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Strength in Numbers and an Old Solution to Degree Discrimination

BY BARRY H. BLOCK, DPM, JD

In early August, CMS released an ominous plan that would effectively discriminate against podiatrists by creating separate E/M codes specific to our medical specialty. The American Podiatric Medical Association (APMA) and other podiatric organizations, along with *PM News* immediately mobilized a letter writing campaign to CMS and Congress to overturn this unfair proposal. As of this writing, over 6,200 podiatrists participated via APMA's eAdvocacy website.



This massive response underscores the value of APMA membership. While it's easy to find reasons not to be a member, the simple fact is that due to podiatry's small size, high membership numbers are necessary for our survival. With a nearly 80% membership, APMA is the envy of all other medical associations. American Medical Association (AMA) membership, for example, is under 25%.

That being said, we believe that APMA is missing an opportunity to end much of the discrimination that we have faced for decades. Since 1982, *Podiatry Management* has advocated a degree change to MD or DO. In poll after poll, the vast majority of podiatrists have supported this concept, yet APMA leadership has stubbornly resisted this change, seeking instead to reach parity of limited license degree with allopathic plenary degrees. We do not see this happening.

We call on APMA to poll its dues paying members and listen to what they want. While we respect the judgment of the leadership, we expect them to respect the grassroots practitioners in the trenches. That is the only way to truly achieve parity and end this oppressive and unjust discrimination.

Respectfully Submitted,

Barry H. Block D.P.M.

Barry H. Block, DPM, JD
Editor-in-Chief
bblock@podiatrym.com

Publisher	Scott C. Borowsky 610-645-6950
Editor-in-Chief	Barry H. Block, DPM, JD 718-897-9700
Managing Editor	Hermine S. Block, MS
Desktop Publishing & Graphic Design	Stephanie Kloos Donoghue stephkloos@optonline.net
Senior Editor	Marc I. Haspel, DPM
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Legal Consultant	Michael Block
Advertising	David Kagan Associate Publisher 1062 E. Lancaster Ave. Rosemont Plaza, Ste. 15F Bryn Mawr, PA 19010 215-808-0770 (m)
Controller	Joseph W. Mellek 610-645-6944 accounting@kanec.com
Circulation	Susan Mease

PODIATRY MANAGEMENT

1062 E. Lancaster Ave.
Rosemont Plaza, Ste. 15F
Bryn Mawr, PA 19010
(610) 645-6940
FAX: (610) 645-6943

E-mail: podiatrym@kanec.com

Website:

<http://www.podiatrym.com>

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Send Manuscripts and Letters to: bblock@podiatrym.com

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