



# ACFAS Update

VOLUME 22 ISSUE 1 NEWS from the AMERICAN COLLEGE OF FOOT AND ANKLE SURGEONS

## Stay on the Move at ACFAS 2015: Download Free Mobile App

ACFAS 2015 is once again going mobile to keep you moving! Before you head to Phoenix for the Annual Scientific Conference, be sure to download the free ACFAS 2015 Mobile App to your iPhone, iPad or Android to instantly:

- Keep track of your pre-selected sessions;
- Review all conference events and activities;
- Receive up-to-the-minute conference alerts;
- Read the latest conference news on Twitter and Facebook feeds;
- Navigate your way around the convention center with convenient maps;
- Find the vendors you don't want to miss.

The ACFAS 2015 mobile app will be available for download in early February through one of three ways:

1. On your mobile phone Web browser, type <http://m.core-apps.com/acfas2015>.
2. Search your app store for ACFAS 2015 (iOS and Android).
3. Visit [acfas.org/phoenix](http://acfas.org/phoenix) for a link.

Once you've downloaded your app, you'll be able to populate it with your personal schedule and contact information by entering your login credentials, which will be sent to you before the conference via email and will be available on the back of your badge at ACFAS 2015.

Watch your ACFAS newsletters and inbox for further details and download reminders on going mobile in Phoenix!



**2015 ACFAS Distinguished Service Award Winner**

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**POSEURS**

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## POSEURS



I have had many an evening meal with international colleagues discussing the “political” aspects of foot and ankle surgery in the U.S. Through these discussions, I have realized three things:

- First, although our degree may seem foreign to some, our training and education define who we are: Podiatric physicians by degree, but foot and ankle surgeons by post-graduate education and formal surgical training;
- Second, many great ACFAS members paved the way in these countries for other members and me to be readily accepted; and
- Finally, ACFAS’ reputation, especially in regards to our surgical skills courses and the *Journal of Foot & Ankle Surgery*, is known and respected worldwide.

Unfortunately, problems arise when foot and ankle surgeons represent themselves to the world, or worse, their patients, as something they are not. The dictionary defines a poseur as someone who pretends to be what he or she is not. Poseurs tend to suffer from a dangerous combination of arrogance and laziness. They are arrogant because they will not admit what they do not know how to do or simply cannot do; and they are lazy because they will not put in the necessary effort to learn what is needed to properly perform what they pretend to do.

This behavior becomes increasingly dangerous when applied to patient care. There are poseurs who thoroughly counsel patients on procedures that they themselves do not actually perform or have little knowledge of, as opposed to referring these patients for proper management of their health needs. The Hippocratic Corpus states the physician has two duties, namely “...to do good or to do no harm.” Understanding your limitations as a provider protects patients by doing no harm, and referring patients to an appropriate provider benefits them by affording access to necessary care. This is true patient-centric care.

The backbone of ACFAS is dissemination of our collective educational wisdom for the betterment of our patients. This is crystal clear from review of the first recorded objectives of the College: “To promote the art and science of foot surgery; to disseminate among its members, and the profession in general, all knowledge of foot surgery; to educate the public and students about foot surgery; and to encourage and maintain the highest professional standards among its members as they constantly strive to develop advanced techniques in foot surgery.” This purpose is devoid of arrogance and intolerant of laziness.

In context, I have always proposed that if you did not get the training in your residency/

fellowship, or do not have sufficient clinical experience with a procedure, then you should enhance your skill set using any of the College’s many resources—be it in print, online or in-person. The strongest link in this education milieu is you, the ACFAS member. Interact with young members, be involved in your Regional Division, volunteer for a committee or sign up to peer review for the *Journal of Foot & Ankle Surgery*. I challenge you to give back to the College through sharing the legacy of learning that members of the College shared with you along your educational pathway.

I firmly believe that collectively we are a network of like-minded and authentic foot and ankle surgeons interested in one goal: bettering our patients’ lives in meaningful ways. To do this, we should not excuse or accept poseur behavior when we see it. Instead, we should remember to always represent all foot and ankle surgeons well by adhering to the highest standards of conduct as promoted by ACFAS as we are all judged by the actions and decorum of our members.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Thomas S. Roukis". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial 'T'.

**Thomas S. Roukis, DPM, PhD, FAFAS**  
ACFAS President

Questions for Dr. Roukis? Write him at [president@acfas.org](mailto:president@acfas.org).

