

The High Cost of Being Different

BY BARRY H. BLOCK, DPM, JD

A recent *PM News* Quick Poll revealed that over 70 percent of respondents believe that podiatrists should be allowed to prescribe medical marijuana. This makes perfect sense since DPMs can already prescribe much more potent controlled substances such as opioids.

Not only do allopathic and osteopathic physicians have the right to prescribe or refer for medical marijuana, in some states lesser qualified providers such as physician assistants and nurses also share this privilege.

Unfortunately, until such time that podiatrists are universally accepted as physicians, we will have to fight an expensive state-by-state battle to achieve the medical parity we have rightfully earned through our comprehensive seven years of education and training.

The best way to objectively prove our parity is an apples-to-apples comparison of podiatric medical students with allopathic medical students, particularly those from foreign medical schools. A Resolution passed by the APMA House of Delegates supports the idea that our students should be able to sit for the same USMLE Exam as do traditional medical students.

If our students can equal or exceed the scores of foreign medical students, it will present a strong argument for true parity of our medical/surgical specialty. Although the better plan is changing our degree, having our students take the USMLE Exam is a step in the right direction.

Respectfully Submitted,

Barry H. Block D.P.M.

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



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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
Director of Continuing Medical Education	David George, DPM
Consulting Editors	David G. Armstrong, DPM Bradley W. Bakotic, DPM, DO John Bergmann, DPM Nicholas Bevilacqua, DPM Michael Brody, DPM G. Dock Dockery, DPM Robert Frykberg, DPM Alison J. Garten, DPM Lynn Homisak, PRT Jon Hultman, DPM, MBA Warren S. Joseph, DPM Stanley Kalish, DPM Jeffrey D. Lehman, DPM Hal Ornstein, DPM Kenneth Rehm, DPM Doug Richie, DPM Jeffrey Robbins, DPM Lee Rogers, DPM Robert J. Snyder, DPM
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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