

Statement by APMA President Christian A. Robertozzi, DPM

On November 29, 2007, the American Podiatric Medical Association (APMA) was officially notified by the American College of Foot and Ankle Surgeons (ACFAS) of a decision of the ACFAS Board of Directors. In its letter, ACFAS indicated that “the Board affirmed its commitment to our bylaws that require APMA membership for admission to the College; however, the Board elected to remove non-bylaw policies on revocation of ACFAS membership if APMA membership is not maintained after initial admission to the College.” The effect of this decision is that ACFAS will no longer require that continuing members of ACFAS maintain membership in the APMA.

According to Section 7.3 of the APMA Bylaws, in order for an organization to be recognized as an affiliate of APMA, “all members of the organization who have earned the DPM degree must be members in good standing in the APMA. Failure to do so shall be grounds for revocation of affiliated status.” The APMA Board is saddened by the prospect of losing ACFAS as a valued affiliate but the APMA Board has the responsibility to enforce our Bylaws. As such, the Board has referred this matter to the APMA Transition Task Force on Affiliated Organizations, which was authorized by the 2007 APMA House of Delegates.

Upon learning of the decision of the ACFAS Board, officers of the APMA Board contacted the president and president-elect of ACFAS in an attempt to explore options and alternatives to the ACFAS decision. We were informed that the ACFAS Board carefully considered its decision and is fully committed to it. Nevertheless, the APMA Board will continue to seek a mutually acceptable resolution to this issue.

Statement by ACFAS President Daniel J. Hatch, DPM, FACFAS

The ACFAS Board of Directors has wrestled with the issue of mandatory dual membership for quite some time but took no action. Every month ACFAS receives calls and letters from some of our members asking about the requirement that all ACFAS members must also be APMA members. Some describe financial hardship, while some have professional differences with other organizations -- but their primary concern is they do not want to jeopardize their ACFAS membership and Fellowship status. We also receive calls and letters from DPMs who belong to neither ACFAS nor APMA, but want to join only ACFAS.

Then a controversial and litigious matter recently occurred in a state association that caused dozens of ACFAS members in that state to contact us. They expressed the same concern: They could no longer support their state organization due to internal matters, but they did not want to jeopardize their ACFAS membership and Fellowship status. This matter prompted ACFAS to reexamine the dual membership issue.

After careful deliberation, in October the ACFAS Board took three steps: 1) To reaffirm its full commitment to the ACFAS bylaws that mandates APMA membership when a DPM joins ACFAS, and 2) to remove the requirement of dual membership when the ACFAS member renews his/her membership in the College. This step will both require APMA membership at the start of a new ACFAS member's tenure, yet allow flexibility in the DPM's membership options as their professional needs or personal finances change throughout their career.

The third step was to adopt a policy that the College will encourage all of its members to maintain their APMA membership throughout their career. In addition, ACFAS remains committed to working with APMA on a wide variety of issues, as it always has. Our joint work on professional parity, reimbursement, policy statements, and other mutual concerns will – and should – continue.

While we hope few, if any, DPM's will choose to discontinue membership in either organization, we believe this accommodation will be helpful to individuals with unique situations during their careers and allow the College to serve hundreds of DPMs who heretofore have not joined any professional organization. We maintain our commitment to work with APMA on all issues of mutual interest and fully support and encourage APMA membership.