## Follow the Latest #ACFAS2015 Buzz on Social Media

Looking for ways to keep up with the latest buzz at ACFAS 2015? Not able to join us in Phoenix? Follow moment-by-moment updates and photos from the conference at **#ACFAS2015** on Twitter and Facebook or through the social media feeds on the conference's mobile app, downloadable at <http://m.core-apps.com/acfas2015>.



## 2015 EDUCATION PROGRAMS

### February 18, 2015 (Wednesday) Perfecting Your Practice: Practice Management/Coding Workshop

Phoenix Convention Center  
Phoenix, AZ

### February 18, 2015 (Wednesday) Diabetic Deformity: Master Techniques in Reconstruction

Phoenix Convention Center  
Phoenix, AZ

### February 18, 2015 (Wednesday) Master Surgical Techniques: Fine-Tuning with the Experts

Phoenix Convention Center  
Phoenix, AZ

### February 19-22, 2015 (Thursday-Sunday) 2015 Annual Scientific Conference

Phoenix Convention Center  
Phoenix, AZ

### April 17-18, 2015 (Friday/Saturday) Advanced Forefoot Reconstruction and Complications Workshop and Seminar

Buffalo Marriott Niagara  
Buffalo, NY

### April 18-19, 2015 (Saturday/Sunday) Total Ankle Arthroplasty Registration Application online

Science Care Lab  
Denver, CO

### May 1-2, 2015 (Friday/Saturday) Advanced Forefoot Reconstruction and Complications Workshop and Seminar

Sheraton Harborside Portsmouth Hotel  
Portsmouth, NH

### May 2-3, 2015 (Saturday/Sunday) Foot and Ankle Arthroscopy

Orthopaedic Learning Center  
Chicago, IL

### June 19-20, 2015 (Friday/Saturday) Foot and Ankle Arthroscopy

Orthopaedic Learning Center  
Chicago, IL

### August 1-2, 2015 (Saturday/Sunday) Foot and Ankle Arthroscopy

Orthopaedic Learning Center  
Chicago, IL

### October 17-18, 2015 (Saturday/Sunday) Comprehensive Flatfoot (Reconstruction & Arthrodesis)

Mobile Lab  
Location TBD

### November 7-8, 2015 (Saturday/Sunday) Advanced Arthroscopy for Foot and Ankle

Orthopaedic Learning Center  
Chicago, IL

### December 12-13, 2015 (Saturday/Sunday) Foot and Ankle Arthroscopy

Orthopaedic Learning Center  
Chicago, IL

\*To be waitlisted, contact Maggie Hjelm  
at [hjelm@acfas.org](mailto:hjelm@acfas.org).

For a full listing of upcoming  
educational opportunities, visit  
[acfas.org/education](http://acfas.org/education).

# ACFAS 2015 Special Events Take Phoenix to the Next Level!



While you come to the ACFAS Annual Scientific Conference for the educational and networking opportunities, top off your conference experience with ACFAS' signature special events! From the Premier Connection—Opening Event, the Resident and Student Networking gathering, the ACFAS Honors and Awards Ceremony, numerous satellite events, to the always-fun Wrap Party at Chase Field—there's constantly something going on to make everyone's conference the best it can be!

To welcome you to Phoenix and ACFAS 2015, we're taking the opening event, the **Premier Connection**, to the streets this year! Head outdoors on Thursday night for free-flow networking with classmates, colleagues and new friends, all while enjoying delicious food, beverages and live music in the heart of downtown Phoenix.

If you're a resident or student, you'll want to stop by the invitation-only **Resident and Student Networking** event on your way to the Premier Connection to meet your new professional peers and ACFAS

Board members. Don't miss the opportunity to gain career advice and grow your network while enjoying refreshments and the company of your colleagues, plus you even have the chance to win great prizes just for attending!

Show your support for your fellow colleagues during the annual **ACFAS Honors and Awards Ceremony** on February 20. Be among the first to congratulate Manuscript, Poster, Honor and Merit Award winners; see new Fellows receive their College pins; and welcome the 2015-2016 Board of Directors at this esteemed event.

Early on, be sure to also check out the profession's largest **scientific poster display** featuring more than 250 award-winning research studies from around the world. Poster authors will be available from 1-2pm each day on Thursday and Friday to answer your questions and share their insights.

