policy.

A listing of all staff and their responsibilities can be found at acfas.org/contactus.

New ACFAS Student Club at WesternU

The newest ACFAS Student Club is up and running at the Western University College of Podiatric Medicine, or “WesternU.” ACFAS Immediate Past President Mary E. Crawford, DPM, visited WesternU in late April to address its inaugural podiatric class.

“The lecture went well,” reports Crawford. “I encouraged the students to stop me and ask questions as I spoke, and they had a lot of questions!”

Immediately following her presentation, the club had a meeting and elected its officers. Newly elected club president Michael Stastny says: “Most of the students in the DPM program here envision themselves partaking in a 36-month residency as future foot and ankle surgeons. Our educational and professional journey will be greatly supplemented by the many learning tools provided by ACFAS. Furthermore, we expect ACFAS will bring to us the newest information relevant to our education, professional development, and ability to provide the best patient care.”

“The visit by Dr. Crawford was tremendously uplifting,” Stastny continues. “It truly demonstrated the desire of
1,500 Foot and Ankle Surgeons Can’t Be Wrong

Here’s what your colleagues had to say about ACFAS’ 2010 Annual Scientific Conference:

“ACFAS is the cream of the crop for content, presentation, access to faculty and quality of the labs. I look forward to next year.”

“The conference made me proud of my career choice and excited for what lies ahead.”

“Best conference for foot and ankle surgeons, bar none.”

It’s not too early to think about attending the next Annual Scientific Conference in Fort Lauderdale, Fla. Preconference workshops will take place on March 8, and the scientific conference runs March 9–12, 2011. Don’t miss out on this preeminent educational event!

Share Research at the Conference

Become part of the education at ACFAS’ Annual Scientific Conference by submitting your research manuscript or poster for consideration. Selected manuscripts and posters will present the most current research and demonstrate the advantages of evidence-based practice to your peers in foot and ankle surgery.

Key dates:
- August 2, 2010 — Manuscript submission deadline
- October 1, 2010 — Poster submission deadline

For submission guidelines and more information, visit acfas.org/ftlauderdale.

The Dysfunctional Forefoot

New Scientific Session Video

Visit ACFAS e-Learning to view the latest Scientific Session video, “Dysfunctional Forefoot.” Foot and ankle surgeons present approaches to address a variety of health challenges, including multiple and stump neuromas, toe deformities, hallux varus, and damage from prior surgeries.

ACFAS members can earn free continuing education contact hours through study of this or any of the Surgical Skills videos. Both members and nonmembers can pick up contact hours with purchase of the Surgical Techniques DVDs from ACFAS e-Learning.

Whenever you’re looking for reliable information on the diagnosis and treatment of foot and ankle conditions, the resource you need is at your fingertips in this online archive. Check back often for current topics and information at acfas.org/eLearning.

The Latest Podcasts:
- Early vs. Late Metaductus Management
- Cavus Foot
- Gearing Up for Residency
- Chronic Ankle Pain: Arthrodiastasis

Recent Scientific Session Videos:
- Musculoskeletal Tumors
- Ankle Arthritis
- 2nd MPJ

2010 CME Calendar

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

October 1–2, 2010 (Fri/Sat)
Coding and Practice Management Seminar
Parc 55 Hotel
San Francisco, CA
15 continuing education contact hours

October 16–17, 2010 (Sat/Sun)
Trauma of the Foot and Ankle Surgical Skills Course
Scientific Education and Research Institute (SERI)
Denver, CO
16 continuing education contact hours

November 5, 2010 (Friday)
Tendon Repair Surgical Skills Course
Intercontinental Dallas Hotel and Wright Mobile Lab
Dallas, TX
8 continuing education contact hours

November 6, 2010 (Saturday)
Tendon Repair Surgical Skills Course
Intercontinental Dallas Hotel and Wright Mobile Lab
Dallas, TX
8 continuing education contact hours

November 20–21, 2010 (Sat/Sun)
Arthroscopy of the Foot and Ankle Surgical Skills Course
Orthopaedic Learning Center (OLC)
Rosemont, IL
To be waitlisted, please contact Maggie Hjelm, hjelm@acfas.org
16 continuing education contact hours

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Key Medicare Billing and Coding Errors in Podiatry
By Christine E. Weikert, DPM, FACFAS

It has always been extremely important to properly code and charge for medical services rendered. Even the most seasoned physicians and staff find coding and billing to be an area of concern and frustration. Medical documentation for each date of service should reflect the services provided. Overbilling and underbilling can make a practice a target for audit and actions. Documentation and the part it plays in reimbursement are vital to the financial health of your practice.

