

November 11 Editorial

We Are Our Own Worst Enemy

Stop blaming orthopedic surgeons. Stop blaming insurance companies. Stop blaming Congress. We are our own worst enemy. It's no secret or surprise that podiatrists are discriminated against. Despite being a key member of the nation's healthcare team in the fight against diabetes, as well as being the premier providers of foot and ankle care, DPMs are often paid less or excluded from programs deemed the providence of MDs and DOs.

Each time we are excluded, the APMA's reaction is to wage a fight for inclusion in these programs. These efforts are often costly and time-consuming. The latest battle is to prevent exclusion from coverage for pneumatic compression devices, but there have been numerous previous cases of exclusion before this, and there will undoubtedly be further battles in the future. Despite spending over a million dollars of APMAPAC money, we are still excluded from Title 19 (Medicaid).

Although there is a simple long-time solution to these problems, APMA leadership continues to deal reactively with current problems instead of looking ahead for the best interests of future generations of podiatrists, as well as alleviating many of the constraints on today's practitioners. It's a case of not seeing the forest because of the trees.

Meanwhile for the past two decades, nearly two out of three practicing podiatrists polled favor a change to MD or DO, yet those in power seem steadfastly determined to ignore the grassroots and defend a specialty degree when the umbrella of a general medical degree would solve a multitude of problems.

It's time for you, the silent majority to make your voices heard. It's also time for the colleges to abandon their self-protectionist autonomy for the greater good of the profession. To do otherwise is simply to accept "politics as usual."