Also plan to attend our industry-sponsored **satellite events**, including breakfasts courtesy of DePuy Synthes, Amniox Medical

and OrthoSolutions held at the convention center (check the final program for listings), a Forefoot Innovations Showcase sponsored by Nextremity Solutions and an after-hours gathering by Zimmer at the Sheraton on Friday evening.

Cap off your stay in Phoenix with a family-friendly **Wrap Party at Chase Field** on the last night of the conference. Mix and mingle in the home of the 2001 World Series, tour the clubhouse, view the World Series trophy, play baseball-themed games and munch on tasty fare. Tickets are available for purchase for \$40 per person at the time of your registration. Fun shuttle transportation will depart from the Sheraton starting at 6pm.

Expanding your ACFAS 2015 experience beyond the ordinary is easy when so many exciting events await you—we look forward to seeing you in Phoenix!



# ACFAS 2015 Special Events

## Thursday, February 19

6:15–7:30pm

### **The Premier Connection Opening Event: Takin' It to the Streets!**

(3rd Street, Between West and North Buildings)

1–2 pm

### **Meet Scientific Poster Authors**

(Exhibit Hall)

5:15–6:15 pm

### **Resident & Student Networking (by invitation only)**

(North Hall AB Foyer)

7:30 pm

### **Nextremity Solutions, Inc. Forefoot Innovations Showcase**

(Renaissance by Marriott Downtown Phoenix Havasupai Room)

An interactive reception to experience hands-on demonstrations with guided instruction from product and clinical experts.

## Friday, February 20

6:30–7:30 am

### **DePuy Synthes, Inc. Breakfast Satellite (101 B)**

Advanced Calcaneal Fracture Fixation Techniques and New Solutions

6:30–7:30 am

### **AmnioX Medical Breakfast Satellite (106 B)**

Orchestrating Regenerative Healing: Umbilical Cord and Amniotic Membrane Transplantation for Foot and Ankle Surgery

Noon–1 pm

### **ACFAS Honors & Awards Ceremony (101 B)**

Congratulate your colleagues who win Manuscript, Poster, Honor, and Merit Awards.

1–2 pm

### **Meet Scientific Poster Authors**

(Exhibit Hall)

6:15 pm

### **Zimmer After-Hours Event (Sheraton Phoenix Downtown)**

Early Intervention to End-Stage Ankle Solutions featuring DeNovo® NT, Subchondroplasty®, and the Zimmer® Trabecular Metal™ Total Ankle

6:00 - 6:15 pm

### **Registration/Hors d'oeuvres**

6:15 - 7:45 pm

### **Presentations:**

*Stephen A. Brigido, DPM, FACFAS*

*Lawrence A. DiDomenico, DPM, FACFAS*

*Alan Ng, DPM, FACFAS*

## Saturday, February 21

6:30–7:30 am

### **DePuy Synthes, Inc. Breakfast Satellite (101 B)**

Surgical Solutions for Challenging Charcot Foot Cases  
*Patrick R. Burns, DPM*

6:30 - 7:30 am

### **OrthoSolutions Breakfast Satellite (106 B)**

Interphalangeal Arthrodesis with a Radiolucent Intramedullary Implant (ToeGrip®)

*Edward Lebrija, DPM, FACFAS*

*Patrice Diebold, PhD, MD*

6:30 pm

### **Take Me Out to the Ballpark! Wrap Party at Chase Field**

Join your colleagues for a memorable night as you mix and mingle in the home of the 2001 World Series in the heart of Downtown Phoenix! Upon arrival, guests can take a tour of the clubhouse, get a glimpse of the World Series trophy, play baseball-themed games, and nosh on delicious fare! Families invited. Shuttles depart from the Sheraton beginning at 6pm. Tickets are \$40 per person. Badges and tickets required for entry.





## Countdown to ACFAS 2015



**Ready for ACFAS 2015 in Phoenix? As you count down the days until the main event, follow these tips to guarantee your conference experience is nothing less than spectacular.**

### **Download the ACFAS 2015 mobile app.**

Access your customized conference schedule, up-to-the-minute details, maps, vendor lists and more through your personal handheld device. To download the app, 1. Type <http://m.core-apps.com/acfas2015> on your mobile phone's Web browser, 2. Search your app store for ACFAS 2015 (iOS and Android) or 3. Visit [acfas.org/phoenix](http://acfas.org/phoenix) for a link. Once you've downloaded your app, watch for an email from ACFAS with your login credentials to gain access to your personalized schedule. Once at the conference, you can also see the back of your badge for your login information.