A good place to start in understanding services and coverage would be to review the local coverage determinations (LCD) for your Medicare area. These are a guide to coverage for services rendered to Medicare patients and provide information to determine acceptable procedure and diagnosis codes, time limitations and modifier usage. Physicians and staff should be aware of the LCD for the services they provide — and keep up on any revisions to LCDs.

One of the top billing errors is attributed to lack of medical necessity, when an audit shows the documentation does not support the level of service provided. In Medicare durable medical equipment billing, the medical necessity must be clearly documented with the use of the KX modifier and this documentation must be on file. More often than not, physicians provide these services but fail to properly document services or medical necessity in the record.

Physicians rendering services to patients in a nursing home should carefully follow specific guidelines. There must be documentation of the request for podiatry services by the referring or requesting physician, patient or patient’s family. Standard orders are not an acceptable means for providing specialty services. A copy of the request for podiatry services should be readily available if requested by Medicare. Your visit note should clearly state the medical services rendered and any treatment and plan. The documentation should be kept in the patient’s nursing home file, with a copy in your records.

Another top billing error is failure to report the correct patient name associated with the insurance identification number. A major area of concern with nursing home patients is recording the correct demographic information, which must match the patient’s insurance card. This is an important first step in claims submission. While demographic and insurance information is important with all patients and their different insurance policies, it seems more difficult to obtain correct and up-to-date information for the nursing home patient.

Your staff must realize there are no gray areas when it comes to obtaining correct demographic and insurance information. Your office should have policies and procedures for the staff to follow. There should be no question about what information is needed and how to input this information into the system.

Establishing a good relationship with nursing home staff allows you to contact someone who can readily assist and provide accurate information for billing. Whenever possible, a scan or copy of the insurance card clearly providing the name, identification number and telephone number of the insurance company is beneficial. Keep in mind patients often change insurance plans, so it’s important to constantly verify this information. Training your staff is key.

Another denial seen too often on claims is for patients enrolled in a hospice program who are receiving other medical services such as podiatry. Modifier GW is used to indicate that services rendered are not related to the hospice patient’s terminal condition. Omitting the GW is a common error and can cause claim rejection. Physicians and staff should take time to review the patient record, noting if the patient is enrolled in a hospice program.

Having your codes, modifiers and insurance identification numbers submitted clean the first time allows your office to see more paid claims and fewer claim rejections. Reducing your billing office error rate will improve your productivity and cash flow.

Christine E. Weikert, DPM, FACFAS, is president and CEO of The Podiatric Billing Specialists, LLC.
2010 Clinical and Scientific Research Grant
As a leader in advancing foot and ankle surgery, ACFAS annually awards grant monies to ACFAS Fellows and Associates to fund research. The 2010 grant application is now available for download from the ACFAS website. Deadline for applications is October 15, 2010.

Only proposals meeting evidence-based medicine levels of evidence 1, 2 or 3 will be considered. To find out more, download the application and view past winners, visit acfas.org/grant.

Take Advantage of ACFAS Research Resources
The College is committed to promoting research and evidence-based medicine. The ACFAS website provides a number of research resources for physicians, including the Journal of Foot & Ankle Surgery, Scientific Literature Reviews, and tools to help members get started with clinical research projects. Explore them all by searching “Research and Publications” at acfas.org.

Optimize Your Practice Management
Change is a constant of the medical practice environment. Keep your practice poised for progress by refreshing your skills at the next ACFAS Coding and Practice Management Seminar in San Francisco, October 1–2, 2010.

Experienced faculty will coach you through issues such as the latest changes in EMR and CPT, coding and documentation tips and pitfalls, and understanding how regional differences in Medicare administration can affect payment.

Participants at May’s seminar in Chicago gave the faculty an average rating of 4.8 on a 5-point scale, and praised the program for its effectiveness and value. Reap the benefit for your practice by attending, or sending your office manager or coding and billing staff. For more information call 800-427-2237 or visit acfas.org.

