

# Wanted: Young Physician Members

BY BARRY H. BLOCK, DPM, JD

In the nearly four decades of *PM's* existence, podiatry has overcome many substantial challenges. These ranged from securing hospital privileges in the 80s to the recent attempt by CMS to isolate our use of E/M codes for services. Fortunately, through the strength of organized podiatry, we have fought (and won) many battles. Because of our medical specialty's relatively small size, our unity has allowed us to succeed.

Membership in the American Medical Association (AMA) is now under 25% as compared to about 75% in the 1950s. By contrast, membership in the American Podiatric Medical Association (APMA) is now approximately 70%. While this may sound impressive, APMA membership continues to change related to the population demographics with a higher percentage of senior and life members. The hard truth is that membership is the lifeblood of this profession and despite the fact that APMA charges discounted rates and provides an ever-growing suite of services for young physicians, those doctors are engaging with APMA less than previously.

APMA is a membership organization whose mission is advocacy. Without a strong APMA, podiatric medicine will have a difficult time fighting the inevitable battles that will develop in the future. Young physicians (and really all podiatrists) must realize that not joining APMA will not only harm the profession, but will eventually hurt them personally in areas such as scope of practice and reimbursement. If you are currently an APMA member, you already get it and are protecting your future. If you are not, it's time to rethink your decision.

Respectfully Submitted,

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