**Check Phoenix's forecast and pack accordingly.** Warm temps and plenty of sunshine are expected, but Mother Nature isn't always this predictable.

Bring a sweater or jacket. Rooms in the convention center will be kept cool, so dress in layers to stay comfortable.

**Head to the conference registration area as early as possible.** Sign in, pick up your materials and dive right into ACFAS 2015.

**Wear your badge.** Your conference badge must be worn at all times for security purposes and is required for attendance at sessions, meetings, receptions and Exhibit Hall events.

**Follow #ACFAS 2015 on social media.** Use #ACFAS2015 in your Twitter and Facebook posts and to search social media for what others are sharing about the conference. The #ACFAS2015 feed will also appear in the mobile app so you don't miss the latest happenings.

**Attend special events.** Catch up with friends and meet new ones at the Premier Connection—Opening Event, support your colleagues at the ACFAS Honors and Awards Ceremony and get a behind-the-

scenes look at Chase Field—home of the 2001 World Series—during the Wrap Party.

Also make time for our industry-sponsored **satellite events**, including breakfasts courtesy of DePuy Synthes, Amniox Medical and OrthoSolutions held at the convention center (check the final program for listings), a Forefoot Innovations Showcase sponsored by Nextremitry Solutions and an after-hours gathering by Zimmer.

**Explore the Exhibit Hall.** Hang at the HUB (sponsored by PICA), chat with exhibitors, look for a new position or potential candidates at the ACFAS Job Fair (sponsored by PodiatryCareers.org) or have your headshot taken by a professional photographer for your resume and social media profiles.

**Complete your post-conference evaluation.** We value your feedback, so please share your thoughts via the app or the printed evaluations available at the conference.



## The Great Job Hunt: Find or Fill a Job at ACFAS 2015

Looking for a new job or a new hire for your practice? Make plans to stop by the second annual Job Fair at ACFAS 2015.

Located in the Exhibit Hall, and sponsored once again by ACFAS Benefit Partner PodiatryCareers.org, the Job Fair will connect jobseekers and employers by allowing each to post resumes and open positions and arrange potential interviews onsite using PodiatryCareers.org's convenient online scheduling tool. A confidential interview room will also be available onsite for use.

Plus, back by popular demand—Headshot Photos! A photographer and make-up artist will once again be available in the Exhibit Hall to take free professional headshots for you to include with your resumes and in your social media profiles.

Don't worry if you can't make it to ACFAS 2015—all positions and resumes for the Job Fair will be posted to PodiatryCareers.org in advance of the conference. Plus, ACFAS members receive reduced rates on online job postings and can post their available positions on the Job Fair bulletin boards at no cost.

Make this year your new start—stop by the Job Fair and Headshot booth in Phoenix and jumpstart your career—ACFAS style!

## Find Out What's Happening in Your Area

# Attend Your ACFAS Regional Division Meetings in Phoenix

Attend your Regional Division's meeting to hear about the most recent happenings and upcoming activities of your local Division, meet the officers and network with ACFAS members who are practicing in your part of the country.

All ACFAS Members who attend their Division's meeting will be placed in a drawing to receive one of two Apple iPad minis—don't miss it!

See below the schedule of Regional Division meetings being held during ACFAS 2015 in the Exhibit Hall. Look for your Division's table sign:

### Thursday, February 19 1–2pm

**Division 8: New England**  
**Division 9: Greater New York**  
**Division 10: Upstate New York**  
**Division 11: Mid-Atlantic**

### Saturday, February 21 1–2pm

**Division 1: Pacific**  
**Division 12: Tri-State**  
**Division 13: Ohio Valley**

### Friday, February 20 1–2pm

**Division 3: Southwest**  
**Division 4: Desert States**  
**Division 5: Florida**  
**Division 6: Midwest**

### Saturday, February 21 Noon–1pm

**Division 2: Northwest/Canada**  
**Division 7: Michigan**  
**Division 14: Southeast**





## Stakes Raised in Coding, Billing & Regulatory Compliance — ACFAS Responds

The coming year will be one of the most challenging in the history of medical practice management. The transition to ICD-10 will bring an explosion of new codes, and the federal Electronic Health Record (EHR) Incentive Program will begin to impose financial penalties in 2015 on practices that do not attest to meaningful use of an EHR. Cuts to Medicare reimbursements under the Physician Quality Reporting System and Value-Based Modifier also begin in 2015. Plus, the recent rise in Medicare auditing of billing claims is likely to continue—a reality made more difficult for podiatric surgical practices by the introduction of new surgical modifiers.

