

Welcome to the “New Normal”

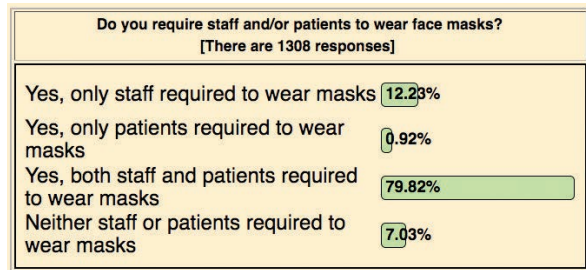
BY BARRY H. BLOCK, DPM, JD

Over the four decades in which *Podiatry Management* has published, we have chronicled many challenges which podiatrists have faced. In the ‘80s, it was obtaining hospital privileges. In the ‘90s, it was Health Maintenance Organizations. At the turn of the century, it was achieving parity with allopathic medicine, and in the ‘10s, it was a residency shortage and shrinking applicant pool. None of these crises created the sudden and detrimental damage to the everyday podiatrist as has the Covid-19 Pandemic.



In February *PM News*’ Quick Poll predicted an upbeat year with little concern about the effects of the coronavirus. By Mid-March, the majority of DPMs were seeing less than half of their normal patient volume with many offices completely closed.

The Quick Poll shown below was taken in mid-May and clearly reflects how dramatically things had



changed over just a couple of months. As this editorial is being written in late June, most practices have opened to some extent, but the way we practice will be forever changed.

Office layouts have been redesigned to allow for social distancing with hand sanitizer stations, and even UV lights in some cases. Patient scheduling has been staggered, which means it will take longer to see the same number of patients. PPE has become a must with most practices requiring both staff and patients to wear masks. The silver lining of the COVID-19 pandemic is that telemedicine has emerged as a useful tool for examining patients who can’t make it to the office.

In this special “Approaching the New Normal”, you’ll find several articles showing how podiatrists in different parts of the country are coping with the these new challenges. We urge you to adopt some of the protocols which other DPMs have utilized to help get your practice back on track.

Respectfully Submitted,

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