A New WEBSITE Equals NEW PATIENTS

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Greg Renton
Orlando, FL

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

“724 new patients!”
Mitchell Waskin, DPM, FACFAS
Richmond, VA

Websites starting at $995
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877.898.4006

Social Networking Available
ACFAS in the News

ACFAS announced the revised Clinical Practice Guideline, “Diagnosis and Treatment of Heel Pain,” with a nationwide press release on April 30. The release has been picked up in 192 media outlets with placements on WTVF-TV, Nashville, Tenn.; WBTV, Charlotte, N.C.; KHNLT-TV, Honolulu, Hawaii; KMPH-TV, Fresno, Calif.; and WTEN-TV, Albany, N.Y.

ACFAS provided tips for prevention of foot injuries in an April news release, “Power Mowers Pose Danger to Feet.” The story has appeared on 110 news outlet websites with a combined readership of more than 65,190,000 visitors per day.

The new ACFAS position statement on total ankle replacement surgery was the topic of a June 2 news release, “Effective Alternative Treatments for Chronic Ankle Instability.”

ACFAS Fellow Karl Collins, DPM, of St. Louis, Mo., was featured in the May issue of Men’s Health and the March issue of Prevention on the risks of contracting MRSA with ingrown toenails and improper nail trimming.

Summer FOOTNOTES

Summertime brings warm weather and fun outdoor activities. Use the change of season to remind your patients of foot health and safety with the Summer 2010 edition of FOOTNOTES, the free patient newsletter.

The newsletter is available in both English and Spanish. To download and personalize a copy for your patients, the next entry on your blog or the next community health event, visit acfas.org/footnotes.

New Podcasts Available

Looking for more valuable foot health information to share with your patients? Two new patient education podcasts, “Diabetes and Your Feet” and “Hallux Rigidus,” are now available on FootHealthFacts.org.

Each podcast features a panel of physicians who answer the most common questions patients have on the health issues presented. Additional podcasts on other foot health topics are also available by visiting FootHealthFacts.org.

FootHealthFacts.org – Your Resource for Patients, Old and New

Consumers looking for reliable information about foot and ankle health are turning to FootHealthFacts.org, the new website linking potential patients with ACFAS members.

And now these consumers are finding the information they need through a new interactive search feature. By viewing photos of the foot, they can click on their area of concern and find a list of conditions that would affect that area. Clicking again on any term on the list will bring up a full patient education resource for that condition. And, at any time during this search, the potential patient can move to the right side of the screen to search for a local ACFAS member.

You can use the resources of FootHealthFacts.org to educate your existing patients. “Patient Reference Forms” are available at acfas.org/marketing for directing your patients to specific information on the site. You can add your practice name and contact information to the forms, as well as the name of the condition(s) they should read about, reinforcing the information you’ve provided during the office visit.

FootHealthFacts.org is information written by ACFAS members for ACFAS members. Direct your patients to this site with the confidence that they will find the highest quality foot and ankle health information on the Internet.

NEWS FROM THE COLLEGE continued from page 3

In Memoriam

The College recently received word of the passing of the following Fellows:

• Gordon W. Falknor, DPM, Ormond Beach, Fla.
• Harvey M. Kopelman, DPM, St. Petersburg, Fla.
Joint Commission Seeks Standards Comments

The Joint Commission is engaged in an ongoing effort to ensure that its standards are valued by its customers and stakeholders. To assist with this, the commission is interested in receiving your comments.

The commission’s website now offers an online form for customers and other interested parties to comment on the value of the standards at jointcommission.org/Standards/comment/default.

The form will become a standard feature on the Joint Commission’s website, allowing for constant customer and stakeholder feedback. The commission is particularly interested in knowing which standards customers and stakeholders value the most, and which they consider to be of questionable value to the delivery of quality healthcare.

The commission’s website has online feedback forms for all accreditation programs, the Disease-Specific Care certification and advanced certification programs, and the Health Care Staffing Services certification program.

ACFAS is represented on the Ambulatory Care Professional and Technical Advisory Committee of the Joint Commission by College member Adam M. Budny, DPM.

Watch for more health policy updates in This Week @ ACFAS