Simply put, physicians and their practice managers are facing a mountain of new challenges. With that in mind, the ACFAS **Perfecting Your Practice: Practice Management/Coding Workshop**, is poised to provide you and your staff with the tools and training you need to navigate the coming year.

The Practice Management/Coding Workshop is once again being offered as a pre-course at ACFAS 2015, providing an in-depth look at the key areas of billing, coding and compliance required to manage today's medical practice. Rated as one of the College's top courses, the seminar will focus

on surgical coding, modifiers, evaluation and management codes, durable medical equipment, meaningful use attestation and more.

Summer and fall programs are also in the works, and in these, ACFAS is working to recalibrate the format in response to member feedback. Specifically, a second surgical coding expert, Troy Boffeli, DPM, FACFAS, is being added to the faculty to increase the opportunity for audience participation in coding scenario training. Boffeli joins returning faculty members Jerome S. Noll, DPM, FACFAS, and ACFAS Coding Consultant Jacqueline Reiss-Kravitz, CPC.

“Our goal in revamping the program is to make it more interactive and to dedicate substantially more time to reviewing coding scenarios from diagnosis, through procedural coding, to billing. The feedback from participants at previous workshops has always been very positive, but it also consistently demonstrated a desire for more interactive training. We're zeroing in on that this year,” says Dr. Noll, chair of the ACFAS Practice Management Committee.

The additional dates for the workshops are July 17-18 and October 16-17. For more information on the program or to register for the pre-conference at ACFAS 2015, visit [acfas.org/practicemanagement](http://acfas.org/practicemanagement).

### Add to Your Surgical Skills Repertoire

## Register for Total Ankle Arthroplasty Course

Spring is the perfect time to refresh your surgical skills and acquire new ones—start with ACFAS' latest surgical skills course, **Total Ankle Arthroplasty**. This hands-on workshop, set for April 18-19, 2015 in Denver, is now accepting applications to register.

If you're ABFAS-certified in foot and ankle or reconstructive/rearfoot ankle and you meet the course prerequisites, you can look forward to an entire weekend devoted to performing primary implantation and revision implants of FDA-approved ankle replacement systems. Throughout the course, expert faculty will share their experiences and surgical decision-making process while demonstrating cutting-edge techniques that will help boost your confidence in the OR and improve patient outcomes.

You'll learn how total ankle arthroplasty is used to manage degenerative, post-traumatic and systemic ankle arthritis as well as how to recognize indications for total ankle arthroscopy vs. ankle fusion. Patient indications are discussed through case studies, and faculty members will also review conservative management, complications of total ankle arthroplasty and the role of supplementary procedures.

Program includes cadaver lab. Online registration is not available for this course, so visit [acfas.org/education](http://acfas.org/education) for an application to register.

## Lawrence A. DiDomenico to Receive 2015 ACFAS Distinguished Service Award



Lawrence A. DiDomenico, DPM, FAFAS, is the recipient of the 2015 ACFAS Distinguished Service Award, one of the College's highest honors. The ACFAS Board of Directors presents this prestigious award each year at the Annual Scientific conference to recognize those members who volunteer their time, expertise and service behind the scenes to advance the College's mission. Dr. DiDomenico is the twelfth recipient of this distinguished honor.

"When I first learned that I was to receive this award, I was at a loss for words," he says. "I'm honored, humbled and excited to receive such a distinguished decoration and to be included among this esteemed group of previous winners."

Dr. DiDomenico's volunteer efforts began years ago at the advice of several mentors. "By meeting colleagues from throughout the country and around the world, I developed many fantastic relationships, strong bonds and a sense of partnership with my good friends and colleagues as the driving force," he says.

These connections are what Dr. DiDomenico values most about his experience as a volunteer, and he is also grateful for the opportunity to both learn and educate. "Throughout my time as an ACFAS member, I have learned from the many successful colleagues who have touched my life and career along the way, and this in turn has helped me become a successful foot and ankle surgeon," says Dr. DiDomenico. "I hope I have inspired

other colleagues in their careers as previous colleagues have inspired me. I feel I have a responsibility to provide the same level of mentorship and education," he adds.

For new ACFAS members who would like to become more involved with the College, Dr. DiDomenico advises them to take advantage of the educational opportunities the College provides. "Education is the key to success in foot and ankle surgery, and ACFAS offers so many avenues to enhance and develop your skills while providing a central stage to forge new, lifelong, supportive relationships with members," he says.

ACFAS congratulates Dr. DiDomenico on this honor and thanks him for his dedicated service to the College.

**"I hope I have inspired other colleagues in their careers as previous colleagues have inspired me. I feel I have a responsibility to provide the same level of mentorship and education."** — Lawrence A. DiDomenico, DPM, FAFAS

## New Board Members Elected

Congratulations to these newly elected ACFAS board members from the recent election:

- Christopher F. Hyer, DPM, FACFAS (three-year term)
- Scott C. Nelson, DPM, FACFAS (three-year term)
- Randal Wraalstad, DPM, FACFAS (one-year term)

Also serving on the 2015–2016 Board of Directors are Richard Derner, DPM, FACFAS, President; Sean T. Grambart, DPM, FACFAS, President-Elect; Laurence G. Rubin, DPM, FACFAS, Secretary-Treasurer; Thomas S. Roukis, DPM, PhD, FACFAS, Immediate Past President; Byron L. Hutchinson, DPM, FACFAS; Aksone Nouvong, DPM, FACFAS; Christopher Reeves, DPM, FACFAS; and John S. Steinberg, DPM, FACFAS.

The new board will be installed at the Honors and Awards Ceremony on February 20 during the Annual Scientific Conference in Phoenix.

## A Big Thank You to Our ACFAS 2014 Volunteer Leaders!

The College gratefully recognizes members who have devoted their time and expertise to ACFAS 2014–2015 committees and task forces. Thank you also to those who served in the past year as peer reviewers and section editors for the *Journal of Foot & Ankle Surgery*. Their names have been published in *JFAS* and can be viewed at [acfas.org/jfas](http://acfas.org/jfas):

Bradley P. Abicht, DPM, AACFAS  
Michael T. Ambroziak, DPM, FACFAS  
Joseph M. Anain, Jr., DPM, FACFAS  
John J. Anderson, DPM, FACFAS  
David J. Aungst, DPM, FACFAS  
Jeffrey R. Baker, DPM, FACFAS  
Richard E. Baker, Jr., DPM, FACFAS  
Joanne N. Balkaran, DPM, FACFAS  
Eric A. Barp, DPM, FACFAS  
James R. Bender, DPM, FACFAS  
Nicholas J. Bevilacqua, DPM, FACFAS  
Troy J. Boffeli, DPM, FACFAS  
Georgeanne Botek, DPM, FACFAS  
Blake Brannick  
Craig J. Breslauer, DPM, FACFAS  
William C. Burmeister, DPM  
Michelle L. Butterworth, DPM, FACFAS  
Danielle N. Butto, DPM  
James P. Callahan, DPM  
Russell M. Carlson, DPM, AACFAS  
Gregory D. Catalano, DPM, FACFAS  
Luke D. Cicchinelli, DPM, FACFAS  
James T. Clancy, DPM, FACFAS  
Emily A. Cook, DPM, MPH, FACFAS  
Keith D. Cook, DPM, FACFAS  
Stephen V. Corey, DPM, FACFAS  
Michael J. Cornelison, DPM, FACFAS  
Charles W. Craft, DPM, FACFAS  
Paul D. Dayton, DPM, MS, FACFAS  
Randall L. Dei, DPM, FACFAS  
Jason George DeVries, DPM, FACFAS  
Thanh L. Dinh, DPM, FACFAS  
Mark D. Dollard, DPM, FACFAS  
Michael S. Downey, DPM, FACFAS  
Robert J. Duggan, DPM, FACFAS  
Michael D. Dujela, DPM, FACFAS  
Katherine E. Dux, DPM, FACFAS  
John N. Evans, DPM, FACFAS  
Raef M. Fahmy, DPM, FACFAS  
Corey M. Fidler, DPM  
Adam E. Fleischer, DPM, MPH, FACFAS  
Timothy C. Ford, DPM, FACFAS  
Raymond A. Fritz, Jr., DPM, FACFAS  
Alan S. Goldenhar, DPM, FACFAS  
Eoin P. Gorman, DPM  
Jordan P. Grossman, DPM, FACFAS  
Nathaniel A. Hamm, DPM  
Mark A. Hardy, DPM, FACFAS  
Matthew D. Hinderland, DPM, FACFAS  
Matthew A. Hopson, DPM, FACFAS  
Allen M. Jacobs, DPM, FACFAS  
Brandi M. Johnson, DPM, FACFAS  
Robert M. Joseph, DPM, PhD, FACFAS  
Daniel C. Jupiter, PhD  
Lisbeth Marie Keplinger, DPM, FACFAS  
Bobby M. Kuruvilla, DPM, FACFAS  
Thomas M. Landino, DPM, FACFAS  
Adam S. Landsman, DPM, PhD, FACFAS  
Daniel K. Lee, DPM, PhD, FACFAS  
Michael S. Lee, DPM, FACFAS

Gary M. Lepow, DPM, FACFAS  
George T. Liu, DPM, FACFAS  
Jose P. Loor, DPM, AACFAS  
Christopher D. Lotufo, DPM, FACFAS  
Alan A. MacGill, DPM, FACFAS  
John T. Marcoux, DPM, FACFAS  
Mark C. Margiotta, DPM, FACFAS  
Derrick J. McKay, DPM  
Robert W. Mendicino, DPM, FACFAS  
Joseph J. Menn, DPM, FACFAS  
Andrew J. Meyr, DPM, FACFAS  
J. Michael Miller, DPM, FACFAS  
Jason R. Miller, DPM, FACFAS  
Roya Mirmiran, DPM, FACFAS  
L. Jolene Moyer, DPM, FACFAS  
Vincent J. Muscarella, DPM, FACFAS  
Samuel Nava, Jr., DPM, FACFAS  
Cristian Neagu, DPM, FACFAS  
Scott C. Nelson, DPM, FACFAS  
Jerome S. Noll, DPM, FACFAS  
James A. Noriega, DPM, FACFAS  
Aksone Nouvong, DPM, FACFAS  
Benjy L. Olsen, DPM, FACFAS  
Julio C. Ortiz, DPM, FACFAS  
Jeffrey A. Oster, DPM, FACFAS  
Benjamin D. Overley, Jr., DPM, FACFAS  
Bela A. Pandit, DPM, FACFAS  
Kyle S. Peterson, DPM, AACFAS  
Melvin B. Price, DPM, FACFAS  
Mark A. Prissel, DPM, AACFAS

Barry I. Rosenblum, DPM, FACFAS  
Thomas S. Roukis, DPM, PhD, FACFAS  
Shannon M. Rush, DPM, FACFAS  
Brett D. Sachs, DPM, FACFAS  
James C. Sang, DPM, FACFAS  
Valerie L. Schade, DPM, FACFAS  
Harry P. Schneider, DPM, FACFAS  
Stephen M. Schroeder, DPM, FACFAS  
Monica H. Schweinberger, DPM, AACFAS  
Ryan T. Scott, DPM, FACFAS  
Bruce A. Scudday, DPM, FACFAS  
Amber M. Shane, DPM, FACFAS  
Jonathan J. Sharpe, DPM, FACFAS  
Naohiro Shibuya, DPM, MS, FACFAS  
Stephen H. Silvani, DPM, FACFAS  
Matthew D. Sorensen, DPM, FACFAS  
Gregory P. Still, DPM, FACFAS  
Wenjay Sung, DPM, FACFAS  
Timothy D. Swartz, DPM, FACFAS  
James L. Thomas, DPM, FACFAS  
Michael D. Vaardahl, DPM, FACFAS  
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# Reflections on Podiatric Expert Witness Work



Allen Jacobs, DPM, FAFAS, never set out to become an expert witness, but after he was first asked to review a malpractice plaintiff case in the early 1980s—and then subsequently heard the defendant’s testimony in court—he knew that serving as an expert witness was a path he was meant to take.

**“I believe what truly makes an effective expert witness stand out is the effort and care the individual puts into preparing for your case.” — Allen Jacobs, DPM, FAFAS**

In this particular case, an individual with severe vascular disease was scheduled to undergo surgery for a bunion, lesser metatarsal osteotomies and multiple hammertoes. The co-admitting physician wrote a progress note asking the podiatrist to reconsider performing the surgery until the patient’s poor vascular status was evaluated. However, the podiatrist proceeded to perform multiple procedures, and the patient developed gangrene requiring amputation. When, in his deposition, the podiatrist was asked why he proceeded with surgery given the patient’s vascular disease, the podiatrist’s response floored Dr. Jacobs.

“The podiatrist stated, under oath, that if the patient’s circulation was poor, it was the primary care physician’s responsibility to cancel the case. He also stated, under oath, that it wasn’t a podiatrist’s responsibility to evaluate circulation,” explains Dr. Jacobs.

“When the podiatrist was asked how one decides whether a patient has enough circulation to proceed with surgery, he said it was ‘like driving a car to Atlantic City—you get in and drive it.’ He said if it makes it to Atlantic City, it works, and if it doesn’t, then the car is broken.”

Since that time, attorneys have contacted Dr. Jacobs for plaintiff and defense review, which has given him a behind-the-scenes look at both sides of the legal process, but serving as an expert witness, especially in podiatry defense, does not come without its own unique challenges, particularly the disconnect that can exist between non-podiatric physicians and podiatric physicians in the evaluation and treatment of foot pathology.

However, educating non-podiatric physicians and other healthcare providers about the depth and breadth of foot pathology, diagnosis and treatment can help non-podiatrists “realize that many of these problems are multifactorial and more complex than they had envisioned, thus requiring expertise of someone with experience in treating foot and ankle pathology,” he says.

For those in the foot and ankle surgery profession who would like to serve as an

expert witness, Dr. Jacobs’ advice is simple: always do what you believe in your heart is the correct thing to do. He also advises not to take any case, defense or plaintiff, just for the money. “Always be truthful and recognize available diagnostic and therapeutic options. If your experience, medical practice or commonality of practice supports these options, accept these alternatives as reasonable,” he recommends.

“Read and reread the records to understand them and also understand the standard(s) of care,” he adds. “Review updated medical literature, not just one textbook, and consider all circumstances—clinical, social, economic and compliance.”

For those searching for a reputable expert witness from the foot and ankle surgery profession, Dr. Jacobs says that among the many factors involved in expert witness selection, a qualified candidate should be able to effectively articulate a plaintiff or defense position to a jury or to attorneys in a deposition. “Remember, no matter how prestigious an individual may appear to you, if s/he does not work tirelessly for your defense and simply wishes to tell the jury, ‘I’m a big shot, I do it this way, just listen to me,’ you may find the defense of your lawsuit problematic. I believe what truly makes an effective expert witness stand out is the effort and care the individual puts into preparing for your case,” Dr. Jacobs stresses.

# The Problem Patient

No matter where you are in your career, you've likely encountered challenging or problem patients. They may have been rude to your office staff, tried to manipulate you into prescribing unnecessary pain medication or convinced you to disregard costs for medical services.

Stephen Schroeder, DPM, FACFAS, moderator of the ACFAS podcast, *The Challenging Patient*, offers several strategies for recognizing and working with difficult patients, the most common of which are manipulative patients.

"They try to achieve a desired goal using deception, coercion or trickery without regard for the interests or needs of others," cautions Dr. Schroeder. "These patients can be especially challenging for younger providers."

Dr. Schroeder says manipulative patients will often play on others' guilt or will take advantage of less experienced clinicians. Some will use "honey" to get what they want by being overly friendly, affectionate or complimentary. Others will use "vinegar" to feign rage, cause contention or threaten

legal action. They may threaten to write negative reviews on physician rating websites as well.

Dr. Schroeder also warns of manipulation by proxy where parents will use their children to get what they want or children will use their elderly parents for personal gain. "And beware of the 'big wig' who claims to know important people and promises favors seemingly without reciprocity," adds Dr. Schroeder.

While patients have a right to be involved in their medical decision-making, they may try to use this for malicious purposes or unreasonable demands. To protect yourself, Dr. Schroeder says to "develop a treatment plan, explain it in detail, document the plan well and do not stray from it, even if the patient tries to steer you off course." He further advises to remain polite yet firm, to continue to help while maintaining appropriate boundaries and to not be afraid to say no.

For more on this topic, listen to *The Challenging Patient* podcast available at [acfasdistancelearning.com/Podcasts](http://acfasdistancelearning.com/Podcasts).



**“They try to achieve a desired goal using deception, coercion or trickery without regard for the interests or needs of others.”**

— Stephen Schroeder, DPM, FACFAS

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